

Toward a New Policy Frame for Lifelong Learning and Creativity

In the spring of 2012, the [Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy at Vanderbilt](#) and the [National Center for Creative Aging](#) hosted a first-time discussion in the Nation's Capital, advancing "Expressive Life" and creative practice as a new approach to connecting public policy with issues of aging. This report is an edited transcript of the proceedings of the meeting.

In comments introducing the topic, Center director Bill Ivey argued that we too often see aging as a barely treatable chronic illness, while in fact later years offer unique opportunities to connect citizens with community and with opportunities for personal achievement. For Ivey, the Expressive Life concept reshapes standard, materialistic definitions of quality of life while pointing toward a new set of helpful public policies – a policy regime especially important to an aging population.

Elizabeth Long Lingo, PhD, revisited her research and pioneering work addressing creative capacity in higher education, extending her understanding of creativity, risk, and innovation developed in university settings to address the special environment of old age.

Sandra Gibson, NCCA Board Member, closed the day-long policy forum, recapping key discussion points while adding her on-the-ground perspective with relevance to those working in health and wellness, education and lifelong learning, and community engagement.

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Toward a New Policy Frame for Lifelong Learning and Creativity

Today we open a needed discussion and dialogue on expressive life and creative practice as new frames connecting public policy with issues of aging. It's a discussion which begins with the premise that aging and the elderly represent an integral but underutilized part of our social capital.

Robert Blancato
President
Matz, Blancato & Associates, Inc.
NCCA Board of Directors

It's not just because we're all aging or all going to age but I think that we are at the same time seeking a deeper and more authentic meaning for our lives -- not just for ourselves but for people in our community and families. So, I think after today this idea will gain traction and we may reflect back and say this was an idea whose time had come.

Mary L. Luehrsen
Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations, NAMM
Executive Director, NAMM Foundation

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Bill Ivey
Expressive Life and Public Policy

The notion of “expressive life” emerged as I was ending my tenure as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Heading the NEA had been a wonderful experience, but the work had taught me that the way our federal government engages art and culture came up short. So, late in my chairmanship, I decided to advance a bold argument for a new way to connect public policy and culture, and in an address at the National Press Club, called for the adoption of a “cultural bill of rights.” Those rights became the frame around which I constructed the chapters of my book [*Arts Inc., How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed Our Cultural Rights.*](#)

I began with this question: **Are the system laws, regulations, and corporate practice shaping the creation, distribution, consumption, and preservation of art, information, and knowledge aligned with broad public purpose?** There exists a US cultural system, but it is informal and also exceedingly complex, as it includes federal funding through the Arts and Humanities Endowments as well as other agencies, also policies and practices that shape copyright; the way America advances trade in cultural goods around the world; the shape of media ownership; the way mergers and acquisitions within our cultural industries are either facilitated or constrained by law and policy. It’s a very broad, complicated system, and one that policy leaders engage piecemeal, never as a whole.

So the Curb Center’s Arts Industries Policy Forum grew out of this perception—my conviction that policy makers in many government offices and agencies need to see the linkages that make up the US cultural system. After all, we don’t have a department of cultural affairs in the US so there’s no automatic “hub” around which to construct coherent policy. So our Vanderbilt team decided to create a “pretend cultural ministry,” hosting conversations among multiple and diverse stakeholders in the federal government to begin to create an informal policy community that could begin to connect the dots that lead from arts funding to cultural heritage to media ownership and global trade to intellectual property—an effort to engage “the whole” rather than a host of scattered parts. After more than six years, the AIPF has emerged as

an effective first-step in building an inclusive frame for US cultural policy.

It's important to remember that we're weighed down by language. Terms like "Art," "The Arts," "Culture," seem perfectly clear, but each has multiple—sometimes even contradictory—meanings. What activities and products are inside our "arts umbrella;" what are out? What is art with a capital "A" as opposed to art with a small letter? "Culture" capitalized may mean "the fine arts;" "Culture" capitalized usually means, "the Fine Arts." Small-c "culture" is more often anthropological—"the sum of human behavior." A key point: **Multiple meanings conceal assumptions and prejudices, making it perfectly possible for two well-intended leaders to talk to one another without ever really communicating.**

Considering the situation honestly, we all know that art and culture—America's expressive life—are the neglected stepchildren of public policy. Those of you who work with our older population, those of you who work with arts funding, those of you who fund art and art making, engage this problem firsthand: when it comes to policy making (and when it comes to funding) art is something you get around to after you've already worried about everything else. Culture ends up as a slightly devalued subset of quality of life, which is itself subsumed beneath policy assumptions that consider only material well-being. "Oh, yes, I love the arts," the policy leader exclaims, and once we solve poverty and once we solve housing and once we solve income stability—all these things—then we can think about the arts. But of course we never quite get there.

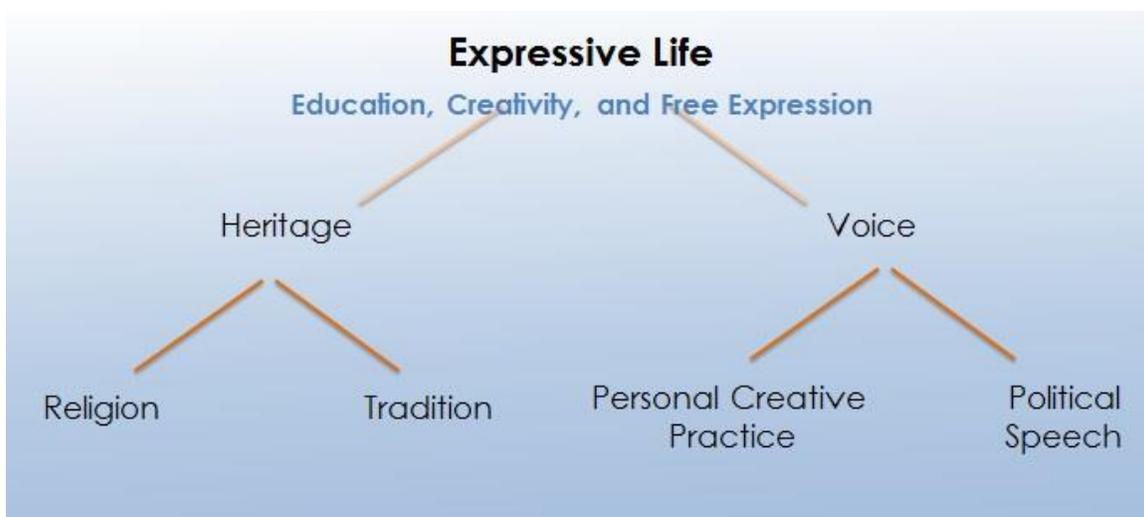
So the absence of coherent government and industry policy engagement with the US cultural scene presents a reason to seek a new, more fundamental argument about creativity, creative practice, and culture as a key component of public policy. I think the concept of "Expressive Life" can move us toward a new policy frame and a strong, coherent argument in favor of art, cultural heritage, and art-making as central elements of a quality life in our still-new century.

What do I mean by "expressive life?"

Expressive Life is a unique realm of human behavior equivalent to categories like “work life” or “family life.” It includes two primary components: Heritage and Voice. *Heritage* is the cement that ties us to history and to one another, grounding us, giving us a sense of belonging. We are connected to place and to the past through the markers of heritage—community, nationality, religion, race, and ethnicity. Heritage is about belonging, about linkages, about ancient ways, timeless meanings, honored commitments. It is contained in folk tales and traditional songs, in family holiday practices, foodways, faith and belief, and in shared markers of race, ethnicity, and nationality. Heritage is about history and continuity.

Voice can stand in opposition to heritage. Voice is who you are all by yourself. Voice is the individual apart from community: a creative intelligence, a unique personality standing alone. Voice is the part of expressive life that enables each of us to express ourselves through unique, personal goals and commitments, through art, political speech, through the creation of new knowledge and insight.

Heritage and Voice are in tension and opposition, but they also interact and balance one another. If an individual is “all voice,” they are a renegade, an outsider. When we are “all heritage,” character and aspiration are buried beneath the weight of history, rules, and obligations.



As the graphic points out, Heritage and Voice can be further divided. Here I was influenced by historian Daniel Bells' critique of modernity. Bell advances a compelling argument about the important role of religion in life, arguing that a failing of modern society is our abandonment of this critical element of heritage. (Religion of course is a very difficult issue to engage through public policy, but it is an undeniable part of heritage and expressive life.) I don't think we frame expressive life without including religion.

A couple of months ago I saw photos in the Sunday New York Times celebrating the marriage of Greg Brown and Linton Stables were published in *The New York Times* a couple of months ago. Brown is the COO of Barnard College; Stables an architect. *The Times* photo was an especially warm and inviting image and I got in touch with them to learn more.

They were married at the First Presbyterian church in Brooklyn. The Rev. Dr. Flora Wilson Bridges, an African-American woman and senior pastor, performed the ceremony. Greg told me that this was very much a community celebration; there was a sense of real tradition. Imagine the scene. Much of what is meant by expressive life is contained in this one event—the continuity of ritual, the nurturing character of community, as well as innovation, individual imagination, a willingness to be different within the context of religious heritage.

Consider heritage. For more than two decades, the National Endowment for the Arts has been honoring master folk artists in America through the National Heritage Fellowship program. Weaver Yang Fang Nhu, from Laos, is a typical recipient, honored in 1988. A member of the Hmong people, Ms. Yang's work employs an extraordinarily-complex back strap loop technology, weaving hemp.

Yang Fang Nhu was reared in a tribal society, in a community of subsistence farmers whose culture lacks written language. She is not a visionary artist honoring a creative muse, but instead is carrying on the traditions of her Laotian Hmong ancestors. Her work and her life embody a powerful sense of what tradition, belonging, and the continuity of the past and the present is all about. This is *heritage*.

Consider “Voice.” I talk with my accountant, James Weinberg, about my tax situation. But the last time we met he wanted to talk about his new CD—a project about which he’s been dreaming and planning for years.

He performed and recorded it at a Nashville recording studio. James is both pianist and composer; he wrote all the pieces, recorded it, supervised mastering, selected album art and notes. James Weinberg’s work as a composer and pianist is all about voice. James is a Jewish-American, he is a trained member of the professional community of accounts, he is a businessman, father, and citizen of Middle Tennessee. These multiple labels define James Weinberg’s heritage, but off to the side, distinct from his professional practice, religion, and family James is defined all alone by his music—his voice empowered by his personal creative practice.

And finally, as the graphic suggests, voice is about democracy, government, and citizenship: Can your voice be heard in the political realm? Do you have access to the knowledge, technology, and media necessary for your vision to help shape government?

So this is my “map” of expressive life: Voice and Heritage subdivided into Religion, Tradition, Political Speech and Personal Creative Practice. Look closely; there’s tension here. People who are very, very caught up in community, family, religion and the past may fail to flourish, their sense of a personal presence in the world constrained. Those who are all about voice, who boast 8 million frequent flier miles and are worldly “citizens of nowhere” in a sense belong nowhere; they lack identity, feelings of permanence, lack a sense of continuity and community.

I am a folklorist and we are all about community and tradition; my folklorist friends are all on the left side of this graphic. They believe that quality of life comes out of connection with community, heritage, through family, faith and tradition. And, as we would expect, the academic field of folklore is a strong voice advocating policies that support community, tradition, indigenous languages, folk crafts.

But there exist voices (so to speak!) on the other side. Philosopher Anthony Appiah has written in praise of cosmopolitanism—the importance of *separating* yourself from community in order to become a

modern-day citizen of the world. For Appiah, living coherently in the 21st century is all about voice. To slavishly honor heritage is to be held back by the weighty anchor of an all-but-useless past.

Balance is what's required, and a life that contains equal measures of belonging and independence can be profoundly satisfying. I believe that if we understand these dual needs of the people we're trying to engage and help, there's a sense of "if things are in balance there is an opportunity to achieve some elements of a high quality of life."

Here's the complete framework: Expressive life, Heritage, Voice, Religion, Tradition, Personal Creative Practice, Political Speech. To make this framework—the idea of Expressive Life—truly a path to quality of life, we must advance appropriate public policies—many of which will have to do with *access*. Do you have access to heritage? Do you have access to the tools of personal creative practice; to the levers of political speech and action? And, of course, even good, smart public policy will fall flat if society lacks a sense of personal responsibility. We can never entirely take this important truth out of the equation.

When we identify the value of a balanced, vibrant expressive life, we're in truth talking about the importance of resilience and, yes, happiness. Access to the tools and materials of expressive life makes individuals, communities or even nations strong in the face of inevitable disappointment and adversity, and provides meaning and deep satisfaction in hard times.

Now, this is quite a bold argument. I'm asserting that expressive life constitutes a *real* space—like work and home—in which life is lived. I'm arguing that we can think about expressive life the way we consider work life, or home life, or family life. While clearly these other components of life bump up against and even intersect expressive life, I'm arguing that expressive life is a new frame for policy action, a realm of practice affecting society that is just as clear, just as defensible as engagement with the workplace or health or other frames of human experience analyzed by scholars and shaped by policymakers.

So expressive life undergirds resilience and leads, I believe, to happiness. Further, I believe that this approach to advancing quality of

life is not only distinct and coherent, it is affordable. I mean, of course, that interventions enriching the elements of expressive life are much, much less costly than many other realms of life. I think the concept is distinct; I think that it makes good common sense.

My new book, *Handmaking America: A Back-to-Basics Pathway to a Revitalized American Democracy*, expands the notion of expressive life introduced in my Press Club address twelve years ago, placing the concept in a framework of politics and public policy. *Handmaking* argues that we have lost our liberal vision for America while we have failed to advance the ideas required to craft a high quality of life in America's post-consumerist democracy. What do we do if we are going to be at 2% growth for the next ten years and if middle class incomes will never again buy 3-bathroom, 5-bedroom homes, 2 cars, a boat, and a European holiday. The Donald-Trump-Junior lifestyles that we thought we had acquired in the 1990s and the early part of the century will be more like a middle class lifestyle of the 1950s, 1960s. If we're not destined to borrow our way to happiness through the pretense of wealth, how then shall we live?

I believe I have an answer: a vibrant expressive life is one pathway to a high quality of life, even in times that are economically constrained. [*Handmaking America, A Back-to-Basics Pathway to a Revitalized American Democracy*](#), is an attempt to reboot the liberal value space. Liberals are good at talking *core issues*—gun control, education reform, women's rights. But we have become timid when it comes to *core values*. In talking with colleagues and friends, I've derived four principles that can guide progressives in securing a vibrant quality of life within our post-consumerist American democracy and society.

1. You are not alone.
2. You can live with purpose through work, family, and community.
3. America's still a beacon on a hill.
4. We owe it to each other.

If we believe in these ideas, and if we want to use them to guide government, education, and media, we must change specific policies.

Consider this question: who owns the past? If you dig into the components of expressive life just a little bit (and we'll leave religion just a little aside because as I mentioned in the beginning it's difficult to engage in a policy perspective) you will see that access to tradition immediately begs the question: who owns cultural heritage. What does the current copyright have to say about how citizens can access art and art making from the past? Is it locked away and only available if we pay for it, rent it, or buy it? Or is cultural heritage available in some other way as a kind of public good to which every citizen has some rights?

This critical conversation—about expressive life, quality of life, and public policy—is one that we haven't had in the US at all. But consider, if policy actors begin to talk about America's aging population in this context and if, as we should, we seek to craft a high quality of life for older citizens through the access to heritage, conversations about who owns culture become absolutely critical. Heritage leads immediately to consider who owns music, drama, and literature from the past? How accessible is historical art and information; what must we do, or pay, to enjoy and learn from what has come before?

Similarly, if voice is important, older Americans need access to the skills and knowledge that make creativity real. The tools of personal creative practice lead straight to arts education—arts learning for citizens of all ages. To build your own voice and to let it be heard, you again need *access*—access to teachers, mentors, equipment, and creative spaces. What must we believe, what must we do, and what must we give up, to place creative practice at the center of education?

I haven't said much here today about the other half of Voice—Political Speech; it's somewhat beside our topic here today. But I will say that *Handmaking America* argues for the teaching and practice of a new kind of civics in our schools and neighborhoods. To be blunt, we need to reduce our commitment to math and science in the classroom, replacing them not only with art making, but with an understanding of history and the way government works, arming people with the basic skills of voice and outfitting them with the knowledge to, among other things, critique the messages of advertising and political manipulation that seek to influence us – especially older citizens – every day. America needs this new kind of civics.

I hope by now you've begun to agree that a vibrant expressive life can be a pathway to a lifelong high quality of life for very little money. Our society can invest in policies that encourage access to heritage and which instill connectedness with community. And at the same time we can invest very modestly to giving every citizen the tools and skills of personal creative practice. In the end, if we do it together, all can live a **Life of Purpose**. And our new life of purpose will not be limited by wealth, nor by age.

Now, consider happiness.

We've all read Martin Seligman. He's the great guru of "positive psychology" and been in this business for a long time shaping and expanding his definition of happiness, now in a new book, [*Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*](#). Seligman attended a small conference that Vanderbilt's Curb Center hosted at the Rockefeller Brother's Fund Pocantico retreat about five years ago. In that meeting Seligman outlined three distinct levels of happiness. First, there is *pleasurable sensation*. Everybody knows what that is: a drink on a sunny beach, paper umbrella sticking out of the glass; sit back, enjoy the sun. The next level is *engagement*. For Seligman, that's the kind of happiness that emerges from the ability to master a musical instrument, build something in your workshop, write a good essay—activities related to voice or heritage; personal creative practice or the skillful engagement with the past. Finally there is *deep meaning*. To me, deep meaning is the most interesting aspect of Seligman's happiness frame, because it includes a contradiction: if I give up my dream of a new car in order to finance my daughter's education, I'm actually creating an unpleasurable sensation—but by giving up pleasure I gain a happiness that is deeper and distinct. Everybody in this room has experienced this version of happiness. Our vibrant expressive life is only rarely about pleasurable sensation, instead it's a space of engagement and deep meaning.

Many of us are familiar with Robert Lane's argument advance back in the 1980s in his book, [*The Loss of Happiness in Western Market Democracies*](#). Lane reviewed data from about 1940 forward, determining that perceived happiness within the US had increased very

slightly over the decades, peaking in the mid-1970s. Since then Americans have actually become less happy, even as wealth has gone up.

So there exists real evidence for a decoupling of the assumed link between happiness and material well-being. Once one is free of absolute material scarcity, once people have something to eat, a roof over their head and some clothes; once you get past basic needs, more wealth no longer increases happiness.

I believe a reconfigured sense of happiness is very relevant to my argument. Expressive life, access to heritage, voice, religion, tradition, personal creative practice, political speech—these are clear arenas in which to achieve engagement and deep meaning. Add smart, relevant public policy, personal responsibility and in the end you attain our higher forms of happiness and a sense of purpose—a purposeful life.

The notion of expressive life has begun a journey for me. I believe the idea can be fleshed out, studied, and used to shape a 21st-century rendition of the American Dream for citizens of all ages. I started thinking about those two poles—community-based heritage and the individually-based voice—that together can lead to along the resilience and the best kinds of happiness. It was through my conversations with Gay Hanna that I became convinced that expressive life can be a valuable frame in which to shape affordable, effective interventions in the lives of older Americans and an aging population.

I was proud many years ago to get my AARP card—that alarming ticket to a new phase of life that that arrives on your 50th birthday—but I think that the card should come with a certificate for a guitar lesson, and a coupon for a free flying lesson. I am convinced that maturity can and should be a starting point, not an ending point. And I believe our notion of expressive life provides one way for all of us to achieve a high quality of life as we get older.

Thank you!

Gail: My name is Gail MacInness and I work for the Elder Care Workforce Alliance and this is a personal question that I was interested

in; maybe you can give an example of the access to heritage concept. I know in my family my heritage is German and Irish and some family traditions were passed down, but not a lot, and so I wonder... but you were talking about those things being honed, so can you give an example.

Bill: I think there are two kinds of heritage in the US system; one of them is what you've described. To families it is often about how do we prepare a specific meal? Half of my family came from Cornwall England, and there were certain dishes that were prepared for holiday meals that were the same as those prepared in Cornwall – things like rice pudding and a special meat pie called a pasty. That's the kind of tradition heritage that my folklore colleagues and I are fascinated by, and it's very important. We also have heritage—shared heritage as Americans as part of this great democratic experiment. That's a little different; for example, Louis Armstrong's recording of “West End Blues.” Recorded in the late 1920s, it's one of the most famous jazz recordings of all time. It's now owned by Sony music. It was first owned by Columbia, I believe, but now all the recording sound heritage of the US has been aggregated under basically a couple of companies and those old competing animals—RCA, RCA Victor, Columbia—are all scooped up within Sony, but there are big questions about what might be called cultural justice.

That “West End Blues” means one thing to African American heritage and the role of African Americans in the development of American music and jazz. It means something else to my parents who met as jazz fans when they were growing up in northern Michigan and “West End Blues” was one of the 78 rpm records that they had in their collection. And you can go on to tell similar anecdotes about different categories of music—blues, country, early rock. The track means something else to a jazz student today who's studying that Louis Armstrong solo that really kind of set the tone for 20 years of jazz improvisation, and there are different meanings that can be found in that one performance—but it's only available if you go and by it somewhere. Heaven forbid that a teacher would make a copy of a CD and pass out a copy of that recording for the class so they can go home and listen to that performance or dozens and dozens of other historic performances. The legal team of the school system would say don't do it, you can't do it. We might be sued.

It's not considered Fair Use anymore. It might be but that kind of wide-open access is not the kind of paradise I'm thinking of when I talk about copyright and media ownership. Instead, I'm concerned about reasonable access to the things that define us as a nation, the art, information and knowledge from the past that constitute the multicultural heritage of American society. If you glance at trends over the last 30 or 40 years, cultural products from the past have become less available because everything—music, old photographs and films, historic radio, vintage TV and books—has been commoditized. If you're willing and able to rent a copy, or buy a copy, the past is there for you. But you don't have a *right* to something simply because you're an American citizen and a text, tune, or image is part of our shared national patrimony. I think that's wrong. However, you don't have to make everything free in order to secure appropriate access to cultural heritage.

Joan: Hi, I'm Joan from the Research Center for Arts and Culture at the National Center for Creative Aging. That subtitle of your presentation has the words lifelong learning and I am wondering if you could speak a little more on that and that little nugget you just drafted at the end about interventions with aging.

Bill: Well, again I think we if we agree that having a personal creative practice is a value this is a good question. Remember, we're talking about the two sides of the expressive life equation here. If personal creative practice is a value in terms of quality of life and a sense of purpose, then the policy question that follows is, "how do we make the tools of personal creative practice available on a lifelong basis?"

About seven years ago the Curb Center did a little study for the Rockefeller Foundation looking at the careers of artists. We were asked to answer a set of questions about the impact of grants on the careers of artists. However, as a sidebar outcome we stumbled on the truth that the US has evolved an entire industry that does nothing but develop and sell the tools of personal creativity and practice. You can buy a book, CD, DVD, that will teach how to do anything. There are books on how to become a classical violinist and get a job in a symphony; and books, DVDs and downloads on everything from home decorating to, gosh,

flower arranging and joke writing. The number of things you can learn from guitar greats and their instructional DVD's is amazing. But in some sense this instructional industry is saying that **if you can pay for it you can acquire a kind of access to some of the practices and content of artistic heritage. Again, I think this is another area in which our challenge is one of access.**

Because in our system, if public goods makes so little of this available for free then we're simply enabling a for-profit instructional industry to grow up off to the side. But not everyone can buy his or her way to heritage and skill in music or painting. If cultural heritage is fee-based, we ultimately create "haves" and "have-nots." So you end up with specific populations—the poor or the elderly—that don't have access to the tools of personal creative practice to the extent required to support a viable expressive life and the related sense of purpose. So I think as soon as you start talking about the tools of personal creative practice and lifelong learning you have to look at different stages of life and determine what kind of access is afforded individual citizens at every stage. We need to empower key institutions with the power to teach the components of personal creative practice for the young, middle-aged, and especially our older populations.

Leslie: Hi, I'm Leslie Richards from the District of Columbia and the stars arts project. My question is sort of on the side of this issue because we get faced with the fact that the elderly are not a priority. The arts are not a priority and the elderly are not a priority, so even in the community when we attempt to foster programs that we say regenerates or renews the creative sprit but it sometimes the elderly they've left work and they'll have that but what we find is that the children take all the work of the community centers. So it takes the community to understand that the elderly also need to have this outlet of expression. Could you comment on that?

Bill: This is something I would almost throw to the table because there are many people seated here who really know about what access the older populations have at different kind of opportunities and experiences. I think that this is the challenge that the arts have always tried to mount in this society and this is the big question: are there things more important than material well-being?

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, we have always dealt with art as an amenity and we're like the greyhound chasing the mechanical rabbit: yes we get this level of poverty and this level of food intervention or housing, but there is never enough for the people who care passionately about material well-being to turn to you and say, okay, now we're going to do arts and culture. So that's a problem—that's one problem. But then the second related problem is how important is it to talk about purposeful high quality of life for older citizens without always defaulting to how healthy they are, how much food they have, what kind of housing they have, and so forth.

I personally believe that once you get past absolute material scarcity, expressive life can be critical to a high quality of life. One of the interesting challenges we were handed by Hurricane Katrina was that something that was destroyed in relatively poor communities that were culturally vibrant. We know how to put the buildings back. We know how to put the schools back. We don't know how to reinsert that sense of personal creative practice and access to heritage that made those communities especially vibrant. Now I talked about this at the American for the Arts Sundance retreat last September and somebody, perhaps properly, said wait a minute you're advocating, you're talking about the "happy poor." And that is the challenge for this model because you are saying that sometimes people can be happy and have a high quality of life and not have nice houses, cars, and so on. But I think it is a legitimate argument and I'd like to hear from people around the table about whether that case can be made. Is it being made and do you think it should be made—the argument about quality of life without only thinking about material well-being.

Caitlin: My name is Caitlin Connolly and I'm with Elder Care Workforce Alliance as well and our mission is to build up the workforce who can care for older adults. We know that one of the greatest influences of that are people growing up knowing older adults and having relationships that are meaningful and break down all the negative stereotypes. So it seems like something like this would be the most perfect opportunity to engage in intergenerational experiences that would really allow for kids to understand the arts and allow for adults to connect with younger kids.

Bill: That is such a good point and I think Elizabeth, my colleague from Vanderbilt, talks about this a little bit more. But this opens up a particular point—when you look at a traditional artist, these people are sources of something—they are not just vessels that we have to fill up. They have, in some cases, irreplaceable knowledge and expertise and skills of hand and mind that we should be extracting, and that extracting process can be extremely rewarding on both sides of the exchange. Back when I first started in the 1970s coming up to Washington to do some panel work for the National Endowment for the Arts, one of the programs that the agency pioneered was a folk arts apprenticeship program that literally paid the elder teacher and the younger apprentice to get together and have a residency in which the older fiddler, drummer, singer, weaver simply passed on the tradition to the younger. Barry is that program still around?

Barry: That program still runs in about 30 states.

Bill: Alright; Barry runs the folk arts program at NEA. So yes, you're right and I meant to actually say that as we were talking about heritage and voice, there is a lot to be brought out from older citizens not just helping *them*. I see Jonathon.

Jonathon: I'm Jonathon Katz. I am the Director of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Bill's argument about "can the argument for expressive life be persuasive," and I think so. Just preparing to come to this meeting I went and randomly online to the state arts institute and a Midwestern state like Ohio, and I see that they have several categories, where they emphasize learners of all ages and one is a school, senior center and community gathering place. So I picked a New England state; I picked Vermont. I see that Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire have a coalition and they are working together to support artist, residencies, and intergenerational workshops that integrate technology, theater, music, dance, ceramics—and it goes on and on for health and wellness purposes for older adults.

I picked a Southern state; North Carolina has a partnership with the North Carolina Arts Council and the Center for Creative Aging in North Carolina to develop older adults in the arts to become creators

themselves, and any application to that state art agency allowed for an inclusive form that asks you about older adults in their programs. The first thing I saw on the Florida website was that theirs linked to the publication by the National Center of Creative Aging—[The Creativity Matters: Arts and Aging Toolkit](#).

So to be effective in the field it is absolutely critical for those here around the table, those who represent national groups and national centers, have their constituents and members get together. The arts and older Americans need to work together because that's the message about expressive life—and if you don't have the conversation with the decision makers, then it doesn't happen.

Bill: Yes, and I think that when I talk about expressive life there is a slight implied criticism of the world I came from, which is the arts world. Sometimes when we talk about arts programs, we think we know what we need and we think we know what's efficient, so we might say you know I think probably tradition and personal creative practice are closest to what arts agencies of all kinds are already providing, but I think that the notion of expressive life as a somewhat broader frame has some value partly because I think that the amenity aspect of arts and culture has become so embedded. You know it's in the DNA of policy, to the extent that we have cultural policy in the US, so that again you don't get to expressive life until you have exhausted material well-being. And I think that; so what I'm hoping is that when we talk about a vibrant expressive life it's that four components, as opposed to saying arts engagement or art involvement or arts training, that maybe we have a chance at a different kind of policy argument with mainstream policy action. My goal over the years has been to get arts and culture to the main stream policy table so that you're in there the same way that transportation and housing or any other aspect of life.

Attendee: (inaudible) ... in Cleveland Ohio and I'd like to go back to this issue of access because what I've found is that efforts to get the cultural institutions of Cleveland to reach out to the older adult community have had very specific avenue that they're pursuing. We know that the city of Cleveland is shrinking in numbers, particularly in families and young children. So our school system is much smaller, and it used to be the driving force for the K-12 arts programs that go out to the schools. On

the positive side some of these art institutions such as the Museum of Art have discovered older adults and they have extended their distance learning programs from K-12 to older adult communities, but often only the high end retirement communities that can afford the technology to do those. The same is true of the Western Reserve Historical Society and some of the other museums. So the struggle is really for us to figure out how to be able to provide these kinds of enriched activities to older adults of lower means who aren't really in a retirement community. So if you could comment on that I'd appreciate it.

Bill: Well, I'll comment in two ways. Yes, I think that's clearly a problem and I think that sadly one of the reasons I started writing about this in *Arts Inc.*, identifying something that my colleagues and I call the cultural divide, which is different than the digital divide. What we were trying to argue is that in the modern era, meaning in the last 20 years there are new sets of "ins" and "outs," and if you are to truly function in the modern era, you need money, you need time, you need certain kinds of specialized training, and you need geographical access—and those four things were not as critical in an earlier era of telephones and over-the-air TV. Access to culture was a lot more diffused, a lot more ways to get at it. I think what you have identified is a special problem with the elderly. You often have people who have time but they don't have money. They don't have the technical knowledge to master some of the new devices that provide access and they're often geographically remote. I don't mean that literally necessarily but they don't they may not have the connection that you need a certain kind of high speed connectivity to be part of this whole thing.

So I think there's a cultural divide that we really haven't dealt with as a society. That allows me to segue into my argument that **what we're talking about here in expressive life, the basics of access should be a public good not a private good. I mean, this is something that government should be doing for all citizens. The access points for cultural heritage are critical.** I don't mean every historical recording should be free, but if the Library of Congress labels 500 recordings as irreplaceable treasures of the American experience, those should be accessible to every American. And again when we talk about a population, older people of less means, I think that's something that we need to try and throw back to the public sphere.

Tony Hutchinson was the Episcopal priest and foreign service officer who said we owe it to each other. And that's the deal. We owe it to each other and that means that we collectively pay a little more taxes so that the older person in the housing project or public housing that doesn't have access to all the tools and the knowledge and so on can get it. And so there is a larger argument has to be made that a vibrant expressive life can make its way into the shrinking realm of public good I mean our overall realm of public good in the US has just been compressed.

Chris: Hi my name is Chris Herman and I'm with the National Association of Social Workers. I find this frame that you describe very useful. I am particularly interested in this relationship between heritage and voice because it strikes me as very similar to a person in the environment of social work which has mutual interests in the environment. I mean we can't understand that side of it; we've changed our environment on a daily basis. And so when you speak about the tension, I wonder if you can describe that a little more?

Bill: Thanks again for that question. Again, when I gave that little talk at the Sundance Retreat, that was another question that came up because I think I may have been pretty firm. You know that these are interconnected—the heritage of the past you know and the free person. In fact I gave a commencement address at a small arts school in Nashville last weekend and one of the points I made was that artists are particularly aware of cultural heritage. We were in a historic church, that's where the ceremony took place. The church had really interesting Egyptian style architecture; well art really is a connection to this past and modern creativity inevitably stands on the shoulders of what some other artist has done earlier.

You just don't create anything out of whole cloth, and artists who argue otherwise are kidding themselves and trying to kid you. So, yes, there is tension between heritage and the independence of voice. Because tradition is about belonging and being connected, you can simply wallow in it, you know. You find people who just get lost in community and heritage and the past and for some that's all there is. On the other hand, you can cut yourself loose from community, heritage, and the past, becoming so much citizen of the world that you're really not even

grounded. But really, much of the time those two things—heritage and voice—are really interlaced, so you're drawing on tradition in order to empower your personal creative practice. So I think the interaction between heritage and voice is quite dynamic and ideally can be maintained in balance. But such a balance requires continual attention. The tension between heritage and voice sets up the common conflict between traditional or folk art making versus contemporary art making. The two combine and joust like the forces inside a weather front, sometimes arguing back and forth along our metaphorical border.

Wendy: Hi my name is Wendy Miller and I'm one of the co-founders of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association so I really appreciate the expression and what you said about using expressive life because for our organization that was a very big integrator for the art, music, writing poetry—for all the different arts to come together in expressive arts therapy. My late husband Gene Cohen did the creativity and aging study that the National Endowment for the Arts sponsored and I feel like I'm here for myself but I'm also here carrying his voice.

So I want to respond and say as an artist I look at your model and I see it three dimensionally and you use the word interlace and I feel that those yellow lines are like a weaving, like a hammock holding something very large and I think what really made Gene's study catapult the field of creativity and aging was that the larger issue is health. That the motivation for resilience and the motivation for working intergenerationally is that we need a public policy and we need to take personal responsibility for the health of our individuals and of our society. And Gene was able to turn those statistics in his study into how much is this going to be for Medicare.

So my final comment is that if we are going to take away from education let's not take away from science because it's the place that is really helping us understand health and medicine and psycho neurology and a lot of what I think are really the integrated languages that I think are going to help us make the interlaced hammock that you're providing.

Bill: I know what you mean. I'm not anti-science. But I question the notion that every 8-year-old should be a pre-scientist. The assumption that being a scientist or a mathematician should take precedence over

being a good citizen bothers me. I do think there is a slight over-reach to say that a vibrant expressive life is about health—physical health. When you say that you're walking into a realm where lots of things are making that claim. And you're then in a rough and tumble with all these other characters who might say well I'm about health no we're more about health you know, we're the housing people we're all about health.

And one of the things I hope, it may not be possible, is that if expressive life is like work life, if it's an arena of human behavior that we can talk about, analyze, defend, probe, celebrate we can, maybe, avoid needing to say it is about anything else. Expressive life is a fundamental realm of life in which we act and think, just as you have a good family life, you've got to have a good expressive life. That's my hope. Believe me, if there are four billion dollars over here I'll scramble over in that direction and say without hesitation expressive life, well, it's all about health. (laughter) I've learned how to do that. But my preference is that it stands alone.

So you say to NEA staff (Neil or to Randy to arts people) what are you about? Well we are about protecting the expressive life of Americans, nurturing the expressive life of Americans. We want every community to have a vibrant expressive life. The nice thing about that is you avoid all those assumptions because believe me when you walk in to a public policy office from the arts, immediately they know what this conversation is going to be about. You're talking about expressive life, and maybe you can have a slightly different conversation but I think it's important. I'm not opposed to a scientific look at this to measure a life of purpose through expressive life, to see it as a marker of happiness or resilience which, yes, can be a subset of health. To do that scientifically is ultimately critical.

Frank Kistler: First of all, for those of you not familiar with the Arts Industries Policy Forum, which I happen to be on, one of the biggest advantages of that forum is that it brings together people who are not normally involved in these things. And I'm one of them. I'm the representative from the Department of Defense. I kill people for a living (laughter) No. We at the Department of Defense have been struggling with the issue for a long time; much of which has been in the media. It started at the beginning of the war and the symptom was that we had an

extremely high number of suicides in post-war veteran's family, violence and worse. When we first started looking at this we started trying to figure out how to deal with that and we started with what was called a resiliency program. And that program was defined to prepare people—men, women—before they went to war so they would better cope with the situation. We found after the fact that that didn't quite do it. There was more to it than that. So then we started looking at post-traumatic stress syndrome and how you deal with returning veterans and to reintegrate them into society a little bit better. We found out that that also did not quite work.

And I actually took a lesson from my parents. The same time we were going through this I was dealing with my parents going into nursing homes and into assisted living and so forth and it became obvious to me that those people in the assisted living facility that had more expressive life and culture going into it dealt better with it while they were there. So we at the Department of Defense started looking at that. And those that came into the military with all of those things with expressive life and all of those things better coped with what was going on during it.

What we are doing right now, obviously we can't select for those who have expressive life before they come in but how can we help them through that process before they really get into a combat situation or into a stressful situation. How do we help them again when they come out of that stressful situation? The thing that we are learning right now is that we can actually solve or deal with two problems simultaneously. And we are looking to get the Vietnam veterans, we have this senior problem we have this problem that they were not taken care of in terms of post-traumatic stress and how are we dealing with them most especially those who are homeless and unemployed and those things and take that group to help the group that we're dealing with now deal with these problems.

Bill: That's a great last comment. I want to thank Gay and the center and the NAMM Foundation and Mary Luehrsen.

Notes

1. Anthony Kwame Appiah's disdain for the influence of community and tribe is conveyed in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007. The tension between Heritage and Voice underlies columnist Tom Friedman's metaphorical book title, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. For the opposing, community-based argument, see James Bau Graves, *Cultural Democracy: The Arts, Community and the Public Purpose*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005.
2. Bell, Daniel. *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1976. Reprinted in anniversary edition, 1996.
3. Seligman has written extensively about the character of happiness. For his basic argument see, Seligman, Martin E.E., *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. New York: Free Press, 2002. Seligman also restates his key points in Ivey, Bill and Kingsbury, Paul *The Pocantico Gathering*. Nashville: The Curb Center, 2005.
4. Lane, Robert. *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Elizabeth Long Lingo, Ph.D.
Creative Aging, Creative Campuses

Thank you very much for inviting me here today to share my work on designing and developing creative campuses—spaces and experiences that build individual creative capacity and foster the collective capacity to solve problems, innovate, and enhance one’s community.

I’m delighted to share some insights from my research, and especially the programs and pilots that I have designed and implemented as Director of the Curb Creative Campus Initiative at Vanderbilt. I’m eager to see which ideas you find most provocative and useful as we consider how to support and sustain creative aging.

At the core of my work at Vanderbilt is the belief that a 21st century education needs to provide more than disciplinary knowledge—we need to **re-imagine higher education so that it also develops individuals’ creative capacities to harness that knowledge to advance innovation and solve problems in their communities.** When I think about the goals of my work, I ask such questions as: can our students, faculty and staff bring together expertise, ideas, and resources to solve local and global problems? Can they invent and imagine? Have we fostered their resilience and tolerance of ambiguity to weather the inevitable setbacks and challenges they will face? Can our students tell their stories in compelling ways? Can they listen empathically to others? These are creative capacities that will serve them both throughout their lifetime, and as they navigate an increasingly project-based economy and career trajectory.

These capacities are just as relevant to our understanding of aging. What if we **re-imagined 21st century aging so that it not only attends to providing basic care, but also to nurturing the creative capacities of our aging population, and the staff members who work with them? What is the potential of re-imagining our “aging campuses” as *creative aging* campuses?** How might that frame change the way we think about aging communities, and the aging population? Do we have policies in place; do we have programs in place to recognize the expertise, knowledge, creativity and passion of our

aging populations and harness it for their individual benefit and the good of their communities?

Defining Creativity

Before I go further, it is useful to step back for a moment and define what I mean by creativity. As a bit of a caveat, creativity is a highly contested term. At the Curb Center, we began our creative campus initiative by bringing together a multi-disciplinary task force of faculty from disciplines that don't typically talk to each other, ranging from astronomy and physics to English, anthropology, studio arts, neuroscience, sociology, creative writing, and business. After our first two meetings, we realized that we could spend a lot of time debating over the term creativity!

Is creativity simply expression of ideas? Something new that is useful to others? Is creativity frivolous, a grace note, simply play? Or is it rigorous and fundamental to academic research and training?

When we starting talking about creativity in our work, however, we realized that there was **a common creative process that threads through art, science, business, media, design, and technology development.** Further, we found power in conceiving creativity as both playful and rigorous; expressive and pragmatic. And we agreed that creativity wasn't the domain of the exceptional creative genius. Creativity could also be infused in everyday seeing, thinking, and doing—how and what we ate, how one mowed the lawn, how one interacted with others. We also wanted to explore how creativity could be harnessed for the larger good.

Can we hold this out as a kind of a holy grail for what we could achieve trans- and intergenerationally? **How could we foster creative campuses across the generational spectrum—and build creative capacity to solve problems and advance innovation for the individual and public good?** What if we **invited individuals to be co-instigators and co-designers of their creative campuses** and solutions to the issues facing their communities?

Four Broad Domains of Creative Capacity

In my research on catalysts of innovation and producers of creative projects, I've identified four broad domains of creative capacity.

The first domain pertains to the **capacity to invent and imagine**. Creativity researchers often measure and define creativity in terms of the number of ideas you have, the breadth or the number of different “categories” of ideas, and the novelty of the ideas. I emphatically agree that generating ideas is a core creative capacity to foster and promote. If we unpack this fundamental practice a bit further, we see that it involves using analogies, taking things to different scale, asking different questions, borrowing ideas from one domain into another, brainstorming as an individual or in a group. For example, a common exercise is to ask people to generate as many uses as possible for a pencil—scratching your head, conducting an orchestra, to poke one’s sibling...

But that's often where creativity studies stop.

As we think about nurturing creative capacity, it's not enough to simply have our great idea. To move it forward we need to engage other people in our stories and our ideas. For example, the success of an idea in venture capital and in the creative industries is often driven as much by *how well* one pitches the idea and the story of the individual behind it, as the quality of the idea itself. Steve Jobs was a master at engaging others in his new concepts.

As we think about building creative capacity, then, we also want to think about a second domain: the **capacity to express ideas and stories in a compelling way, using an array of communication media**. Further, compellingly expressing your ideas involves both telling and empathically *listening*. I know for example NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) has this great oral history project where they capture the stories of older musicians. Drawing stories out, eliciting differing interests and perspectives is a key capacity. As I said, creativity is not just the lone soul genius. Creativity is inherently relational—which is particularly important as we think about creative aging.



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The third **creative capacity domain is the ability to co-create, to harness the expertise of others.** While we often think about workshops, etc. focused on individuals, in my research I focus on creativity as a collective effort that involves bringing people together to co-create, to solve problems, to make things happen—whether it's a theater production in New York City, an art festival of emerging artists in Washington D.C., or efforts to address obesity in Memphis. How do you develop *producers* of creative projects, who can harness the expertise of others to make creative projects happen? I have this slide up here of the Marvel Super Heroes. What if we engaged our aging population as super heroes who can be creators and agents of change—with hidden talents and expertise that need to be nurtured and harnessed?

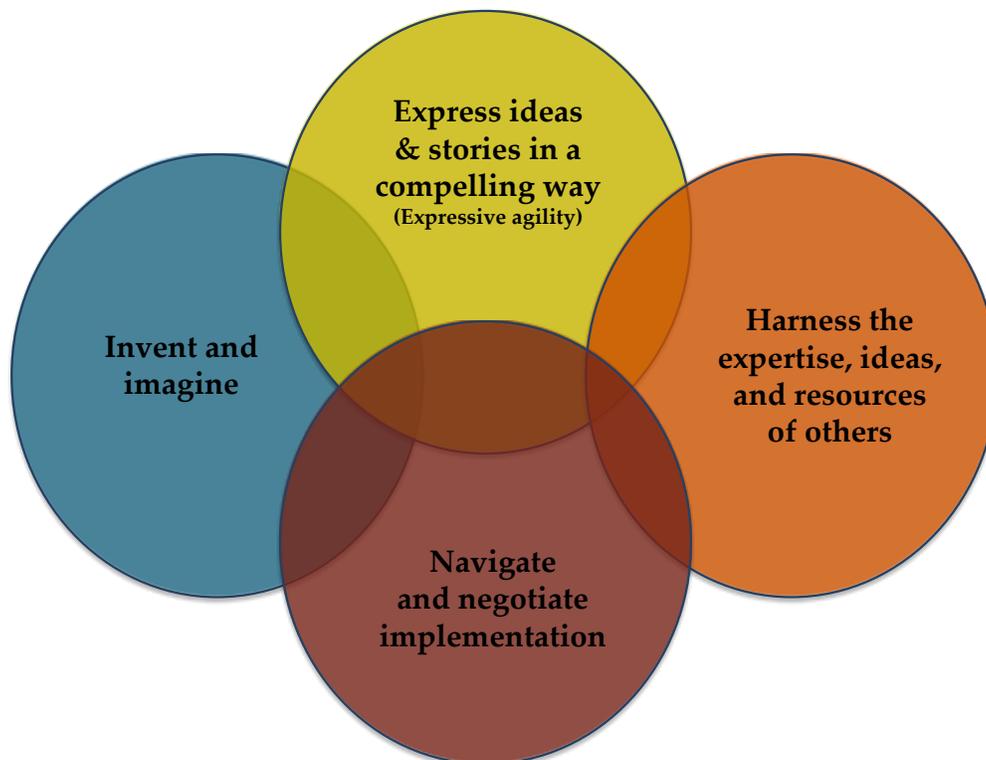
Finally, the **fourth creative capacity domain involves navigating implementation.** Sometimes implementation is easy, but often it requires pivoting from one's idea and negotiating different parties' interests, goals, and perspectives, and building coalitions to bring people on board. We can develop people's capacities in this area as well.

Four Broad Domains of Creative Capacity

Creative Practice

Identifying these four creative capacity domains is a first step. But how do you develop these creative capacities? The typical approach is to offer a single creativity class or capstone experience, hoping everyone will take it and be “creative” as a result. This approach is so limited, and while enjoyable in the moment, often does not build capacity. Instead, I suggest that we need to foster **habits of creative practice**. Instead of investing in one-off interventions, we could better leverage our resources if we invested in creative practice as something that needs to be nurtured on an ongoing basis.

But this poses a challenge: often times we only have limited resources.



What I’ve found is that there are many untapped opportunities to foster creative practice. For example, I’m a parent. I have an eight-year old and a four-year old, and I like to think of the whole constellation of different things they do—in the house, in their outdoor adventures, in

their classrooms at school, what they eat, who they engage with—as all potential touchpoints for developing their creative practice. What if we designed creative campuses for aging populations that took such an expansive and systematic approach? So that the roads that people navigate, the places they get their food, the community centers that they engage in could all be places and resources that could be subtly leveraged to foster their creative practice?

How can **ideas from the higher education context be translated and adapted to the context of creative aging?** This is the intellectual challenge for us here. Let me start by sharing with you how we're trying to approach fostering creative practice at Vanderbilt.

Making it Happen

Vanderbilt's creative campus initiative has three major program areas. First, and at its core, we've developed the nation's first scholarship program in creativity, innovation, and the public good—the Curb Scholars program. This four-year program provides a small group of students consistent engagement with creative opportunities. Second, our initiative includes academic programs and curricular innovations that reach a broader set of students on a semester or year-long basis. And third, we have campus-wide projects and programs that reach the broader Vanderbilt community of students, faculty, and staff.

In all of our programs, we are really trying to **push experimentation**—to move beyond planning to taking action, and then reflecting to see what works and what needs tweaking. We consider everything a “pilot” or a “lab” and do it on a smaller scale first, so that we don't get caught in the cycle of over-planning. We then try to be strategic about where to leverage our resources after we've done our experimentation.

We have taken a multi-faceted approach to fostering creative practice—creating and leveraging existing programs to offer creativity workshops and development opportunities, foster creative spaces and encounters, provoke generative and non-routine conversations, and engage individuals in solving problems. I discuss each of these in turn.

A creative campus offers workshops for everyone in the ecosystem.

We have started with the basics—workshops to build creative capacity. The key, though, is *not* to have participants just sit and listen, but to enable them to get their hands dirty, and encourage curiosity and questioning.

For example, I brought in Second City Improv to work with my Scholars. Improvisation is all about that creative, generative, exchange across individuals. I thought, “What if I could do this for the whole campus? If there are people that are interested, let’s try it.”

So I launched the Creative Practice Boot Camp. Our Boot Camps offer workshops in improvisation, design thinking, creative problem solving and creative inquiry, graphic facilitation, storytelling, and more. All of the workshops are designed to touch upon one of those creative practice areas: **invent, imagine, express your ideas, harness collective creativity, and implement.**

We had 600 slots available, and we were hoping that it would fill over time. But it sold out in 5 hours!

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 Improvisation Rachel Miller and Lauren Dowden, Second City Improv	 Storytelling Glenis Redmond, Poet and Storyteller

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VANDERBILT

Such an untapped need! And it was not only for students—and this is important—but also for faculty and staff. If you are trying to nurture creative capacity you have to **focus on training the trainers**—building their capacity as well as your target population. We want to build creative capacity in the whole social ecosystem.

A creative campus fosters a community of creative practice. The Curb Scholars program in creative enterprise and public leadership is focused on fostering habits of creative practice. We bring our scholars into the program as freshman, and I work with them for four years. I have developed a four-year developmental arc that leads up to their

senior legacy project. The program is focused on maintaining, nurturing, and protecting their creative practice in a very risk-averse, intense environment—where creativity isn't always celebrated. I meet with them weekly, presenting them with creative challenges that take them out of their comfort zone, involve working with students from other disciplines, and develops their tolerance for the ambiguity inherent in creative projects.

The “meeting weekly” piece is really important as far as keeping preserving our creative practice amidst all the stresses of our environment. But meeting weekly is also important for **building a community**. Creativity involves taking risks and extending individuals beyond their comfort zone. Scholars need a familiar and trust-based context where they can feel comfortable taking risks and experimenting with, for example, improv.

How many here have done an improv workshop? It is fairly daunting—whether you are interacting with strangers whom you will never see again or you are interacting with trusted people. To stretch people out of their comfort zone, you need to pay attention to the social and psychological dynamics at play in your group.

A creative campus uses space to spur creative encounters. A creative campus utilizes its spaces to spike curiosity and inquiry and break people out of their mundane existence. So many spaces we walk through are uninspiring and institutional. Everyone is walking back and forth between point A and point B, with a cell phone glued to an ear. Where is the spark?

So at Vanderbilt, we are trying to use space to provoke creative encounters on campus. For example, our chair of Studio Arts, Mel Ziegler, worked with ROTC to have them toss roses as they repelled down buildings. We brought in a Harlem graffiti artist; we set up a graffiti wall; and we invited people to tag their creative signature on campus. Some people did it and some people didn't. But we are experimenting with how to foster creative encounters and non-routine passages through spaces. One of the most popular things on campus was our traveling Legos® table. It sits where people wait for classes and appointments.



A creative campus provokes generative, non-routine conversations. A creative campus also provokes generative, non-routine conversations and collaborations. The goal is to encourage different people to talk about different things with different people in different ways using different media. For example, we have taken the idea of art exhibits, and instead of simply hanging them on walls, we invite individuals and groups to respond to them and generate their own art that is then added to the walls as part of an ongoing exhibit. We've examined how people typically talk to each other on campus and considered how we can foster different conversations. We've had a lot of fun with our own version of "speed dating"—people have seven minutes to sit across from another person and try and generate new ideas and new collaborations. It is an incredibly effective approach and gets people talking about new ideas and new possibilities and new ways of working and experiencing life that they didn't have before.

I love Denver's Museum of Contemporary Art's Mixed Taste series. They offer two presentations, one after another, but they are completely unrelated. So you might have someone who talks about the quality of meat (he's a butcher) and then you have someone who is talking about planets. And everyone just sits there and listens and then afterwards you try and make sense of it and have a conversation once you've been exposed to these two different things. It is an intriguing opportunity to break out of the norms of how we engage topics and think and exchange with each other.

To generate non-routine conversations we've also **embedded artists** in research projects. Can you imagine different communities having an embedded artist engage people and present their conversations in different ways? I also taught a class where students developed an alternative tour of campus. This is a favorite of mine. What if everyone in a living community actually created an alternative tour of that particular living community? What would that look like? This involves paying attention to what you would explore and curating your experience and space for others. How would you present your work life and living space to other people?

A creative campus takes existing programs and infuses them with creative practice. For example, freshman orientation now includes what I call a “noticing” exercise. I started this first with the Curb Scholars and now it has been integrated into the freshman orientation for all students. We ask them to notice interesting juxtapositions, cool moments of design—or maybe poor design—and take photos of campus that play with perspective or that tell a non-traditional story. Students who have had that as a first experience from their very first day at Vanderbilt have reported that they look at both campus and other spaces with more thoughtfulness. So that's an example of how we can utilize existing programs and infuse them with creative practice.

A creative campus illuminates creative identities—both extraordinary and everyday. As we think about creative aging, we are not only trying to think about how we can deliver creative opportunities, but also how to showcase what creative practice is in a broadly defined way. This might be through a “story” project, perhaps one that has an intergenerational component. Aging populations are important as carriers of history and stories and insights. We need to capture the breadth and depth of creative identities.

Could it also be valuable to offer a creative practice open house? Whether you are a musician, a dancer, or someone who makes robots after your day job as an accountant, what if you could actually share that with others as part of a creative aging community? And better yet, an open house where people could actually explain and describe their passion of who they are as an individual?

A creative campus promotes creative problem solving. Finally the other big piece that we are really trying to engage and promote as a lever for fostering creative practice is an emphasis on problem solving and innovation. I believe that every individual on campus is a source of identifying a problem, illuminating an opportunity, and being a potential catalyst for change and innovation.

Could we bring together individuals from aging communities and encourage them be a creative resource team harnessing their range of expertise? People have all these different backgrounds that they can bring forth to solves issues. The question is how will you engage your community members as experts and potential agents of change?

A creative campus is driven by catalysts. So all of these pilots were realized by a fairly small staff. And I know that all of you probably have very small staffs as well. How do we do it?

My approach is to embed as many experiments as possible in existing processes. As director / instigator, I go out and talk to every person who runs programs in all the different facets of student life. If you're a librarian or in charge of orientation, commencement, the residential houses, or the dining commons, could I entice you to think about what creative practice would mean in your programs?

What I have found is that no one has even asked these people how they would engage differently! And when I did, they are all so very, very eager to share. Embedding creative practice in existing systems has been a very powerful approach to actually making things happen when I don't have the resources to launch programs myself. And, of course, students are an incredible source of ideas and a force for making things happen. We just need to open the door and invite them into the effort!

I feel that's one of the strengths of our initiative—we're developing a community of catalysts who are making things happen. We have an innovation grant program to support the ideas of our catalysts and it's worked really well because all of a sudden, in addition to our produced programs and workshops, we have all these catalysts creating change in their classes, their dorms, their programs, and out in the Nashville

community. This approach has been particularly powerful for us. We just need to find the people who are passionate and want to create change or who have an “I only wish I could ...” project.

So now what I'd like to do is just open it up and explore what's possible for creative aging? Let's open it up now to questions, ideas, comments.

Attendee: Can you explain what an embedded artist is and how that works?

Elizabeth: Yes, one stellar example was a research seminar that met every month for a year. They embedded the artist as a member of the research group from the very start. The artist listened, captured and synthesized the ideas. And just as the other scholars presented research papers, the artist presented their artistic representation of the dialogue that had emerged.

I think this question of embedded artist is really interesting because there are different levels of integration. A first option is to invite an artist to lead a single class or bring a certain practice to life. A second is to invite an artist to co-teach the class with you or co-design a particular class around a particular topic—that's a whole other level of engagement. The third holds the most promise—you actually bring the artist in as a partner right from the start to help design and implement. This third approach is one of *mutual* benefit. Your work is enhanced because you brought the artist in, and the artist's work is advanced as well. I think this third approach is how we should be thinking about embedding artists. I believe the engagement should benefit their creative practice as much as those who are engaging with the artist.

Michael: Hi, I'm Michael Patterson. I'm on the Board of Directors for National Center of Creative Aging and I run a company called mindRamp. I work with retirement living areas and there seems like there is a direct sort of parallel here; a lot of what those senior living places are challenged with is how to you serve your existing community and yet how are you going to attract a boomer community or are you going to attract the boomer generation. And I think a lot of the more creative approaches are saying it's not a place to go and fade away; it's a place to go and continue to be creative. I think one of the things that Mr.

Ivey talked about which struck me is I think the idea, we buy into the idea that art and creativity is important as a developmental tool for the young. We need to understand that development doesn't end. It never ends. With longevity we are constantly developing, so art and creativity needs to be an important developmental tool, I think, at all ages. So I think taking a lot of what you're doing and embedding it in living situations would be very exciting.

Elizabeth: Thank you. And I would add: building upon and harnessing the existing creative expertise of your community. For example, my grandfather was a foreman for General Electric and had 60 women working with him, which was fantastic. He was great at managing expertise but after he retired, he was never asked to identify or solve problems in his community. And he never had the opportunity to have his expressive agility nurtured. Having a framework that articulates the multiple facets of the creative process is very useful as we consider how we might augment individuals' creative practice.

(Inaudible question)

Elizabeth: So the next step we're taking is evaluating how programs worked for individuals. For example, the Creative Practice Boot Camp is fantastic because it met an untapped desire for opportunities to engage in creative practice. People were really excited and took away ideas and techniques, but part of the challenge is how to help people translate it to their work. We offered brown bags afterwards and some follow up regarding how to put the workshops into practice, but this was only a first step. That's why thinking about it in terms of developing creative practice is really important—**we need to move beyond offering tools to helping people be able to adapt and translate those tools to different contexts.**

Attendee: So this is a follow up to the question you were just asked. So a lot of the specific interventions you were describing struck me as pretty cool. Like when you were just describing embedded artist, I thought it was a really interesting idea and sort of like synesthesia, translating something from a completely different medium, shared experience, and expressing it in an interesting way that might be sort of

somewhat hard to predict for others, thereby adding a really interesting component to the entire interaction.

But thinking about this, I wanted to ask about the problem of creativity, the industry buzz word mode. It used to be brainstorming was the means to creativity; well we found that brainstorming doesn't typically really produce very many good ideas and it might produce ideas that everyone here can collectively live with but not everyone actually favors. So what about that? I'm not necessarily suggesting that that's what's going to happen here but we know that higher education is prone to such things and so how does this become more than just is this our new idiom for thinking about our new practice of the moment.

Elizabeth: This is a great question. And I think part of it is to follow-up on the research to tease out and see what's really happening. But I also think having the focus on implementation and having people take projects from inception to implementation is especially important—we rarely focus on implementation and that's the most difficult piece. And if we can actually build students' capacity to implement, we will start seeing some real tangible outputs from their creative practice experiences. It takes a little bit longer to measure that, but I think that will hold us accountable as well. Can our students actually do something at the end of it?

Attendee: (inaudible) I used to work at the Department of Labor when Bob Reich came in (inaudible) and that whole crew from Harvard and we taught everyone how to be a leader and how to work in teams. Reich left and then a new Secretary came in and then a new administration came in, and I would imagine there are probably a handful of people left there now who have the ability to do that. So this idea of institutional sustainability as different leaders come in or different structures come in it's really... it's great while it's happening and maybe that in itself is worthwhile but the institutional sustainability is a real big issue.

Elizabeth: Your question points to the need to have a community of practice to reinforce and support one another, and embedding the practice in the institution's ways of doing things—its processes, systems, programs. I think one of the challenges with many training programs is that people come in and they do the two-hour training or

the one-day training, but then what happens next? A community of practice helps continue the dialogue and keep you engaged. Embedding the practices in the institutional systems and programs is important as well, but that's a whole other level of organizational transformation and change.

I hear you; it's an uphill battle. One of the metaphors that we use is that the campus is a rubber band. We are going to stretch it through our pilots and then it is going to revert back to its original shape. And then we are going to stretch it a little bit more and it is going to come back but a little bit looser each time. So we are starting small to stay sane. And realistically, not everyone cares about creativity and innovation. "Why do I want to do anything non-routine?" And so we've focused on the people who get it and are excited about it. And bring them in and really give them as many resources as and investments as possible and recognize them as agents for change.

Attendee: I think this is all very interesting. I think that it is also in this possible to get cities involved in implementing this and just one example is in New York where the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Aging after looking at some research in the mid-2000s created artist residencies in senior centers, now 50 of them in 5 boroughs, and, really interesting, putting the artist in that kind of creative environment. I should also say they got a grant from the NEA and an Our Town grant. I think the background of a lot of the Our Town grants is a lot of the same kind of synergy that they're trying to create so I think that there are a lot of mechanisms to bring this to a policy level or a city level.

Elizabeth: And I think to the extent to which you consider all four creative practices, the more you can hit on all four, that's where you want to strategically put your money, right? Or, for example, when we evaluate innovation grant proposals, if there is a project that will have an encounter, generate a conversation, solve a problem and illuminate creative lives, that's a sweet spot. We want to encourage those people who try to work on multiple levels and with non-routine campus partners—these projects might be slightly more involved and resource intensive but they can achieve multiple outcomes.

Attendee: I was struck by your comment and then the two previous comments; I think early on you mentioned that the creative process is where you were putting your focus and that's really where I find that's where the sweet spot is because when you look at it there are multiple different parts of the process so you can't just focus on brainstorming or divergent thinking; you also have to have convergent thinking and insight and research and so on. So I think to a certain extent if you teach the training, if you teach the process and people integrate that, they don't get stuck in any one process and think that that's the answer to creativity, and it may also be somewhat of an answer to the sustainability of creativity within an organization. There isn't just this magic bullet, one approach; it really is a complicated process and you have to learn it in order for creativity to happen but it's not also so mysterious that people can't learn it and figure out how to do it.

Elizabeth: And I think having a framework that moves beyond brainstorming and generating ideas to the challenge of integrating and synthesizing those ideas and then implementing them is a huge breakthrough in my field and our understanding of creativity. Thank you for emphasizing that very important insight.

Thank you to everybody and thank you very much for your time.

NOTE: Dr. Lingo was the former Director of the Curb Creative Campus Initiative as well as the Director of Curb Programs in Creative Enterprise and Public Leadership, at The Curb Center at Vanderbilt.

Notes

Michele and Robert Root-Bernstein, co-authors of *Sparks of Genius, The 13 Thinking Tools of the World's Most Creative People* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999), provide the foundational framework for understanding the fundamental tools for creative thinking.

R. Keith Sawyer, author of *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration* (Basic Books, 2007) and *Creating Conversations: Improvisation in Everyday Discourse* (Hampton, 2001) provides important insights into the relational dynamics among individuals and teams as they develop creative outcomes.

Bill's Closing Remarks

Bill: Thank you Elizabeth. I just have a few words and then we are going to have a few words from Sandra Gibson. I was struck in listening to Elizabeth's presentation the extent to which the living situations of older citizens link to the character of a campus and the kind of strategies that will work on a campus could readily be applied to these other circumstances. I also think that Rob Albro's observation that creativity is a kind of buzz word, that it can be used casually and carelessly, and that this notion of rigor and evaluation is critical in all of this work. In regard to our efforts at Vanderbilt, we try to separate ourselves from what is perhaps a very popular over utilized brand—that is, "creativity," in order to do something that is really rigorous and broadly useful. So that's what we are trying to do and we will see if we can get there.

I want to thank all of you for your participation today and your generous contributions and great questions, and I think this connection—expressive life, creative practice, and work with our aging population can be very fruitful, so I appreciate your participation. I'd like to ask Sandra Gibson who is a board member of the National Center for Creative Aging and also is herself principal in your new firm, which is Culture Works.

Closing

Sandra Gibson

I agree with Bill that this connection really is fruitful to pursue and I think there are enormous opportunities, certainly policy implications, advocacy opportunities for those of us working in health and wellness, education and lifelong learning, and community engagement. This forum illuminated a lot of what we can and have to do.

In health and wellness, as many of us know in NCCA and many of the organizations represented here, there is a critical need now—an enormous need for a variety of services, resources and support systems for patients and care givers and professionals. In lifelong learning and education, there is an expanding interest in personal learning. That's been tracked by the International Alliance for Lifelong Education and that's for a variety of reasons, not the least of which are these social and psychological needs we have to connect and generate and self-actualize according to our own interests and passions.

And we now have a couple generations of people living longer, healthier, who are favorably disposed to learning, continuing on in a variety of ways. And then in the community engagement arena, it seems to be the convergence of all of us here, all the sectors we represent and more. Where we've got this wonderful opportunity for intergenerational cross cultural, cross sector learning and exchange, which is really facilitated by this pursuit of creative practice, creative endeavor. So it's this idea that everyone can have this full, vibrant, wonderful life and work all on their own terms and pursue happiness.

For me, I think it is important to think through and contemplate the ways in which we might do this. How do we work towards this new culture and community of living and how do we make sure that there is access to the systems, the tools, the resources for a vibrant expressive life—as Bill has so beautifully put it—throughout our lives. So this is one of which I hope will be many forums in conversation. And I just hope that the opening remarks by Mary and Bob from our board at NCCA, Bill and Liz's proposal, and the ideas that they shared really inspire you to frame your work. And I am not talking about re-framing.

Frame your work and form the kind of partnerships that take up these proposals and opportunities.

And finally just some thanks to NAMM Foundation, the National Association of Music Merchants, for their generous support of the forum and Mary Luehrsen for joining us today, to the Curb Center at Vanderbilt and the Arts Industries Policy Forum. I've been able to participate in a number of these and in fact I was at the weekend forum at the Rockefeller estates with Marty Seligman, the group of positive psychologists and a group of lonely artists, one cultural anthropologist, Shirley Bryce Heath. I had dinner with Marty Seligman and he said, Sandra, forget about getting money for the arts, we need the well-being candidate and we need this thinking about expressive life and well-being flowing through our population, then the money will pour in. And I sort of wanted to follow Marty everywhere after that.

Thank you for provocative ideas and proposals that we can really take up. And Bill I hear that this is maybe your last formal proposal and act at the Curb Center, and I just personally want to say thank you to you for your service. Many in this room have had the opportunity to work with you for many years from Country Music Hall of Fame to the Endowment to the Curb Center, so I want to know that we will continue to have access to you, your great thinking and your great gifts. There will be a white paper of this coming out. I don't have the timeline for it but we will let you all know and it will give you a summary of what the discussion has been today and so for all of you who took an afternoon and joined us. Thank you so much and we look forward to more exchanges.