KWF
Journal of the Knight-Wallace Fellows at the University of Michigan
Volume 23, No. 1 Winter 2013

What is college for, anyway?

Liz McMillen, '98, editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* delivered the 28th Graham Hovey Lecture on Sept. 19. Here's a summary of her comments.

...Congratulations to the new class of fellows. I hope you guys know just how lucky you are, and how far the fellowship has come since I was here in 1997.

Today, you travel to Argentina and Brazil and Turkey, and you dine with presidents and you go for horse rides on the Pampas. Back in *my* day, Charles made a big deal out of going to (drumroll, please) Toronto.

We also went to Atlanta to visit then-novel CNN, where the high point was an after-hours visit to the Cheetah Lounge. Not that we didn't learn some things. One of my male colleagues learned you never tell your wife you've been to a strip club. I'm not sure he's ever been fully forgiven. ...

Philip Cattillo

McMillen: The new educational order is becoming a caste system.

People sometimes ask me: What did the fellowship do for you? And I tell them, I'm still trying to figure that out. I don't mean to be flip. The beauty of the fellowship is that it is a year out of time, a year to explore and be curious and maybe make mistakes. If you're lucky, the Knight-Wallace fellowship will set you up for a lifetime of exploration. ...

You are going to see and learn a great deal in your year here and, if you look carefully, you'll also learn about what you'll see in real life when you go back to your jobs.

My contention is this: The way we go to college—the way we think about it, prepare for it, what we do when we're there, who gets to go, and on what terms, and what happens afterward—says everything about our aspirations as a country, and who gets to aspire to what. And it's changed a lot over the last 30 years.

So let's take a look at higher education 30 years ago. Your typical college student then—let's call her Liz—studied at a four-year college.

She started college when she was 18 and she earned her degree—in the humanities—in four years.

She lived on campus.

She was taught face to face by full-tenured professors who had spent most of their careers at that college.

She studied history, literature and other liberal arts subjects and didn't worry that taking those courses would ruin her chances for a job.

In fact, she went to college hoping to become educated in the fullest sense, and didn't necessarily see a connection between that education and the job she would first get when she graduated, or the career she would later embark on.

She bought books and textbooks in print and took exams in Blue Books.

She signed up for classes through the mail and got her grades the same way, on paper.

She shared a phone on her hall with other people and if she was lucky she later could afford to have a private phone in her room.

She came to school with full financial aid though by the time she graduated she had accumulated some debt, a few thousand dollars or so.

She worked a work-study job but her hours were limited to 10 a week.

Now let's look at the typical student on campus today. Let's call her Becky (because she is more likely than not a woman).

She goes to school—but she also works full time as a waitress. She lives at home with her family, not on campus in a dorm.

She is 28, and this is her sixth year in college, and she's still not guaranteed to graduate this year. That depends on whether she can get spots in enough courses—and that's not easy, given the demand for them on her campus.

She didn't go right into a four-year college after high school—first she worked, then she took some classes at a for-profit university and her local community college, then she enrolled at the large public university in her state.

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From the Head Fellow

— By Charles R. Eisendrath, '75

PROGRAM HAS BEEN BUILT BY THOSE IT SERVES

Depressed by several years of total failure to find support for international fellows or travel abroad, I spent an afternoon with a calculator, which for the mathematically challenged like me can be a downer all by itself. That afternoon in 1999 was different. It turned out that each eight-month fellowship cost about as much as taking an entire class anywhere in the world except Asia for a week.

To me, that eureka moment meant exchanges: Staff development fellowships for the news organizations we partnered with and, for us, high-quality international fellows and a subsidized trip to their home countries.

We began with Argentina because I had worked there for *Time* and retained the contacts to get us started. I also knew that Argentina met tests that I had begun developing for partnership exchanges. What little Americans knew about it was very little, indeed, and largely wrong.

Technically, a KWF alumnus produced the relationship with *Clarin*, Argentina's largest daily, because I qualify. For the next four, however, the claim to made-by-alumni is clean and doubly satisfying because I think of them as the truest test of commitment to building the program by those it serves.

Fatih Turkmenoglu and Yavuz Baydar were fellows in 2003-04, a few years after I began recruiting applicants from Turkey because I considered it the most important country in the Middle East. It also met "The Argentina Test" of being little known and of large interest. The pair of alumni I deputized to find us a partner could not have been more different—Turkmenoglu a mercurial

figure at *CNN Turk*, Baydar a deeply serious analyst for *Milliyet*. Within a few months KWF had an exchange with *Dogan*, the largest media group in Turkey.

Dancing with international partners, however, can involve unpredictable cut-ins. On short notice, *Dogan* announced in 2008 that it would be sitting out our embrace indefinitely. Fortunately, this unpleasantness happened while Matthias Schepp, '05, of *Spiegel's* Moscow bureau had joined the KWF group in Istanbul. Within a matter of weeks he had two Russian oligarchs vying to be our partners the next year. Alexander Lebedev, owner of the investigative *Novaya Gazeta* "and all the potatoes in Russia," as Schepp put it, won out and Charles Clover, '06, of the *Financial Times'* bureau helped with the organizational chores.

On that first exchange in Moscow, Helio Schwartzman of *Folha de Sao Paolo* asked why KWF never came to Brazil. My entire contribution to what has developed into a remarkably rich relationship was saying, "Invite us." That's all it took; in January we will welcome our 10th *Folha* fellow after five news tours in Brazil.

Which brings me to the latest development, one that unfolded in a completely different way.

The Canadian and Alberta provincial governments had teamed up to give KWF a look at the oil sands project, the largest energy "play" in the Western Hemisphere and possibly the world. That was why in October 2012, Kate Brooks, '13, who learned how to get what she needs in unknown territory as a freelance photographer covering serial wars in the Middle East, found herself seated next to Janet Annesley, who was paying for the fellows' dinner in Edmonton as director of communications for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. I leaned around in back of her and whispered to Brooks, "See if she'll do a fellowship."

Brooks did the rest. In January we will be joined by Ilja Herb, a photographer much of whose work would have to be described as decidedly un-petro gunk black. Next time we'll probably have someone more interested in technology or economics. Balance is part of the deal. So is the freedom to accept Canadians interested in any aspect of energy, not just oil and gas.

Because of geography and personal involvement with Canada throughout my life, it had been a particular disappointment to have failed so long in establishing a lasting relationship for KWF with America's nearest neighbor and largest trading partner.

What exactly does "lasting" mean? I've learned to enjoy the dance without worrying too much about the music ending because when we need to change partners, KWF's international alumni show us the next steps.

TOURING CANADA'S FOSSIL FUEL WONDERLAND

—By Scott Tong, '14

Canada: land of Gretzky, maple syrup, moose jokes and—you guessed it—a whopping deposit of crude oil. In fact, very few fellows realized our neighbor to the north had quietly morphed into a fossil fuel powerhouse, until seeing it in person.

"I had no idea Canada was capitalizing on oil sands projects," said Marcia Pledger, business columnist for *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* and self-described "knucklehead novice" on the issue.

We spent two days on the Alberta energy power play, on a visit underwritten by Canada's consular service. Day 1 served as an extended classroom blur of oil sands talks, maps, stats, aerial photos and fierce opinions about one of the world's newest forms of energy production. By most fellows' accounts, the supply of PowerPoint charts significantly outpaced demand.

Day 2: the real thing. At dawn we flew via corporate jet to the Syncrude company's site for mining hydrocarbons at the surface of the ground. The pilot eased the small plane low to give an overhead view of the operation's scale.

"This was incredible for me, the mining and the (wastewater) tailings," said Megha Satyanarayana, *Detroit Free Press* reporter. "It felt like I was in Mordor."

Our group sniffed the petroleum (briefly). We received samples of oil sands—gritty like tar, thick like peanut butter—in baby Ziploc bags to tote home. Much of the processing of the product occurs in pipes and tanks, and proved challenging to see. One bus ride, though, yielded a view of what may well be the largest mountain of sulfur on the planet. Sulfur, a byproduct of the industrial process, was waiting to be sold on the market for a decent price.

There's no such market for the vast quantities of chemical wastewater "tailings."

Marcia Pledger

The oil sands project in Alberta has endless angles.

In 2008, 1,600 ducks landed on a Syncrude tailings pond and died. As our guide took us to a similar pond, he described the company's new strategy: blasting noise-making air cannons to scare the bejesus out of neighborhood fowl. At that very moment, *Las Vegas Sun* columnist Patrick Coolican pointed to the pond.

"Hey," Coolican asked. "Isn't that a duck?"

The Syncrude man confirmed the duck, swimming and very much alive. Quick on his feet, he noted the pond had been diluted to less toxic levels. We re-boarded the tour bus. The duck swam on.

The other way to extract oil sands, to ultra-simplify, is to drill down and steam the stuff up. Cenovus Energy does it that way, and that afternoon we took a look. The underground method produces no wastewater ponds, though it does require putting in a fair bit of fossil energy to get it out. There are always trade-offs in the energy business.

"I think the Canadians could have been more open about what a dilemma this is," the *BBC's* Jenny Baxter said. "No country in the world would sit on a natural resource and not exploit it, particularly given the world's addiction to oil. So more two-way discussion would have been valuable."

It's not easy being a fossil fuel titan. Nor is it a simple story for journalists. Reporters and editors from *The Edmonton Journal* spoke to our group of the endless angles: The boomtown. The worker shortage. The theological passions of oil sands friends and foes. The myths and misperceptions. The flood of global investment into Canada's Next Big Thing, from places like Canada, Norway and France.

We flew back to Ann Arbor with our oil sands baggies, winter fashionable wool hats adorned with industry logos, a few head colds from an unyielding travel schedule, and lingering questions: Why did we not visit indigenous groups affected by the drilling? Or the boomtown Fort McMurray, where real oil industry leathernecks live and play? What is the PowerPoint of diminishing returns?

Our group also returned with more informed views about a key energy issue of our time. And but for one of us, the visit included the rare luxury of taking a road trip without having to file a single story.

Editor's note: When not on a fellowship that forbids all kinds of (other) work, the author is a D.C.-based energy and environment correspondent for Marketplace *public radio.*

FIRST AFGHAN FELLOW FEELS BIG RESPONSIBILITY

Ruhullah Khapalwak, '14, is the first Afghan fellow in KWF's history. He's a freelance journalist who has worked in his home country with Western news outlets including The New York Times, CNN *and* Al Jazeera English *since 2001. He's helped break stories on civilian casualties, illegal detentions and Taliban operations during the war in Afghanistan, and recently branched out into video documentaries. His study project during the fellowship is "The effects of the digital revolution on journalism in the developing world." He recently discussed his unlikely introduction to journalism and its future in his country.*

— By Kyle Poplin, '10

Ruhullah Khapalwak, by all rights, should be a furious man.

He's lived through five regime changes in his native Afghanistan and lost family members in every one of them. Two of his great uncles were taken from their home during the Russian occupation and never heard from again. His father-in-law was assassinated by the Taliban. The list continues.

Marcia Prentiss

Ruhullah Khapalwak, an Afghan journalist, discusses Afghanistan

Yet Khapalwak refuses to dwell on anger and revenge. "Who am I going to go after?" he asks. "The only thing I think of now is the future and the future for my daughter who is 2-and-a-half years old. We hope for the best, that one day we will have a regime that will bring justice.

"For an American it might not be very convincing, because if something happens here you have to pursue it. But so many atrocities have happened, one after another, that we hope for the best. It's survival. You have to survive."

He's planning more than that. After his fellowship, Khapalwak hopes to return to Kandahar City and ensure journalism builds on its recent foothold in the country.

Such a goal seemed unlikely a few years ago, even to Khapalwak. When he finished high school in 2000, the Taliban ruled Afghanistan. Khapalwak wanted to go to college, but had no idea where or how. Then 9/11 happened and the Taliban were overthrown by an American-led invasion. "The day that the Taliban left Kandahar, my hometown, everybody was very excited, very cheerful, so I came out to see the people in the street," he recalls.

"I saw a friend of mine who was actually working as a translator for an American journalist. He said there were many other journalists who needed assistance." Only days later Khapalwak was translating for Michael Ware of *Time* magazine.

"Soon I was picking up the way he worked, and what sort of questions he asked, and how to conduct interviews," Khapalwak said. That eventually led to work with *The New York Times* as a translator. When "it started getting rough for foreign journalists" in Afghanistan, Khapalwak began doing more work on his own. He would go alone into the field to gather accounts, then get help writing stories. "I slowly built up my skills. … At the beginning (my career) was coincidence. Afterward, it was something I had to do. I really liked it. It was my passion.

"I really liked carrying my notebook and my pen with me. That made me very confident meeting whoever was in front of me."

The work grew increasingly dangerous. "I'm not scared of the Afghan people," he explains, "but I'm scared of political organizations or groups that could easily target me. And I had death threats from the Taliban accusing me of being an American spy. … I took it very seriously. I came to the conclusion that it was maybe a good idea to stop and go to college."

In 2006 he applied to four colleges and ended up with a full scholarship at Swarthmore. After graduation in 2010 he went back home to continue working, first freelancing for the *Times* and then moving into digital.

He's thoroughly enjoying his fellowship—"There's so much here, I'm worried I'm not getting at everything"—but his purpose is clear. "I'll try to take as much as I can back with me and keep the legacy of a free press and freedom of speech in Afghanistan."

He's seen big changes in Afghan journalism. When he was young, he says, there were no private TV stations in the country; today there are more than two dozen. There are now more than 50 radio stations that report the news, compared to two—the *BBC Pashto* and *Voice of America Pashto*—when he was growing up.

"As an Afghan who has worked for the past 12 years with so many prestigious, well-known and very honest journalists of the world, I think we have to keep that legacy alive in Afghanistan," he said. "The freedom of press and speech is very essential to keeping a democracy.

"And I really thank this fellowship and Charles for bringing people from countries like Afghanistan. We really need journalists to come here, do their research, go back to their country and take the voice of the Afghan people to the rest of the world."

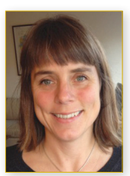
Our Great Geniuses

Jamaal Abdul-Alim, '08, was named 2013 chess journalist of the year by the Chess Journalists of America. He also won best international article in the magazine category for the National Association of Black Journalists. An independent writer, he's currently a Spencer Education Journalism Fellow at Columbia University.

Brian Akre, '98, won a 2013 Cicero Speechwriting Award for a piece written for the CEO of Royal Dutch Shell. It was his second Cicero award. Akre joined the Renault-Nissan Alliance as director of executive communications in October.

Scott Elliott, '05, was named editor of *Chalkbeat Indianapolis*, part of a new nonprofit online news organization. He previously was education reform reporter at the *Indianapolis Star.*

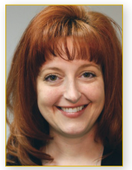
Craig Gilbert, '10, received a fellowship at the Marquette Law School to do a six-month research project on political polarization—an outgrowth of his time at KWF.



Kate Linebaugh, '08, was named deputy chief of the *Wall Street Journal's* Corporate Bureau. She joined the *Journal* in 2004 as the regional investment banking and deals reporter.

Jonathan Martin, '09, was named a permanent member of the *Seattle Times* editorial board.

Harris Meyer, '91, was named managing editor at Chicago-based *Modern Healthcare.* He previously was a freelance writer.



Stephanie Reitz, '05, was named university spokesperson and senior media relations specialist at the University of Connecticut. She previously was a reporter at *The Associated Press* and *The Hartford Courant.*

Rochelle Riley, '08, won first place in the Best Local Interest Column on a Variety of Subjects category for the 79th National Headliner Awards. She's a metro columnist at the *Detroit Free Press.*

Angela Shah, '07, has joined *Xconomy* in Houston as editor of the new Texas edition. She previously was a freelancer based in Dubai.

Harry Siegel, '11, has joined the *New York Daily News* as a weekly columnist and editorial board member. He previously was an editor for *Newsweek-The Daily Beast.*

Jesse Walker, spouse '09, recently published "The United States of Paranoia" through HarperCollins Publishers.

IN MEMORY

Mary Jean Hovey, wife of former Knight Wallace Fellowship director Graham Hovey, died March 1 in Whitehall Township, Pa. She was a librarian. She and her late husband had moved from Ann Arbor to be closer to their son, Thomas D. Hovey, and his family who live in Forty Fort, Pa.

Kevin Clemens, '08, with the solar-powered motorcycle and unusual electric sidecar machine he built in his workshop in Lake Elmo, Minn., and rode this summer at Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats.

IN BRAZIL, ALL EYES ARE ON THE ROAD AHEAD

— By Alex Stone, '14

Coming from Detroit, I was struck by how many American cars—Fords especially—one sees on the streets of São Paulo. Unlike our cars, however, many of these are powered by a renewable form of ethanol derived from sugarcane, which grows throughout the country in abundance. Brazil is the world's second largest producer of ethanol and a leader in the use of sustainable biofuels.

Marcia Pledger, '14, at the Museu Afro Brazil in Sao Paulo.

Our trip to Brazil was also fueled in large part by a form of ethanol derived from sugarcane—in this case, cachaça rum, the workhouse spirit of Brazil's signature cocktail, the caipirinha.

A bracing, sweet-and-sour concoction that will put hair on the chest of the person standing *next* to you, caipirinhas—together with the best coffee ever—turned out to be the perfect energy source for our manic, whistle-stop tour of this gritty and unfathomably complex urban jungle.

Imagine if Los Angeles were twice as large and, at the same time, highly industrialized and you'll have some idea of what São Paulo, or "Sampa," is like. A city of 20 million, it thrums at a pace unlike anything you'll find in the States, an urban sprawl on steroids, at once exhausting and exhilarating.

"The main point of the trip is to open people's eyes to how big and important the Brazil story is on so many levels," Charles Eisendrath, head fellow, told us. "And yet you hardly hear a peep about it in the U.S. press, except when it comes to oil, and maybe something in the sports section."

While in São Paulo, we drove through shanty towns ("favelas") teeming with the worst kind of squalor and, hardly missing a beat, consorted with millionaires—a stark reminder of the country's staggering income inequality. We visited the city's wonderfully interactive Museu do Futbol, built alongside the stadium where Pele played, met the city's charming mayor, Fernando Haddad, and toured the magnificent Museu Afro Brazil, which boasts a collection of more than 4,000 works of African and Afro-Brazilian art.

At *Folha de Sao Paolo*, we watched a gripping documentary, by *TV Folha* director João Wainer, about the June 2013 riots, in which a million people took to the streets. Initially sparked by a rise in bus fares, the demonstrations quickly turned into an omnidirectional outpouring of rage that found expression in mass lootings and widespread violence (though, miraculously, no one died). "No one has yet to come up with a conclusive explanation for why the riots happened," we were told, inviting comparisons to the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US.

Other major highlights of the trip included meeting Joaquin Barbosa, the chief justice of the Supreme Court (and the first black Supreme Court justice in Brazil), who is currently presiding over a corruption case that has led to the indictment of the chief of staff; a night of Brazilian classical music at the stunning Sala São Paulo concert hall; and watching the Knight-Wallace fellows get trounced in soccer by a bunch of 8-year-olds.

With *Folha's* Helio Schwartsman, '09, as our intrepid guide, we were treated to an inside look at the city that left me reeling.

It was, indeed, an eye-opening experience.

Part of the surprise for me was in seeing the contrast between São Paulo and Buenos Aires—the second leg of our South American journey. Unlike Argentina, a country held hostage to its own history, mired in a recursive cycle of nostalgia—we get it, you love Evita—Brazil is a country with its eyes on the road ahead. "Brazil is looking to the future, and it's getting there, while Argentina is still talking about redistributing the same pie, rather than trying to make it bigger," said Eisendrath, a veteran visitor to both. Case in point: Not long ago Brazil and Argentina had the same size economy; today Brazil's is more than six times larger. The score on poverty tells a similar story. Brazil has reduced poverty by 50 percent since the 1980s. Argentina: zero.

And yet, Brazil still has a long way to go. The income gap remains one of the largest in the world. (In Sampa, the one-percenters hopscotch from rooftop to rooftop in helicopters to avoid the city's chronic gridlock.) Crime is brutal and rampant. Productivity is low relative to most other emerging economies. In a fascinating lecture on the sad state of the educational system, by Naercio Menezes Filho, a professor at Insper Education and

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IN ARGENTINA, 'EVEN THE GOOD GUYS ARE COMPLICATED'

— By Petra Bartosiewicz, '14

The trip this fall to Buenos Aires, Argentina, marked the 14th year fellows have made the journey to this beautiful and deeply complex country. With its wide avenues and sidewalk cafes, its passion in equal parts for futbol and tango, Buenos Aires, the most European of Latin American cities, has been described as "just a big theater."

So it was fitting that we began our journey at the Teatro Colon, considered to be one of the world's finest theaters for its acoustics and design, where our guide told us of the ghosts who haunt the place and of a secret room above the main hall's massive chandelier that hides singers who during performances play the roles of angels, or even the voice of god. Our guide, it turned out, was more than she appeared as well; a singer in her own right, she broke into a spontaneous soprano aria to demonstrate the theater's near-perfect sound quality.

The hard work of exploring this new city continued at an evening wine tasting in the historic San Telmo district, where we were schooled in the finer points of a rich array of Argentinian wines. In the spirit of investigation of one of the country's leading industries, we tasted, tasted again, and then tasted some more. The wine was accompanied by a dinner starring the delicious steak Argentina is deservedly famous for. I lost count following that meal of the number of such feasts, with the exception of an epic carnivorous lunch at the renowned La Brigada, where we dined on veal sweetbread, chorizo and blood sausage—and that was just the appetizer.

In the following days there would be late-night tango and an afternoon boat ride along the canals of the Tigre Delta, visits to the city's museums and La Recoleta cemetery, the final resting place, most notably, of Argentina's former first lady, Eva Peron. We decamped from the hot city for a day, piling into a pair of vans and driving to the "Estancia Los Dos Hermanos," where our hosts Pancho and Ana were generous and the horses we rode through the bucolic Pampas region were merciful on their inexperienced riders.

WE WERE TOLD POLITICS IS NOT ABOUT COLLABORATION OR NEGOTIATION, BUT ABOUT FRIENDS AND ENEMIES. THE OFTEN TURBULENT POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IS IN FULL EVIDENCE IN THE ONGOING BATTLE BETWEEN CURRENT PRESIDENT CRISTINA KIRCHNER'S GOVERNMENT AND *CLARIN*, THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER, WHICH IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF KIRCHNER AND HAS LAUNCHED A WIDE-RANGING INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED CORRUPTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING BY HER GOVERNMENT.

Back in the city we heard lectures on Argentine literary heroes such as Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortazar, and on the lasting power of Peronism, the political movement based on the legacy of former President Juan Peron and his wife Eva, which transcends traditional left and right divisions and remains a defining force in shaping the country's internal political alliances.

In Argentina, we were told, politics is not about collaboration or negotiation, but about friends and enemies. The often turbulent political landscape is in full evidence in the ongoing battle between current President Cristina Kirchner's government and *Clarin*, the country's largest newspaper, which in recent years has been highly critical of Kirchner and has launched a wide-ranging investigation into alleged corruption and money laundering by her government.

On a visit to the offices of *Clarin*, we heard from the paper's editors, who discussed the controversial media law recently upheld by Argentina's Supreme Court, which the Kirchner government has claimed is needed in order to reduce media concentration, but which journalists say is an attempt by the government to stifle dissent.

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Marcia Pledger

Jenny Baxter & friends: Which is BBC's head of production?

KWF leads discussion about ObamaCare

KWF helped organize a timely policy conference, "ObamaCare: Hearsay or Fact," on Nov. 4 during the government shutdown and about five weeks into insurance open enrollment. Other collaborators on the policy conference—the 10th in KWF's history—were the Center for Healthcare Research & Transformation, the U-M Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation and Michigan Radio.

Above: *The event drew a standing-room-only crowd at the Michigan League. Steven Brill, author, "Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills are Killing Us,"* Time, *participated via Skype and is pictured on screen.*

Above: *Ora Pescovitz, CEO, U-M Health System, welcomed the crowd and framed the debate.*

Above: *Polls show that most Americans are confused about ObamaCare and don't trust the media to communicate information about the law. The debate, Americans feel, has been more about politics than policy. A main topic of the conference was how best to help Americans make informed decisions.*

Below: *The policy panel, left to right, Thomas Buchmueller, chair of business economics at the U-M Ross School of Business; Heather Howard (keynote speaker), director, State Health Reform Assistance Network; Michael Cannon, director, Health Policy Studies, Cato Institute; Dr. John Ayanian, director, U-M Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation; and Marianne Udow-Phillips, director, Center for Healthcare Research and Transformation.*

Below: *The journalism panel, left to right, Holman W. Jenkins Jr., editorial board member and columnist,* The Wall Street Journal; *Julie Rovner, health policy correspondent,* NPR; *Sarah Kliff, health policy reporter,* The Washington Post; *Jonathan Cohn (keynote speaker), author, senior editor,* The New Republic; *Reed Abelson, health care business reporter,* The New York Times; *and Charles Eisendrath, moderator.*

PHOTOS BY STEVE KUZMA

—What is college for anyway?, continued from page 1

She's hardly alone in this winding path. People in higher ed call Becky's experience "the student swirl."

Among her fellow students at her university, just over 50 percent will graduate in six years. Many of them are just like her—older, working, often with families. Some are veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan.

And unlike Liz, there's very little chance that any of them will ever attend one of the 150 most selective colleges in the country.

Becky's major is business administration. She is mainly interested in courses that can help her get a better job, not make her a better person. That's probably not surprising, given that she has some $25,000 in student loans and expects to take out another $10,000 this year.

What's Becky getting for that money? Unlike Liz's experience, a stunning majority of Becky's interactions in college happen online.

Several of her courses are taught online, and she takes them with hundreds of other students. Some of those courses are taught by professors who teach at universities hundreds of miles away.

She would like more contact with her professors but many of the people who teach her courses are adjunct instructors who are not given office space on campus.

She does all her course registration online, gets her assignments and course syllabi that way, and her classroom performance is monitored by a sophisticated learning dashboard that tells that professor how well she is mastering the course material.

Finally, she is among the nearly three-quarters of Americans who are taking college courses in some form, the highest college-going rate in this country's history.

So, you all have your degrees. Why should any of you care about Becky and what she has to go through to get her degree, what that degree will be and how much debt she'll be in when she gets it? Isn't that just the way things are today?

Here's why we need to care: Because Becky represents a huge shift in higher education. She's what we call in the trade a nontraditional student. Except that she has become the rule, not the exception.

And for every Becky who eventually makes it through and gets a degree, there are countless more who don't graduate but who still have debt and who still need jobs they can make a living on.

Photo: Philip Dattilo

The new fellows at the Hovey Lecture.

The truth is that higher education as it now exists is helping to widen the divide between the Lizs and the Beckys of the world, between the haves and have-nots. It's doing that through skyrocketing tuition (even at public universities) and student loan debt, and by devoting the most resources on the wealthiest students. That's an astonishing turn of events in recent American history. ...

Higher education was once the great equalizer. No longer.

Consider this fact: At the nation's 146 most selective colleges—including the top flagship universities—only 3 percent of entering freshmen come from the bottom socioeconomic quarter, while 74 percent come from the top quarter.

Or that community colleges, where low-income and minority students are concentrated, spent an average of $13,000 per student in 2009, while four-year private research institutions, which disproportionately enroll higher-income and white students, spent an average of $67,000 per student. That's a $44,000 difference per student. Think about that, in terms of what the least-advantaged students need to succeed.

As Georgetown University researcher Anthony Carnevale put it last year in *The Chronicle*, "Taken one at time, postsecondary institutions are fountains of opportunity; taken together, they are a highly stratified bastion of privilege."

So how did we abandon such a successful model?

We could blame shortsighted legislatures and administrators, but the causes are so interwoven and complex that it's difficult to separate one single thread.

But we can say the decline didn't happen overnight. Sixteen years ago, in 1987, the states provided about three-quarters of the funds public colleges spent on education. But over time that number has dropped.

Given current trends, it is estimated that by 2030, 17 years from now, most state legislatures will no longer provide any support to their institutions of public higher education.

As college presidents who come by *The Chronicle's* offices like to say, they are no longer state universities but merely "state located" universities.

With the steep cuts in state funding, public universities have raised tuition and fees to make up for the shortfall, thus shifting an ever-greater financial burden onto students and families. Since 1985 alone, tuition and fees are up more than 500 percent.

In essence, as public universities receive less money from states, they are running themselves like private universities and charging higher tuitions.

Is anyone surprised that in one recent poll a majority of Americans—62 percent—said they could not afford a college education at a public university?

—continued on back

—In Brazil, all eyes are on the road ahead, continued from page 6

Research Institute, I learned that on average, kids in Brazil spend just four hours a day in school, hardly a syllabus for progress.

Brazil's political system, meanwhile, is mired in corruption and internecine disputes between the country's 32 national parties, *Folha* columnist Fernando Rodrigues told us in a seminar on politics.

Women's rights are also lacking—abortion is still illegal—and racial disparities remain widespread (Brazil, I was surprised to learn, was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery.)

Marcia Prenger

The fellows blended in nicely at the samba club in Brazil.

Most entrancing of all, however, was an unscheduled visit to "Batman Alley," an outdoor gallery of some of the world's most impressive street art. These strange and energetic vernacular works, which grow like symbiotes along several blocks, seem to capture the soul of the city in a uniquely powerful way. "People have such a desire to tell their stories that they'll write it on the walls," said fellow Laura Holson, a feature writer for *The New York Times*, for whom Batman Alley was also a high point. "It tells a different story, a voice that's not heard in the city or in Congress."

Of course, no trip to Brazil would be complete without some glute-shaking samba, so on Saturday night we descended on a sweaty, cachaça-soaked club in Vila Madalena, Sampa's Greenwich Village. "I walked in and thought I would last 10 minutes," said Jenny Baxter, '14, who is head of production at *BBC News*, a well-known bastion of RP and stiff upper lips. "Three hours later, I was the last to leave and made many new Brazilian friends." Seeing Baxter and the other fellows grooving to samba was, as Brazilians say, "muito legal"—totally awesome.

But with the sweet comes the sour. Again the walls told another story. A look at the north wall of the bar revealed a poem by Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Brazil's national poet, titled "E agora, José?" A kind of tristful catechism, the poem clings to the recurring refrain, What now, Joseph? (The bar was called Boteca Seu Zé, or Mr. Joseph's Bar, an allusion to the title line.)

What now, indeed?

It's a question the country as a whole seems to be asking itself. Brazil is a resource rich, diverse country with stores of creative energy. But it has a lot of soul searching to do.

Lately, a crisis of faith has been brewing over the World Cup (which will be held in Brazil in June and July of next year) and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio. José Henrique Mariante, assistant managing editor of *Folha de Sao Paolo*, spoke at length about the challenges that Brazil, a country sorely lacking in infrastructure, will face if it is to host these two major international events. The World Cup alone, he said, is expected to set the country back $15 billion. If successful, it could help reinvigorate the country and its people. Failure, on the other hand, could deepen the pervasive sense of malaise that hangs over Brazil like the marine layer.

So … what now?

When it doubt, it never hurts to dance.

After the first bar shut down, I quickly made my way to another samba club and danced the rest of the night away. Everyone around me was gracious and welcoming, despite the violence I did to their national dance.

Afterward, Baxter offered a tip for those who, like me, lack a certain innate sense of rhythm.

"It's all in the hips," she said. "And in the cachaça."

—In Argentina, 'even the good guys are complicated', continued from page 7

Si-haeng Jeong, '14, said she found many parallels in *Clarin's* struggle with a battle fought between her newspaper, *The Chosun Ilbo*, and the South Korean government. "I feel very much for the *Clarin* journalists," Haeng said. "We endured a very similar situation, with similar tactics of government intimidation and attempts to silence us."

The government's fight with *Clarin* has been much in the news in Argentina as the country begins looking toward the 2015 general election. We met with Sergio Massa, mayor of the Parana Delta city of Tigre, who is considered a serious contender for the presidency. "Mr. Massa made it clear he is willing to take on a political system roiled in scandal and corruption," said Bonney Kapp, '14, who has covered the presidential campaigns of Barack Obama, John Edwards and Mitt Romney. "It will be interesting to track his political ascent and see if he is able to enact the changes he says he is prepared to tackle."

Head fellow Eisendrath described the momentous changes he has witnessed in Argentina over the decades. When he first arrived in 1973 as a journalist working for *Time* magazine, the country was in one of its darkest moments. "No one walked the streets at night, the markets were empty, people were being kidnapped," he said. Although the country today has transformed dramatically, the scars of its past remain just beneath the surface.

"In Argentina the bad guys are bad, but even the good guys are complicated," said Eisendrath.

Journalists are 'warm, wonderful.' Who knew?

By Alan V. Deardorff, the associate dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, the John W. Sweetland professor of international economics and professor of public policy. His research focuses on international trade.

Over the years, I have met a number of KW fellows in various contexts, but most importantly when they attended one of my courses and/or were paired with me as an adviser. Of these, two in the past two years have stood out and made me appreciate anew the value of the Knight Wallace program.

The first of these was Marcelo Leite, a print journalist from Brazil who was here for just fall semester 2011. Because he had been reassigned to cover economic issues at his newspaper, he wanted to learn more about economics, and because I was teaching my course in the economics of international trade policy at the time, he took my course. We also met frequently outside of class to discuss all manner of issues, only some of them related to international trade or even economics.

As I'd learned to expect of KW fellows, Marcelo was knowledgeable, articulate and very smart. I looked forward to our meetings as well as to his occasional interventions in my class. What's more, he was a delightful person.

I don't know how the fellows are selected, or how they can possibly be chosen for their personalities, but all the ones whom I have gotten to know have been wonderful, warm human beings. If that's true of journalists as a class, I certainly had not learned that from other sources.

The second recent KW fellow whom I've been pleased to get to know was Amir Paivar, an Iranian journalist on leave from the BBC in London. We planned initially for him to sit in on my large undergraduate course on international

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economics, but his focus changed to learning about entrepreneurship, something I could not provide. Nonetheless, we met regularly throughout the semester that he was on campus, just to share ideas and experiences.

His experiences, being at the time not welcome in his home country because of some of the work that he had done, were far more interesting than mine. Again, I looked forward to our meetings and found him to be good friend and a fount of information.

Looking back on these two experiences with KW fellows, I'd be hard pressed to identify what they may have gotten out of their interactions with me. But I am very clear on what I have learned from them. They've opened my eyes to parts of the world I will never meet in person myself.

I'm very glad I had that opportunity and I hope it will recur.

Publisher: Charles R. Eisendrath '75
Editor: Kyle Poplin '10
Production and Design:
Kathleen Horn, Blue Skies Studio;
Wagner Design Associates

Views expressed in the *Journal* are not necessarily those of the Fellowship Program or the University of Michigan.

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—What is college for anyway?, continued from page 9

As public universities feel this financial squeeze, the undergraduate demographic is changing dramatically.

For example, here at Michigan, in 2012, 42 percent of students—almost half—were from out-of-state or a foreign country. In other words, the students who pay the most. Just 10 years ago that figure was about 20 percent.

In some states the focus on out-of-state students is getting truly wacky. At the University of California at Los Angeles in 2011, you were more likely to be admitted as an out-of-state student than as an in-state one.

This is a bewildering turn away from the original missions of public universities.

The Chronicle and *ProPublica* reported recently that many public universities are shifting their financial-aid dollars away from the poorest students to wealthier ones—mainly to attract out-of-state students or higher-achieving students whose academic profile will help boost these campuses in the rankings. ...

And if certain experts are right, President Obama's latest proposals for rating colleges and tying financial aid to their student performance will only make things worse for students from low-income families.

And once they leave college, non-traditional students like Becky face crushing amounts of debt. Just this past year, we've passed the trillion-dollar mark in total U.S. student debt. …

We are seeing a generation for whom a college degree may have opened doors, but at what cost? Given that it will severely limit their chance to live the American Dream, is that what college is intended to do?

If the public universities have abrogated their original missions, of the promise they offered of education to their citizens at a reasonable rate, what's to be done? Some people believe passionately that innovation will save the day—that MOOCs and online courses offered at low cost will open up education for many more people. …

The idea is that students with ingenuity and discipline will be able to cobble together a reasonably priced undergraduate degree. That will be a great thing, if it happens. Let's not lose sight of the fact, however, that low-cost online education is only filling a need that wouldn't exist at all if public universities had not been forced to alter their mission.

There is also the risk that an online-based education could further exacerbate the inequities in higher education I've been describing. How many who favor this innovation would choose to educate their own children this way? …

So no wonder the value of a college degree is being questioned—that colleges are being asked about the "return on investment" they provide. What is a college education for, anyway? Is it just to get that credential so that one can get a job? Is it an experience intended to educate the whole person? Should higher education be thought of as a benefit for an individual, or more broadly as an engine for economic development, as a societal good?

I would frame the question differently: WHO is college for? What kind of college, and on what terms? Is the traditional four-year degree in this country today just for the affluent?

When people talk about this country being on the wrong track, one of the main and largely unspoken reasons, I maintain, is what's happening in higher education. The path to aspiration and social mobility in the United States has become much more narrow in the past three decades. Before our eyes, and without much public discussion, college has become a large socioeconomic sorting device.

So. You all are going to have a wonderfully rich year in Ann Arbor exploring this incredible university. But when you go back to your beats next summer—whether it's digital technology, science, the media, sports, economics or politics—remember that many of the people and issues you will be reporting on are products of this new educational order, one that many believe is becoming a caste system that reproduces economic privilege in this country.

You will be covering the consequences of higher education's struggle to produce a competitive workforce, and you will be covering people dealing with the issues of inequity that higher education is magnifying.

Higher education and the questions about who and what it's for is certainly *The Chronicle's* story. But it's not JUST *The Chronicle's* story. It is, inevitably, over the years of your careers, the next 30 years of your lives, going to be your story, too.