Educating for Journalism: the professionalism of scholarship

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ABSTRACT   *Journalism education's historical origins, intellectual tradition and media constituency have directed the field away from what could be a more lively engagement with the liberal arts, which are accepted in principle at least by academy and industry as a valuable foundation for professional journalism education. Yet students are increasingly disengaged from the democratic process, signaling a crucial need for promoting greater civic engagement. We urge a broader educational commitment to the professionalism of scholarship, as opposed to the more conventional view of media "professionalism" in the academy increasingly promoted by the media industry. Meanwhile, the academic communication field—the prevailing disciplinary identity of journalism—has emphasized media effects and audience studies. As universities seek greater external financial support, this research is easily directed toward applied, or "administrative," research, leaving broader questions of journalism and democracy up for grabs. Our view of academic professionalism is based on a broader social responsibility, and we are concerned that the educational mission should not be dictated by external agendas. While journalism in some ways occupies an academic "no man's land", accepted by neither industry nor more traditional liberal arts disciplines, it can be viewed alternatively as a potentially fruitful academic intersection, providing leadership in educational reform.*

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In an increasingly media saturated and dependent culture, the education of media workers and especially journalists attracts increasingly greater attention. Never before has there been so much public interest in how the media work and concern about how the press performs. And never have so many students sought instruction on college campuses within the journalism and media fields. The trends experienced in US journalism education have direct relevance abroad, where the model has been widely adopted in schools often staffed by graduates of US universities. Around the world, the communication and media professional major is popular among students who exceed the numbers most programs can accept. Comparative research into these would-be "global" journalists, and how they are educated, has increased in recent years, with a particular interest in the emergence of a correspondingly global sense of professionalism (e.g. Splichal and Sparks 1994; Weaver 1998). Thus, we may justifiably say that journalism and, more broadly, media education is an international phenomenon.

Meanwhile, all indications point to a decline in the social capital required for

effective democracy: voting, civic participation, political trust, community involvement. The public has become inured to commodified life, with its far-reaching logic of consumerism, rendering them less equipped for citizenship than ever. A 30-year longitudinal study of attitudes and norms of freshman college students in the United States found that "students are … increasingly dis-engaged from politics, as the 1997 freshmen demonstrate the lowest levels of political interest in the history of the survey" (Sax *et al.*, 1997, p. 3) This suggests that while liberal arts instruction may be available to our students, those civic skills and values are either not reaching them or are not finding a credible or welcome reception. This condition, coupled with the declining prestige and credibility of the press itself, points to a real need for reform within the university, particularly within journalism education, to create conditions more favorable to civic participation.

While some would define this educational mission for journalism narrowly—training candidates for news and media jobs—others would broaden it to include teaching media literacy for those who may not themselves go on to be practitioners. In either case, the goal should ultimately be to improve the practice of journalism and thereby the democratic society in which it is rooted. Indeed, one of the peculiarities of journalism as an academic professional teaching area is its basis in undergraduate education, where the emphasis lies in teaching entry-level skills rather than the advanced domains of knowledge and skills required in professions such as medicine, law or architecture. Other professions have established required graduate degrees that allow the academy to play a more meaningful role in credentializing new employees and thereby helping to develop the defining ethos in their respective areas.

If the training task is made too narrow and technical—too elementary—we would have to ask why journalism education should need to exist at all within higher education, given that a degree is not required to practice the craft. Of course, the value of basic training to industry lies in subsidizing a role that industry would otherwise have to assume to create a productive entry-level workforce.

The university has staked out a larger role, however, by striving to ground itself within a rationale of liberal arts and civic engagement, an approach that characterizes the "professional" role we would desire for journalism educators. The role of the university is to prepare students not only to be employed but also to participate effectively and critically in the democratic community. This challenge needs to be met particularly in journalism, whose value lies in developing the liberal arts (reading, thinking, civic participation) in a context of application.

Indeed, journalism's early leaders on American campuses had high-minded ideals for the field beyond a narrow vocationalism, including Wisconsin's Willard Bleyer who maintained that "No other profession has a more vital relation to the welfare of society or to the success of democratic government …" (Bronstein and Vaughn, 1998, pp. 16,17). Lofty though its goals have been, the mission of journalism education has always been greatly conflicted. Indeed, no where else in the university do so many fault lines converge, creating tensions based on professional outlook as well as on teaching and research philosophy. Furthermore, the field is set within the contentious context of press performance and media representation, centering on issues of race, gender and class.

In this essay, we will describe some of the crucial historical trends in journalism education and how it must re-

spond to the changing face of both the media industry and higher education in general if it is to live up to its high-minded promise in both teaching and research.[1] As support for higher education declines and institutions are obliged to look to private and corporate sources for support, they are vulnerable to having their mission co-opted and distorted. Elsewhere the first author has argued that the professional crisis in journalism has led the media profession to become more assertively involved in seeking prestige within universities, shaping curricula, hiring practices and programs (Reese, 1999). At the same time research by the second author suggests that journalism education faces a parallel crisis. University and college professors have long embraced the idea of journalism education as a scholarly and disciplined integration of liberal arts, communication expertise and civic participation, but have yet to practice integration with a shared sense of disciplinarity or scholarly norms for teaching (Cohen, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 2000).

Thus, this is an important time to evaluate the mission of journalism education and consider how it ought best to react to these pressures, from outside the academy as well as from within, as it establishes its own professional identity. While much attention has been paid to upholding the profession of journalism, far less has been directed toward the more immediate scholarly professionalism of those who teach in this area. Indeed, journalism merits a special place within its academic setting and should be an active leader in the educational reform movements. Surrendering its defining ethos to either communication research in retrenchment or to a profession in crisis prevents a true engagement with its potential contribution to the democratic liberal arts.

The Field in Transition

Eclecticism

As an inter-disciplinary program of study, lodged somewhere between the liberal arts and more purely professional training, the eclecticism of the discipline of journalism is in danger of becoming schizophrenic. Academic staff, most of whom have had media experience themselves, are increasingly tugged between their professional orientation to the media crafts and their academic identities. As journalism has matured and grown within the academy, traditional scholarly guidelines have obliged professors to conduct research if they want to be respectable university citizens. Meanwhile, the media industries have continued to demand, with the willing collusion of job-minded students, a high degree of training in basic skills that enable new employees to easily take their places in entry-level positions (a demand currently played out as programs scramble to add training in the new media technologies). This pragmatic pact between the university and its student (and parent) consumers may obscure the concern that this overly narrow training may not be in the long-term best interests of young people, who will ultimately be involved in many careers.

Supporting this hybrid status, studies estimate that fewer than a third of graduates expect to be working in print journalism (still the source of the defining professional ethos for journalism) 5 years after graduation. This eclecticism exacerbates this theory-versus-practice tension, creating a disconnect in many programs which may be felt both among and within individuals. Among faculty, some with perhaps a greater media professional allegiance will readily embrace academe's industry critics, while those with traditional research in-

terests may dismiss outside attacks too readily in defending the academic worthiness of their discipline.

For individual educators, career research interests may have little to do with their teaching assignments, leading to a lack of coherence within the scholarly life (Rice, 1998). Indeed, the various professional constituencies served by a program may not even exert a unified guidance, especially when journalism joins more strategic communication areas such as advertising and public relations. (Programs such as Columbia and Maryland have chosen to preserve their special emphasis on journalism, apart from what they regard as the contrary values of the persuasive arts.) Thus, it is more important than ever that we think clearly about an academic professionalism that could help bring better coherence out of these disparate pressures.

Journalism and the Liberal Arts

The liberal arts underlie journalism education as an implicit article of faith. As articulated by philosopher Alexander Meiklejohn (1948) in lectures delivered at the University of Chicago, "A primary task of American education is to arouse and to cultivate, in all the members of the body politic, a desire to understand what our national plan of government is" (p. 3). Meiklejohn viewed the liberal arts as the basis of understanding the American democratic plan and viewed civic participation as a political duty inherent in that plan. He saw unfettered communication through the media as a means of carrying out the duties he associated with each citizen's democratic political compact. His understanding of the relationships among open communication, an educated public and our democratic system of governance is reflected to-

day in the stated missions of most colleges and departments of journalism and mass communication. The commonly accepted accreditation standards require that approximately three-quarters of a student's courses be outside journalism, primarily in the liberal arts, with the remaining quarter in the major.

Surveys of today's college students, however, show that a majority holds attitudes considered anathema to these educational goals for journalism. Indeed, the predominant interest among students, as Levine and Cureton (1998) report, is not the arts of liberty but of consumerism. The practice of political participation among students is vanishing (Astin et al., 1999), and the problem may be especially acute in journalism and communication. As professional programs we draw students with strong vocational goals who want to master the skills they will need to move quickly to the professional practices of writing, editing and visual design. For these students, time spent immersed in the liberal arts can seem to be time wasted. Furthermore, the ethics of the journalism classroom and the newsroom often discourage overt political participation by students in favor of the neutrality media professionals perceive is needed to foster journalistic objectivity and preserve their independence. This "neutrality" may discourage a broader sense of civic engagement. Generally speaking, the so-called "75/25" liberal arts accrediting standard has not received a strong challenge, even from the industry. We must move beyond this acceptance in principle, however, to ask whether this ratio of course-work creates a coherent domain of knowledge and skills or simply a conglomeration of courses and credits.

We recognize that the terminology can become slippery in discussions like this, and social conflicts are also

definitional struggles. "Professional" and "professionalism" as employed by many educators, for example, often denotes a focus on occupational, "hands-on" skills, as distinguished from more purely academic or theory-based endeavors. Thus, debates between media practitioners and academics have often proceeded from a presumed industry–academic dichotomy. Common usage aside, the construct "profession" refers to a calling founded on a body of knowledge, a call to public service and an ethical framework for practice (Beam, 1990), in addition to the application of a set of skills. Journalism is quite different from the traditional learned professions such as medicine that carry significant judgemental autonomy for the practitioner and impose barriers to entry. To the extent that it lays claim to a high-minded societal role, a body of knowledge and an ethical framework of practice, however, journalism does take on important elements of professionalism. Moreover, the idea of a journalism "profession" also becomes unduly elided into the journalism industry, the increasingly concentrated corporate structure that may wish for itself the professional trappings as well as their accompanying constitutional protections and public respect. The outer image of a public-spirited ethos increasingly has become a helpful public relations tool for news media that are ever more profit-driven and suffused with entertainment values. (For a critical perspective on professionalism, see Nordenstreng, 1998.)

Whether or not journalism is, strictly defined, a profession, it is a field of practice in which many features of professionalism are admired and to some extent required in the daily practices of mainstream news publications. This conceptual murkiness has contributed to the confusion in both industry and the academy as to what we mean by professional undergraduate journalism education. What often gets called "professional" within academic programs may often indeed be more aptly described as vocationalism to the extent that it involves learning by emulation. Whether recruited to faculty positions after years of journalism experience or directly from graduate school, many educators view their task as instructing students in the techniques and practices that will equip them for entry-level jobs. How do editors edit? How do reporters develop sources and collect information? Those who reject such limiting definitions of the profession of teaching journalism have, as discussed further below, come under attack as offering too much theory and critique at the expense of useful industry preparation.

Again, it is not that the industry or the academy have rejected the importance of the liberal arts contribution to journalism education. Rather, a combination of factors—including the quasi-professional status of journalism, the influence of the industry on matters of curriculum and pedagogy, the often easy passage from newsroom to classroom among those who teach—have conspired to locate the profession of liberal arts teaching outside of journalism programs. At worst, a "no-man's-land" of journalism education results which lies neither fully in line with the culture of other university faculty who view themselves as professors and scholars nor with journalists who subscribe to the professionalism of the industry. Potentially, however, this educational intersection of the university can be a particularly fruitful spot to recoup some of the key features of academic professionalism or, as we call it in our title, the "professionalism of scholarship".

Historical Context

To understand fully the multiple pressures on this field, we need briefly to place it in historical context and see the connection between its research and teaching agenda. As a constituent field of communication, journalism has had its recent histories thoroughly laid out (Czitrom, 1982; Delia, 1987; Dennis and Wartella, 1996; Rogers, 1997; and others). A more specialized field history is available from others (Emery and McKern, 1987; Medsger, 1996), including a recent review of its Midwestern roots at the University of Wisconsin (Bronstein and Vaughan, 1999). We can establish that conflicting models were present from the beginning. At Wisconsin, Willard Bleyer established a program organized within the liberal arts, while Missouri's Walter Williams began a free-standing professional school in 1908 which stressed experiential, learning by doing with instruction from working professionals.

From its early ties with the teaching of English, journalism became more closely joined intellectually with the social sciences, as institution builders such as Wilbur Schramm organized it at Illinois and elsewhere within the emerging post-war field of communication. The last 20 years have been marked by the continued growth of such large communication professional programs, which to print journalism have variously added related fields like public relations, advertising and broadcasting. More recently, historically separate speech communication programs have increasingly been combined with journalism and media fields (Ohio State, Tennessee). Often these combined programs represent one of the largest groups of majors on their campuses. These schools have moved increasingly to free-standing status, outside the liberal arts organizational umbrella and reporting directly to the central campus leadership. This makes it easier to enforce their own value system and promotion criteria, apart from their colleagues in the arts and sciences.

These trends have brought visibility and additional campus resources and have made it easier to partner with media industries and to raise funds, while bringing new pressures to satisfy those professional communities. At the same time, this outward focus has distracted from a more serious integration of journalism with the liberal arts. Autonomy has weakened the professional links among liberal arts and communication faculties by reinforcing dissimilar standards for faculty recruitment, promotion and tenure and by discouraging communities in which the scholarships of research and teaching are publicly shared and reviewed critically by professional educators who view themselves as peers.[2] Indeed, on most campuses the sense of general community has already been eroded by external market pressures that have caused major salary disparities among the various colleges. Business, for example, claims it must compete with industry for faculty who may have more lucrative opportunities elsewhere. Thus, large universities increasingly function as loose confederations of entrepreneurial programs, working against a lively cross-disciplinary exchange with the liberal arts.

Communication's Intellectual Roots

In strengthening the professionalism of scholarship itself, we must consider how theory will best be integrated with practice and how journalism and communication studies best relate to the larger society. Historically, research in this area has changed in its view of

civic engagement. Recent histories of the field have emphasized the early importance of the Chicago School. Rogers (1997) identifies the "Four American Roots" of communication science: John Dewey, Charles Horton Cooley, Robert Park and George Herbert Mead. Park himself had been a journalist. These men believed in the mass media as a way to build community and improve society, and the city of Chicago was exploited as a diverse urban laboratory. The shift of communication influence to Columbia University in the 1940s and a corresponding rise in (academically) professionally reproducible methods of quantification led to a focus on the instrumental uses of communication. The engineering models of Shannon and Weaver (1949) and Weiner (1948) led to a more precise but more bloodless view of communication and journalism, with societal civic values taking a lesser, more detached position. Successful communication became equated with a clear transmission of message with a minimum of "noise", a model that left little role for considering larger ownership and structural concerns. If a multi-method, often ethnographic approach to chronicling public life characterized the Chicago approach, one could even say that journalism scholarship became less like journalism practice with this shift.

This communication field, from which journalism draws its primary modern research identity, was strongly shaped at Columbia by the administrative research initiatives of Paul Lazarsfeld. Elsewhere, others have shown how this research style, conducted within a framework of concerns compatible with commercial ownership, narrowed the questions to those of interest to the media industries: voting, opinion and consumption (Solomon and McChesney, 1993).

The Question of Journalism

With audience and effects studies becoming the norm, two early studies of specific journalistic research questions show how strong was the tendency to normalize even such research within a limited effects and benignly functionalist world view. In 1950 David Manning White published his study of "The Gatekeeper: a case study in the selection of news", using a metaphorical concept that makes intuitive sense to professional and academic alike. Five years later Warren Breed (1955) appeared with his influential study: "Social Control in the Newsroom". Both are often referred to as classics, often included in textbooks and overviews of the communications field.

Breed assumed the publishers had the power over how news was shaped and that they used a number of implicit techniques to oblige reporters to follow "policy". White located major influence with the editor "gatekeeper" who made decisions that were "highly subjective … reliant upon value-judgments based on the 'gatekeeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations" (p. 386). These were provocative questions with both studies potentially representing a more direct engagement with the way news works within communities, but the field's limited understanding of them worked to render them less problematic. In a textbook review of mass communication research, Wilbur Schramm and Donald Roberts (1971) refer to these two studies within an effects context, stating that: "… the individual reporter or editor views and interprets the world in terms of his own image of reality—his own beliefs, values and norms. Thus, to the extent that his image reflects existing norms and values, he is likely to overlook or ignore new ways of perceiving the world or approaching problems"

(p. 382). Similarly, regarding Breed's concern with newsroom policy, Schramm and Roberts argue that "to the extent that media policy reflects the norms of a given culture or subculture, so too will the information they (the media) transmit" (p. 382). Professional practices were not closely examined, with these statements begging the larger question: to what extent and in what respect do journalists and their larger media policies reflect (and shape) societal norms and values (see Reese *et al.*, 1993).

As with other fields, critical and cultural studies have penetrated journalism and made problematic those questions of ownership, ideological bias and social control that were of little concern to the founders. Meanwhile, a renewed emphasis on administrative research has emerged in recent years. Long a relative campus backwater in terms of grant research funding dollars, journalism and communications faculties are increasingly able and obliged by their cash-strapped universities to seek external funding for their research. Of necessity, to attract funding, this research often becomes applied, centering on narrow questions of effects and persuasion. Health communication, with its initiatives in areas such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs is a good example. While using communication to improve health is a worthy goal, more basic questions of how journalism functions in a democracy may increasingly go unaddressed for lack of easy funding. This tendency too often leads to an artificial choice for the scholar: between the embrace of an industry vocationalism and a resignation to the view of research as a tool, available to the highest bidder.

We should not imply here that research receiving outside funding is inherently bad, or that universities cannot productively partner with private industry. Useful research and other goals can be achieved when questions of common interest can be found; but given that others outside academe are clearly spending vast amounts of time and money to engage schools and universities for their own purposes, we also need to spend time finding what our profession requires of us, which in turn will guide our judgment as to which of these partnerships will be most useful.

When the Chicago School's concern with journalism-in-community gave way to the more explicitly value-neutral engineering, sender-receiver models, a concern with social betterment remained explicit for a time. Park and Dewey, for example, hoped their newspaper could help solve social problems by disseminating discoveries of social science (Rogers, 1997). Schramm and other communication researchers would later help further the effort in World War II by conducting, among other things, studies of the effectiveness of propaganda and persuasion for the government. Although these scholars' work for the government has been criticized, they did have a liberal's belief that better understanding of communication could produce a better world. This faith in communication and science to accomplish worthy social objectives has suffered mightily since the collapse of the Cold War social consensus of the 1960s as to what constitutes such worthy causes. While the research techniques remain, research now is less explicitly and optimistically tied to accepted overarching social objectives. A research agnosticism concerning value implications has taken hold, a posture that may also be said to characterize current journalism.

While critical and cultural studies have brought important "ferment" to the field, these areas do not typically engage much with the professions and are easily marginalized. Meanwhile, what might be called main-

stream communication science is increasingly pressured by administrative tendencies. The problem then becomes this: if one rejects the research-for-hire or industry patron model of research, and critical studies are not taken seriously by the profession, what choices are available to effect social change?[3] The civic ground is left without strength, as scholars retract to their mutually exclusionary camps.

Media Professional Influence

Earlier we noted the built-in tension, present from the beginning, between professional and academic, in journalism education. Recently this has taken on greater strength and coherence. The increasingly concentrated ownership of media has increased the likelihood that the industry will be able to speak with greater accord. A renewed industry pressure urges programs to give less importance to the doctorate as a credential for academic employment to restrict theoretical approaches of study so as to not distract from a skills emphasis, even suggesting that the "real scholars" reside outside of journalism programs (see Reese, 1999). When discussions take place among professionals and academics, the issue quickly becomes centered on the usefulness of research carried out in universities to the journalism profession. If it were more useful, it is argued, more editors would make a point of reading it.

Clearly, journalism, along with the rest of academe, is in need of reform, but reducing the issue to an academic/professional split means the academy will increasingly lose ground. As financial resources for higher education decline and the leadership initiative is picked up by well-funded foundations and industry voices, programs will find it difficult to resist the call to become more "professional". In large part this call leads schools to be more responsive to the demands of the industry labor pyramid by training appropriately skilled entry-level employees. For example, a publication for broadcast news directors included a typical recent article from this view: "Back to School: are J-schools giving students the tools they need?" (Potter, 1999). The basic conclusion is that programs should provide as much hands-on training as possible, including (usually unpaid) internships, and from professors with recent industry experience so as to equip a student to work in newsrooms from the first day of employment. Emphasizing professional skills, however, ironically risks criticism from even hard-core professionals, who argue that this training may be dispensed with altogether. Lewis (1993), for example, was highly critical of Columbia University's journalism school, one of the exemplary few "pure" professional graduate programs. He quoted a number of professional critics (p. 26), including one columnist who said: "All we do is ask questions and type and occasionally turn a phrase. Why do you need to go to school for that?" Perhaps that would be true if the profession were indeed reduced to that or was so unproblematic in its societal impact.

While engagement with the media professions can be useful and constructive, it must not substitute for building a stronger sense of academic professionalism. Among the features that characterize a profession, Pelikan (1992) includes a tradition of critical philosophical reflection. This has been one of the hallmarks of academe but it has not exactly characterized journalism, which even critics from within the profession have called far too self-congratulatory (see Haiman, 1998; also see Hallin, 1992, 1996). Many industry-originated research initiatives take the perspective that if only

the public was more aware of the constitutional freedoms and job constraints, it would be more appreciative of journalists' work.

This anti-reflective view explains in part the resistance to theory and press criticism within the journalism curriculum. Former *New York Times* editor Max Frankel has said, "There (are) too … many media critics in business these days. It's ridiculous. If all those people, including me, would go back to work, we'd have a very good press. But instead all we're doing is studying the …press" (quoted in *Freedom Forum & Newseum News*, April 1998). Meanwhile, there has been an explosion of press criticism among advocacy groups, including an abundance of web sites on the Internet devoted to media issues, a growing media literacy movement, and new general audience magazines such as *Brill's Content*, a recent publication of media reporting and analysis. Thus, this growing interest in understanding media from outside the profession suggests that there is much to be done in connecting public concern to professional initiatives and to deep scholarly inquiry.

In strengthening their own professionalism, scholars must have points of engagement with journalism and media professionals. Even the severest critics of the current corporate media would accept that there are well-intentioned, intelligent members of the press would hope to work with academia to improve industry practice. This engagement need not lead to weakening one's critique, but would help it to be better informed, with the potential for finding interventions for reform. In some ways, the "public journalism" movement, advocating a more active role for journalists in addressing community concerns and problems, is a good example of a theoretically based set of ideas, developed in partnership with the profession. While it may be criticized, it has at least

generated a debate about rethinking current practice. Ironically, this movement appears to stimulate more interest in the press than within the academy, and now is in danger of being absorbed as just another marketing device for large media concerns.

Media Foundation Efforts

Much of the professional educational initiative now has been taken up by media-based foundations, or those with media interests. The Freedom Forum is the wealthiest of these groups with a specifically journalistic mission, holding now a $1 billion endowment. The Forum carries out its own programs through its "Newseum" museum near Washington, DC, its Media Studies Center in New York and its Pacific Coast Center devoted to education. Other foundations with roots in journalism, such as Knight, work more directly through existing academic journalism programs by establishing well-endowed professorships, designed to attract accomplished media professionals to university teaching. Scripps-Howard provides internship and scholarship support in addition to underwriting a program at Ohio University. The Pew Charitable Trusts, not a media foundation as such, has identified the public journalism movement as one of its key programs for support. Thus, increasingly the research and leadership that media professionals find useful is not originating from within the academy.

The Freedom Forum has been increasingly active in stepping into the breach to shape the future direction of journalism education, including sponsoring a recent report that was critical of journalism education, the *Winds of Change* (Medsger, 1996). The ostensibly empirical report on the data obtained in a high-profile national study

of educators and journalists took a strong polemical tone, advocating bringing more news professionals into teaching without so much concern for academic credentializing, and reversing the conversion of journalism into a "generic communications degree". The oversimplified academic versus professional dichotomy assumed that the primary source for leadership in this part of the academy lay within the journalism profession itself.

Whatever the conclusions, the origins of this report, its underlying assumptions and the strength of the reaction, pro and con, within journalism education must be understood. Indeed, given the trends outlined earlier, the tenor and volume of reactions to the *Winds of Change* should not be a surprise. Journalists and professors each have a significant stake in the issues fueling an industry–academy clash that shows few signs of abating. With journalism's entry level ranks increasingly staffed with graduates of journalism programs, which continue to enjoy healthy enrollments, journalists and educators alike will understandably struggle for control over the knowledge and preparation needed to practice professionally. The answer from within the academy lies not in embracing or rejecting industry critics, but in establishing a new form of professionalism which may meet the needs of society while encompassing the goals of journalism and higher education.

Professionalism of Scholarship

Given our theme throughout this commentary of professionalism, we have asked what it means to be a professional journalist, what it means to conduct research that serves the profession and the society and what kind of education is most likely to prepare

students to work effectively as professional journalists. We have not yet discussed in depth the issue at the heart of journalism education: what does it mean to be a professional teacher? We begin with the important assumption that journalism educators may possess a variety of academic and industry backgrounds. University teaching, like journalism, is an unlicensed profession, and while paths such as the PhD may be the *de facto* entry credential, the educational enterprise is enriched by the variety of scholarship and discovery contributed by the diversity of faculty backgrounds.

An industry–academy clash over the place of professional training in undergraduate education is not unique to journalism and media education. Lee Shulman (1997), president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, has questioned the validity of the "presumed tension between the liberal and the pragmatic" in liberal arts education (p. 151). Far from dismissing the pragmatic, Shulman concludes that professors must become more professional and must learn to "profess the liberal arts". Borrowing from Steven Brint's (1994) work, *In An Age of Experts*, Shulman suggests a number of characteristics of professional learning: the pursuit of important social ends; understanding rooted in discovery and a body of knowledge; an environment in which theory is tested in the field; judgement; and reflection that enables assessment of practices within the university profession and community in which work is shared and subject to critique by peers (1994, pp. 154–5)

While each has relevance for what it means to be a professional faculty member in journalism, "understanding rooted in discovery and a body of knowledge" carries special significance in the context of the recent National Research Council report, "How

People Learn" (Bransford *et al.*, 1999). This 2-year study concludes that professional educators must have special knowledge about how to teach within their unique disciplines—knowledge that goes beyond general teaching methods—as well as a deep understanding of their disciplinary substance. Thus, it is not sufficient to be an expert journalist or a skilled academic researcher. Expertise in a discipline is necessary, the report finds, but is not sufficient alone to instruct others. Knowledge of the discipline and of pedagogy interact, the report concludes, implying simply that faculty professionalism requires deep domains of knowledge and skill in both. The depth of available knowledge about learning is, as the National Research Council makes clear, well beyond what most professors in journalism or elsewhere in the university are familiar with. Cohen *et al.* (1999) found only scattered attention to the science of learning in communication programs preparing doctoral students for careers in teaching and research. There is little to suggest that faculty recruited from industry are any more familiar with this single area of teaching professionalism.

In his landmark study, *Scholarship Reconsidered: priorities of the professoriate*, the late educational reformer Ernest Boyer (1990) suggested that among the greatest dangers to the university is the smothering effect of outside, non-academic forces upon the fundamental missions and goals of the professoriate. He was concerned, among other issues, about the kinds of pressures embodied in such reports as the *Winds of Change*, with its dichotomous view of professional and professor. A considerable body of research and practice has made it clear, for example, that service learning is among the most effective teaching pedagogies. Yet it is not unusual for journalists, and many journalism teach-

ers, too, to question its use because it places students in activist rather than neutral or objective positions. The ethics of the newsroom rather than the classroom drive this response (see Cohen and Kostyak, 1998).

These outside forces are not sufficient to lead the modern university as an institution to betray its traditions or duties. Equally threatening is our own inattention as professors to our own professionalism. We too rarely reflect in any systematic way on our pursuit of important social ends, our understanding rooted in discovery and a body of knowledge, the nurturing of an environment in which theory is tested in the field, our own judgement, public reflection that enables assessment of practices within the university profession and the support of a community in which work is shared and subject to critique by peers. As practitioners of a disciplined professionalism, we should not ignore issues of academic and industry preparation of faculty, but neither can we let that be the driving question. There are others to ask. Given our emerging knowledge of the learning sciences, can we separate the liberal arts from journalism and still expect students to create a whole out of the parts? Can we find better ways to prepare industry and academic teachers to be professional educators? Can we develop agreement among ourselves as to what we mean by a professional teacher?

Conclusion

In this review we have identified some important influences on journalism education: its historical origins, intellectual tradition and media professional constituency, especially with regard to the liberal arts and civic engagement. We have argued that the media industry's

strengthening tendency is to pull the enterprise in a direction of, if not voca-tionalism, at least a definition of media professionalism which addresses the industry's practical needs. On the other hand, the academic communication field, the prevailing disciplinary identity of journalism, has emphasized media effects and audience studies, using methodological tools easily adapted to an administrative research agenda and responsive to contract work. In both cases, the intellectual and teaching identity and initiative is increasingly ap-propriated by external spheres of influence.

Thus, the broader and sorely needed goal of scholarly professionalism is left untended, a special irony for journalism with its wide potential for effective teaching of the liberal arts and civic engagement. Here is a good place for a well-integrated and socially relevant field, where teaching, research and service may be combined for a coher-ent professional pursuit within the academy. Here is an excellent site to bring about the kind of teaching advo-cated by educational reformers, includ-ing critical thinking, active and experiential learning, writing across the curriculum, media literacy and service learning. This potential, however, can too easily go unrealized. Often the mere fact of a "hands-on, real world" experience, such as an internship, is assumed to give students the necess-ary rounding to equip them for work, while providing a cheap form of labor for media organizations. Missing is the guided deep reflection that may create a more meaningful learning experi-ence. Journalism is not the only disci-pline that hires faculty and constructs a curriculum in hopes that the entire thing will add up to the desired result. This will not happen, however, until we have a better-thought-out professional framework to guide it.

In the conflict between media profes-sions and academy, we often lose sight of each institution's purpose within the larger society. We are certainly not the first to call for social research to focus on broader more central issues. The tendency of the academic disciplines to focus narrowly has been noted by such critics as C. Wright Mills (1959) and Robert Lynd (1939), who in his *Knowl-edge for What?* took the social sci-ences to task for retreating into their islands, leaving a vast ocean of press-ing social problems unaddressed. He advocated reorganizing university work around inter-disciplinary efforts to ad-dress those problems as appropriate for each one. Journalism could be this problem-based inter-disciplinary field built around understanding and improv-ing press performance.

The US model of journalism edu-cation is held out for emerging democ-racies to emulate, and "global" journalists and their media organiza-tions are striving to develop accepted standards of their own professional practice. Thus, professionalism of scholarship will become increasingly important to guide this process, to en-sure that students become citizens rather than consumers, thoughtful pro-fessionals rather than interchangeable cogs in a labor force, and that media industries are partners with academia rather than clients.

Notes

[1] Others recently have laid out some of these issues within the media education arena more broadly (e.g. Christ, 1998; Dickson, 1999).

[2] We do not mean to imply that journalism faculty should simply become more like their liberal arts counterparts.

These members of faculty have their own problems with being inter-disciplinary and appreciating other areas, but that is a subject addressed widely elsewhere.

3 Social change is certainly possible outside the profession, with the media literacy, cultural–environmental and other reform efforts taking place largely outside major academic circles and professional involvement. Our focus here, however, is on how universities can better address the spirit of these initiatives.

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