Hijacking Free Speech in the CSU

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On March 1, 2002 Judy Chicago returned to California State University, Fresno to speak about the Feminist Art Program she had begun there in 1970. In her lecture and in the weekend symposium that followed, Chicago and a handful of her former Fresno State students spoke of the transformative effect that the first Feminist Art Education program in the U.S. had on their lives as female artists and on the spread of innovative pedagogic strategies to other art institutions. They discussed the role consciousness-raising sessions[1] played in the production of their art, the value of building an all female off-campus art studio, and the power that performance art had on initiating a very public discussion of feminism in Fresno. At the end of the symposium, those of us who are new to Fresno State were perplexed by the stark contrast between the campus climate of the early 70s and the current one—one in which 45,000 Promise Keepers were allowed to meet in the football stadium at cost while the use of bras in a public display for Breast Cancer Awareness Month was prohibited.[2] Veteran faculty, too, were left trying to explain just how the autonomous academic voice that called Chicago to Fresno and inaugurated the first fully-funded Experimental College in the CSU had been hijacked.

It is important to note that Chicago's presence on campus 30 years ago, while short lived, was part of a much broader liberal movement at CSUF. As Seib (1979) describes, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement resonated in the Valley, where anti-war sentiments and the movement to forward a civil rights agenda through education exploded in student boycotts, hunger strikes, rallies, and a major shift away from Fresno State's normal school beginnings to an academic curriculum. Conservative administrators, faculty members, and students eventually managed to break up progressive campus alliances by firing outspoken professors, circumventing faculty governance, and dividing the most vocal and radical school on campus, the School of Arts and Sciences.

To be sure, these changes continue to affect our campus. But such acts do not explain fully the contemporary, often unwilling, complicity of many faculty members in the rise of conservatism on our campus or on others. Nor does what has been ubiquitously labeled as student apathy fully explain why students seem to accept the invasion into educational institutions of a corporate mentality, aptly illustrated by one of my students who earnestly suggested that if Judy Chicago wants to be effective then "she should be more congenial and committed to pleasing her audience, like a Starbuck's employee." To understand these things, we need to examine how resistant

speech, activism, and challenging pedagogy get continually managed in the university setting. Here I want to look at one seemingly benign CSU initiative, the promotion of community service among students, to understand how a "managerial minority" encourages complicity among faculty members and students, and effectively curtails free speech and campus activism. Given that the CSU system is one of the largest university systems in the United States with a fall 1999 enrollment of 359, 947, this example is a cautionary tale for those working at other universities.[3]

Anthropologists, especially, might be interested in this example as community service has emerged as one of the ways in which many universities ostensibly are promoting cross-cultural awareness and responding to the criticisms forwarded in discussions of multiculturalism. Indeed, anthropologists are particularly well equipped to criticize the contemporary, institutional definitions of cross-cultural experience, multiculturalism, and community that figure heavily in university curricular revisions and are so important to understanding the reduction in campus activism. Anthropologists are well suited to undertake an examination of the workings of the university not only because of our discipline's methods but also because of the contrary, often deeply reflective, stance seen in much of our disciplinary history. As an essential part of this history, Gerald Berreman's activist legacy and commitment to formulating professional ethical standards offers a way of re-framing our reactions to these changes in higher education.

One of CSUF's stated primary goals is to "increase student involvement and work toward integrating a significant service-learning component into the educational experience of each student." Aided by funding from the Chancellor's office, our faculty teach 51 designated service learning courses that involve over 2,500 students, and many more courses include community service as part of the course requirements. And according to our campus president's office, Fresno State students contribute over 25,000 hours a year of community service to the "needs of others in our region." At first glance, the inclusion of community service in courses seems harmless enough. The promotional material for service-learning courses states that the addition of a minimum of ten hours of volunteer work to regular academic course curriculum "fosters a sense of social responsibility and civic ethic" among undergraduates while also providing students with "meaningful 'real-world' experience" and establishing partnerships between the university and the broader Valley community. Indeed, there are service-learning courses that seem to make some sense. For instance, in a service learning Marketing class, upper division students put their skills at web page and ad design to good use for local organizations. But this particular marketing course, in which each student completed at least 30 hours of service, is not the norm, and it is questionable how much students learned about community in this class. Too often service learning poses problems for promoting free speech and activism because of how it gets used, what it ends up replacing, and how it dovetails with other seemingly unrelated campus and CSU trends.

Critics of current changes in higher education encourage us to examine the ever-strengthening relationship between government projects, corporate pursuits, and university research. Aronowitz (2000), Fairweather (1988), Gumport and Pusser (1995) Massy (1994), and Slaughter and Leslie (1997) focus on the effects diminished federal and state budget allotments for higher education have had on scholarship and the nature of academic labor. As they argue, university-industry-government partnerships have come to drive academic research agendas, especially in technoscience fields, thereby leading to the devaluation of fields of study outside the scope of these market interests, and to the redefinition of these fields of study in light of corporate interests. More so than other public statements published by our university, the 1997 "Vision for the 21st Century: A Plan for Excellence" (CSUF 1997) makes clear how this national trend is manifested on our campus. Here the social sciences emerge as valuable because they prepare students to work in industries that serve diverse populations. Indeed, throughout the document local and global cultural diversity are conflated with economic diversity. Knowledge of cultural difference, therefore, is posited as an area of expertise to be marketed rather than used as a basis of a critique of capitalist interests. As Giroux (1997) has argued, educational institutions build on capitalist culture's insistence that forms of difference be subsumed under a consumer identity, and CSUF is no exception. Students, then, are first and foremost customers and future employees rather than members of cultural groups or even pupils. According to this logic, for students to succeed in the regional employment market, they must be equipped with the "comparative advantage" knowledge of cultural diversity promises to give. On our campus and on others as well, community service is one route through which students can obtain this pre-employment training.

In the Plan for Excellence, community service as a curricular goal appears as one of many university initiatives designed to "bring broad recognition to California State University, Fresno as a unique center of educational excellence." Although the term excellence is used ubiquitously in this document, in the speeches and informal talk of administrators, and in criteria for university sponsored grants, its definition remains opaque, if not completely without a referent. It remains unclear how "excellence" can describe simultaneously the parameters of good teaching in Kinesiology and Classics, the condition of buildings and plant operations, and the educational outcome of forced volunteerism. As Readings (1996:23) describes, "today, all departments of the University can be urged to strive for excellence, since the general applicability of the notion is in direct relation to its emptiness." While the term excellence may not be defined, its use in university settings points to the university's increased responsiveness to industry. That is, the language of excellence integrates diverse fields of study and activities into a single value system judged by unfettered university bureaucrats (Readings 1996). As Readings explains, excellence is an "organizing principle" of the corporate university where "performativity" is measured through a variety of cost-benefit analyses that link academic performance and disciplinary knowledge with the wider market. Thus, fields of study that cannot

be translated into the language of the market are at risk for not measuring up to standards of excellence, and thus at risk to ever-looming budget cuts. More often than not, on our campus and on others as well, high demand for courses earns a department a rating of excellent. As students increasingly see the value of education only in terms of training for future jobs, departments' search for high enrollments becomes a competition in customer satisfaction. It is difficult to estimate how the chase for course enrollments affects the content of particular courses, and, in turn, to what degree academic freedom is compromised. On our campus, it is fair to say that many faculty members feel that they are held hostage by the situation. Adding to this sense of paralysis is that the very existence of the plan represents the loss of faculty power over the curriculum. As Aronowitz (2000) explains, in restructuring the university to meet the needs of private and public entities, curriculum planning has been taken out of the hands of faculty and centralized in the administration.

The movement to service-learning courses forwarded by system-wide administrators emerged at the same time that the campus was reformulating the general education[4] plan so that it would be similar to that of other California State University campuses. This process has been and continues to be contentious because a department's placement in the GE program partially determines its ability to offer smaller, more specialized courses. As the university turns more to vocational and technical education in response to the demands of the job market, majors in the Colleges of Social Sciences are jeopardized, and the College itself threatens to become a conglomeration of service courses for the professional and technical schools. And while professional and technical programs increasingly are allowed to offer GE courses in areas traditionally dominated by fields of study in the social sciences, much more is at stake than "turf," as our administration following national trends argues.

As the new GE plan was being formulated, courses that focused on multiculturalism and international issues came under fire. For instance, the Liberal Studies Program, an elementary education major and the largest major on our campus, attempted to eliminate the only required course that focused on race, class, and gender as central topics of inquiry. Part of the Liberal Studies argument was that this particular course duplicated courses taught in the education department, one of which was the required tutoring course in which undergraduate students tutor elementary school students from predominantly Latino or African American schools. The Women's Studies, Asian American Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Chicano Latin America Studies Programs were only able to preserve this bread and butter diversity course by agreeing to teach statistical literacy as a central part of the course curriculum. The argument presented by the Liberal Studies Program highlights a pervasive problem in how community service is being used to displace academic study of difference onto the experiences of individual students. Too often in these courses attention to diversity as a course topic focuses on shifting the attitudes of students about cultural difference through developing empathy in face-to-face

interaction with those deemed "other." Lost is the study of the history of difference, structural inequalities, or any true critique of standard curriculum.

Concomitant with this loss is the way that community service obscures understandings of activism. Not only must community-service courses include mechanisms for teaching and reinforcing a narrowly defined "service ethic," a requirement that is reinforced through committee review of syllabi and required outcomes-assessment techniques, but the acceptable organizations where service learning can take place are built on traditional models of volunteerism. The problems here are predictable: service learning prohibits students from participating in groups formed to protest legislation or city and county ordinances; instead students work for organizations with a long history of community financial and ideological support, many of which preserve the status quo. The service-learning program especially encourages students to work for community organizations that have established ties to the university. The impetus behind this is part of a broader endeavor to make the university and the community more connected. One positive manifestation of this trend is a cooperative project in which students, faculty, and community groups work to restore the San Joaquin River. The award winning San Joaquin Writing Project which trains public school teachers to tackle the pressing problem of illiteracy is also an exemplary university sponsored program designed to meet the needs of the region. But a variety of other initiatives have also been lumped in with these progressive programs and labeled as university-community partnerships. These include initiatives such as: the Savemart sponsorship of a large-scale athletic facility; the move to feed employees into the growing regional prison industry through the creation of a corrections-officer track in the second largest major on campus, criminology; and the regular use of the practice football field by a local car dealership to sell used cars advertised with TV spots featuring the football coach. Especially relevant to the topic of activism is the provision that service learning cannot take place on campus or with any student organization. Considering the way community is being defined through university-community collaborations, prohibiting service-learning courses from using student organizations as a site for applied education cuts off the opportunity for faculty and students to integrate criticisms of the university into the community service curriculum, and impairs students from seeing the campus as a viable place to build community and promote activism.

The strict management of activist voices on our campus bolsters these prohibitions. For example, in the recent university sponsored celebrations redefined the activist legacy of Caesar Chavez in acceptable institutionalized lexicon, calling, rather unimaginatively, the recent holiday a day of "service and learning." I hasten to add that our campus was a regional disbursement center for legislative funds designated to promote Chavez Day to young students in which a heavily funded program was to teach gardening techniques to young children, many of whom are the children of farm workers. And the campus and city police have directly targeted one of the most visible campus activist organizations, the Fresno branch of the United

Students Against Sweatshops. In collaboration with community members and a handful of faculty, this organization has led a series of protests against local Gap stores while also disseminating information about the use of sweatshop labor in producing clothing bearing the Fresno State logo. Currently, students from this organization and community members are working to build a lawsuit challenging the arrest of 19 people at a May 6, 2000 demonstration. Preparations for this legal action already has uncovered the fact that the Fresno PD had a campus police officer infiltrate United Students Against Sweatshops. This officer funneled information about the May 6th protest, circulated in part on university e-mail, to the Fresno PD, so that when the demonstrators arrived at the shopping center, 40 to 50 officers were waiting in riot gear. And the campus police continue to work for the Fresno PD by monitoring how student groups advertise on-campus upcoming demonstrations. This past October the campus police mistook students from one of my Women's Studies classes, who were working on the annual Take Back the Night March, as students from United Students Against Sweatshops. Within fifteen minutes of beginning to advertise the event, the police had rounded up all twenty-three students with the aid of outdoor cameras dispersed throughout campus.

While the university punishes such activism, it presents community service as providing students with valuable experience that can be parlayed into concrete job opportunities, a major concern of students from the Central Valley that has a chronic unemployment rate of 13% and an average per capita income of $13,600. For faculty, too, participation in the service-learning program promises career rewards. Service-learning courses reward individual departments through increased student enrollment, especially if the university realizes its goal of having each student take such a course. Already smaller departments have been drawn to the community service program as one strategy among many to help their majors survive, thereby unintentionally supporting administrative system-wide objectives which many faculty evaluate as threatening academic autonomy and undergraduate education. For instance, the 1997 Cornerstones Report (CSU 1997), the CSU system's statement of institutional planning, states that a vital step in "providing educational excellence" is the "innovative" delivery of education, including the elimination of "unnecessary obstacles to timely completion of degrees," in part by further developing "community/industry partnerships in both program design and teaching," and funding industry responsive programs through "eliminating low enrollment programs." Service-learning, therefore, is one strategy used on campuses to enable students to obtain degree requirements without actually receiving instruction—particularly important in light of an anticipated balloon in enrollment over the next five years.

On our campus, faculty members who develop service-learning courses can receive three units of re-assigned time. With a teaching load of four courses a semester, each normally capped at 40-50 students, and no teaching assistants, just one course release can add significantly to the amount of time a faculty member has to devote to other teaching and research endeavors. The promise of a course release is

especially alluring to junior faculty struggling to meet the stepped-up tenure requirements that the university has standardized through a very curious adaptation of a model of academic development put forth by the Carnegie Foundation and adopted as part of centralized university planning. Since developing a course rarely takes up all the time afforded by the award of a course release, faculty can use the time to pursue other tenure requirements. And by including a service-learning component in the course curriculum, faculty can lighten the teaching load by replacing graded assignments with proof that students completed their volunteer hours.

Finally, those faculty who teach service learning courses are financially rewarded through Faculty Merit Increases—a disputed salary distribution plan in which faculty members compete for raises. This plan targets service-learning as an area of pedagogical development deemed meritorious. Although the dollar amount of merit awards may seem negligible, considered in the context of the hotly-debated faculty salary schedule in the CSU coupled with the recent 15% increase in administrative salaries and the fear that in the future an even larger percentage of salary increases will be apportioned to the Faculty Merit system, these awards have symbolic importance that far outweighs their monetary value.

Our complicity in this individual and departmental rewards system points to an even larger problem facing the social sciences. Unfortunately, more often than not many of the undervalued departments and programs in the corporate university have responded to their displacement with attempts to prove that their respective fields of study actually do produce something of economic value. As a faculty member in a Women's Studies program struggling to build its major, I am well aware that this type of response may not be the chosen path but a strategy foisted upon departments in times of distress. I fear, however, that without a developed and supported counter logic, many departments and programs will forget that, for example, the translation of "multicultural awareness" into measurable economic value was originally meant to be a temporary strategy, not a logic to be normalized. And, if Readings (1996) is correct in his assertion that a key cost-cutting strategy in the corporate university is to eliminate departments either by promoting interdisciplinary studies or simply adding faculty members trained in cultural fields to professional schools, then this strategy will fail in the long run. If we only legitimize our worth using the logic of the corporate university, then the social sciences may not be able to hold on to their claims of expertise as faculty members in the professional schools increasingly are "trained" to be culturally sensitive.

On our campus, our silence as a faculty body around these issues and our compliance with the corporate logic of the university in part explains why the student in one of my courses could only see Judy Chicago as a potential Starbuck's employee. The question for faculty is how do faculty promote student activism and free speech through course curriculum when seemingly unrelated campus and CSU initiatives partially determine the shape and scope of courses?

One strategy that certainly would prove useful is to examine more thoroughly how Fresno State, and other campuses as well, have been dramatically re-organized since the early 1970s in such a way as to increase the control of system-wide administrative units while dispersing faculty power. Even a cursory glance at our history reveals that faculty governance has been replaced by what one Fresno State professor called "rule by task force." Too often curriculum changes and faculty review are placed in the hands of either the administration or in the hands of faculty who are in what become or informally are administrative positions. For instance, one of the current task forces, which are headed by faculty members and low level administrators chosen by the upper administration, has proposed that the often precarious guidelines for post-tenure review no longer be determined by individual departments. Instead, this committee proposes that the campus office in charge of fostering faculty development through forwarding dubious CSU mandates such as outcomes assessment and other accountability measures set post-tenure review requirements. This particular example along with the extended example of community service also illustrates the need for more communication between faculty committees, a process hindered by work speed up and, among other changes, the elimination of faculty input into university wide information systems that, in the recent past, have been places for faculty response but now include only information put out by the administration. But even when faculty have been consulted, we have not always been successful at understanding how various proposals work in concert with other university or system initiatives. Knowing this history requires listening to the voices of long-time academic activists not only because they have witnessed and fought many of these battles but also because they may be more likely than others to be suspicious of those changes that seem innocuous but usher in insidious restraint on the autonomous academic voice and campus activism.

The work and activism of Gerald Berreman is useful to the development of a narrative that both counters the corporate logic at work in the university and resists the move to collapse the study of human diversity into a single market-value system. Some three decades ago, Berreman raised issues similar to those discussed in more recent criticism of higher education. In denouncing anthropologists' participation in counterinsurgency research in Thailand during the Vietnam War and by speaking out against the academic colonialism at work in U.S. government funding of research in India, Berreman called attention to the serious problems in unchecked government-university partnerships. Pointing to Project Camelot as evidence, Berreman argued that social scientists needed to regain a sense of social responsibility. He led a charge within the discipline to dismantle the "sterile professionalism" that plagues "value-free" interpretations of the humanistic science of anthropology (Berreman 1968:391-392). Berreman was particularly concerned with the consequences of anthropologists' silence around their research and the research of others in public forums:

> Our silence permits others in society less reticent, perhaps less scrupulous, almost certainly less informed, to make their own use of

> material presented. It leaves politicians and journalists, to entrepreneurs, scoundrels, and madmen, as well as to statesmen and benefactors—but especially powerful—the interpretation and manipulation of matters about which they frequently know little, and nearly always know far less than those who collected the material or made the analyses. [1968:392]

Berreman played a key role in breaking the profession's silence around dubious activities by helping to frame the original Principles of Professional Responsibility (PPR) for the American Anthropological Association. As hinted at in the above statement, the U.S. political climate and the realities of clandestine military operations abroad centered the PPR and the discussion of ethics in anthropology around questions about where anthropologists get their money for research and how their findings are used once their research is complete. Thus, the 1971 version of the PPR rebuked secret research and placed the protection and welfare of the subjects of anthropological study above all other concerns. And the statement of responsibility to students in the 1971 PPR also is concerned primarily with students' research activities and the appraisal of their academic performance by mentors. The same sentiments shape the most recent code of ethics, though as Berreman (1991) has noted there is a notable retreat from censuring anthropologists' involvement in secret and clandestine activities.

The recent Chagnon debacle illustrates the need for the profession to continue to engage with ethical considerations involved in fieldwork, the funding of fieldwork, and the uses of the analyses of fieldwork. In *Darkness in El Dorado* (2000) investigative journalist Patrick Tierney accuses Chagnon and other anthropologists who have worked in the Amazon of mismanaging their research and of exploiting Amazonian people for dubious scientific gains. While a panel of anthropologists at the 2001 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association refuted many of Tierney's inflammatory claims, what became clear in this very public discussion and in a variety of other public dialogues afterward was the ways in which anthropology as a discipline had failed to respond to well-known suspicions about the nature of Chagnon's research. In part, these discussions pointed to the ways that questions of ethics in anthropological research need to be continually revisited.

But if we are to be engaged responsibly with contemporary world events as Berreman continues to insist, then we need to expand our discussion of ethics to include the inscription of corporate values into the university curriculum and into the organization of academic institutions. As Berreman describes in a 1991 article about proposed revisions to the PPR, the logic of the market threatens to overtake the academy so much so that "corporate and national priorities become anthropologists' priorities" (1991:64). The "scoundrels and madmen" Berreman referred to in 1968 may no longer be only CIA agents or conservative politicos but university presidents, provosts, and chancellors.

For those of us at non-research oriented universities resistance to these "madmen" and "corporate priorities" may be less often framed around questions of research funding and focus, and more frequently around questions of teaching and faculty power. However, Pusser's (Gumport and Pusser 1995) research on the substantial growth in expenditures for administration in the University of California system reveals that even research institutions have witnessed the increased control of the academic enterprise by administrators who talk about education as "added value." Nevertheless, individual faculty members at various institutions have been anything but silent about corporate power in higher education, writing and speaking about a variety of issues including faculty-union negotiations, the increased reliance on part-time faculty, and the "outsourcing" of services previously performed by university employees. However, these issues have received much less attention from professional organizations, even those that see themselves as more politically engaged than typical ones. As the logic of the market increasingly steers the shape and scope of courses and thereby curtailing academic freedom, anthropologists must be attentive to the ethics of teaching not just in our interactions with students but in the very organization of the university.

While individuals at times do use the language of ethics and responsibility to speak out against the corporate take over academic institutions, it would be even more powerful for anthropology as a profession to counter the capitalist ideology in the academy with an ethical narrative of social justice. This narrative would respond to both the current re-organization of knowledge and revaluing of knowledge in the academy along the mandates of the global marketplace and during the current takeover of the university by education managers. Our strategies for fighting the academy's move to make education ever more responsive to the demands of corporate power may be localized and context specific just as questions of ethics and responsibility in anthropology have become. But I want to suggest that we need an overarching language of ethics and responsibility for teaching to counter the all encompassing principles of excellence that engulf universities in capitalist priorities. Berreman's fight to develop a code and ongoing conversation about ethics strikes me as a fruitful source of inspiration and trajectory to follow.

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[1] Chicago does not use this term to describe her art practice; however, her students often do use this term to describe their feminist art education.
[2] Accounts of the attendance at the first Promise Keepers Conference in Fresno in June 1997 vary widely. The estimate of 45,000 is a conservative figure made by Taylor (1997).
[3] For a detailed account of enrollments in the CSU system, see the statistical abstracts published by the Office of the Chancellor.

[4] The general education package consists of courses that are common to almost all students regardless of their major. In each area of the GE, students have a choice between classes.