

## CIVILITY AND STUDENT LIFE

Gary Pavela\*

Anyone who writes about “civility” risks fostering one of the great inducements to incivility — *boredom*. Especially for college students, the topic of “civility” brings to mind staid convention, lectures about manners, and — worst of all — hypocrisy.

This risk can be reduced by trying to clarify what “civility” means and by asking a frequently pondered but rarely discussed question: “Why be civil?” Assuming a satisfactory answer is provided, readers might then be induced to consider ways civility can be promoted.

### WHAT CIVILITY MEANS

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Although “civility” can't be defined with precision, it is equated with courtesy — a style and manner that elevates human interaction and discourse. Variations occur in different cultures, but all are reflected in patterns of human sociability (smiles, bows, handshakes, gifts, ritual greetings, or acts of kindness) grounded in one unmistakable characteristic: a recognition of “standing” and dignity in others.

Civility, courtesy, and good manners usually require discipline and self restraint. The training and effort associated with those qualities gives them a value — a currency — that ennobles the recipient and the giver. Through reciprocity in giving and receiving, the stature of both is enhanced.

Most social animals display some capacity for rudimentary civility, usually grounded in structures of dominance. One human characteristic is civility based on empathy, or abstract notions of “rights,” drawn from “self-evident” principles or religious teachings. One of the great cultural inventions in history — for which the West, with all its failings, deserves much credit — is the effort to extend those feelings, principles, and teachings beyond family, tribe, and nation to all humanity. Some variations (*e.g.*, the animal rights movement) even extend beyond the species.

#### *WHY BE CIVIL?*

As to the question “why be civil?,” one might respond by saying that we strive for civility for the same reason musicians seek to play great music, athletes strive to win races, or novelists aspire to write enduring books. Our nature is to try to create something greater than ourselves. Doing so promotes happiness. Since civility is part of our humanity — indeed, one of the most elevated parts of our humanity — the struggle to be civil can lead to the highest happiness.

Civility also promotes happiness because it is associated with affiliation, affection, and love. Those characteristics and feelings flow from our social nature. They are rarely achieved and hardly ever survive when others are treated without dignity — solely as a means to someone else's end.

Our social nature also depends upon communication. One of the most cherished forms of human communication is conversation — a process guided and structured by implicit or explicit standards of civility. The importance of conversation was emphasized recently in

a transcribed discussion among writers and scientists who thought deeply about the nature of human beings and computers.<sup>1</sup> New York University computer scientist Jaron Lanier — who coined the term “virtual reality” — observed:

I think that the fundamental process of conversation is one of the great miracles of nature, that two people communicating with each other is an extraordinary phenomenon that has so far defied all attempts to capture it. There have been attempts made in many different disciplines — in cognitive science, in linguistics, in social theory — and no one has really made much progress. Communicating with another person remains an essentially mystical act.<sup>2</sup>

Conversation is important to us because another distinguishing attribute of our nature is to be *truth-seeking animals*.<sup>3</sup> A more curious creature never lived. From a purely Darwinian standpoint, we “waste” extraordinary resources trying to understand processes we can't control or have little bearing on our immediate biological survival — like whether the universe is expanding or contracting. We even pursue theories that may harm us — or at least harm our self-image — by affirming we have no special stature at all, other than as primates with an extraordinary capacity for self-delusion.

We require at least some minimal standards of civility in conversation precisely because truth is our goal. This is because truth is something greater than isolated facts or theories. It encompasses reciprocated experience (or wisdom) shared in relationship with other human beings. A good example in the academic world is the scientific method. Following the scientific method means practicing self-restraint: engaging in self-examination, honestly sharing information, welcoming constructive criticism, and viewing those who disagree as partners in the pursuit of truth, not enemies. Civility is an essential part of the scientific method — and academic life in general.

### *PROMOTING CIVILITY ON CAMPUS*

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1. See Jack Hitt et al., *Our Machines, Ourselves*, HARPER'S MAG., May 1, 1997, at 45.

2. *Id.* at 50.

3. *See id.*

The importance of civility is reflected by timeless laments about its passing. The intensity of concern is particularly strong in the United States at present, perhaps for good reason. A 1996 *U.S. News and World Report* survey found that eighty-nine percent see incivility as a “serious problem,” while seventy-eight percent think incivility is worse than it was a decade ago.<sup>4</sup>

In the *U.S. News* survey, seventy-six percent of the respondents attributed the apparent decline in civility, at least in part, to “adults' willingness to keep their children under control.”<sup>5</sup> This suggests that other institutions designed to shape and influence the young — like colleges and universities — will also be expected to set and enforce higher behavioral standards.

Both as an end in itself, and in response to public concerns, college administrators will be seeking to promote greater civility on campus. Some will meet resistance from colleagues who think students have formed immutable habits by the time they arrive on campus. That pessimistic view is wrong, based on solid research done by Professor Donald McCabe of Rutgers University and others, showing that varied campus climates can have a significant impact on how students behave, including their willingness to engage in academic dishonesty.<sup>6</sup> What follows are thoughts and suggestions about ways educators can realistically expect to promote better values — and better conduct — by students.

▪ **Realism about student development and student life needs to be a starting point in any discussion about promoting greater civility on campus.** Young people often define their character by testing authority. Some appear to have developed important personal, social, and religious insights as a result. One example, out of many possibilities, is Leo Tolstoy. The chronology of his student life includes excessive drinking, wild partying, gambling, a bout of venereal disease, and a series of failed examinations at the Kazan University Faculty of Oriental Languages.<sup>7</sup> Somehow, he managed to ply these experiences into a life that helped him create some of the greatest literature ever written. Countless examples of

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4. See John Marks, *The American Uncivil Wars*, U.S. NEWS & WORD REP., Apr. 22, 1996, at 66.

5. *Id.* at 68.

6. See Gary Pavela, *New Research on Academic Integrity*, SYNFAK WKLY. REP., May 20, 1996, at 485.

7. THE PORTABLE TOLSTOY 28 (John Bayley ed., Penguin Books 1978).

this nature may help explain why civility should not be defined as perfect rectitude, or blind obedience to authority. Especially in the young, civility is a sensibility that may be inchoate (evidenced by the common observation that a student has a “good heart,” even if he or she is frequently in trouble), but that needs time and experience to develop. This is not to suggest students should escape the consequences of their actions. Quite the contrary. What is needed is moderate, progressive discipline, coupled with dialogue designed to promote self-realization.

▪ **Those who seek perfection in themselves and others are destined for disappointment, and risk promoting even greater cynicism in an already cynical generation.** Daniel Thomas, a political scientist at Wartburg College, has observed that many young adults in America have “a deep sense of irony . . . [p]eople [who] pretend to be saviors or faultless are immediately suspect.”<sup>8</sup> What is needed is an approach suggested by Elizabeth Kiss, Director of the Kenan Ethics Program at Duke University. “Moral education,” Kiss observed, “is not about having all the answers but about a shared process of moral inquiry.”<sup>9</sup>

The idea of a “shared” process of moral inquiry means that civility is incorporated in the *teaching* of civility. Students are not treated as immoral, inferior beings, but as actual or potential fellow strugglers in an effort to treat people better, and to lead a better life.

Most of the world's great ethical thinkers appreciate this approach, recognizing the reality of human fallibility. Aristotle, in particular, argued that ethical behavior is difficult.<sup>10</sup> It requires restraint on powerful emotions, and a calibrated effort to determine “the right extent” at the “right time” and “the right reason” for the things we do.<sup>11</sup> “It is easy to fail and difficult . . . to hit the [ethical] mean,” Aristotle wrote, and we “must, as the saying has it, sail in the second best way and take the lesser evil” on some occasions.<sup>12</sup>

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8. Ted Anthony, *Young Voters Stay on Sidelines; “Watcher Generation” Could Swing Presidential Election, but Complex Political Issues Leave Many Overwhelmed*, ROCKY MTN. NEWS, Oct. 27, 1996, at 3A.

9. Elizabeth Kiss, *Moral Education in an Age of Irony*, 8 SYNTHESIS: L. & POL’Y HIGHER EDUC. 614, 618 (1997).

10. See ARISTOTLE, THE NICOMACHEAN ETHICS 79–87 (H. Rackham trans., Harvard Univ. Press 1968).

11. *Id.* at 81.

12. *Id.* at 95.

This is a concept educators need to understand if they wish to achieve even modest success in influencing student values and conduct. Virtues like courtesy and self-restraint are not easily or naturally developed.<sup>13</sup> They depend on temperaments and habits that must be affirmed, nurtured, and refined over a lifetime — and which, even then, still leave us vulnerable to failure. It is not the exceptional failure that is the greatest evil, but the unwillingness to *see* the failure, and start anew.

▪ **A single-minded reliance upon punishment is one of the least effective ways to promote civility, especially among American college students.** If anything has been learned by the campus “speech code” debate<sup>14</sup> — and the resounding rejection of speech codes by the courts — it is that punishment for the kind of incivility associated with offensive expression runs squarely into a deep and evolving libertarian streak in American society. The end result has been to turn offending students into First Amendment martyrs. This characteristic of campus life is only going to grow stronger in the years ahead, as the culture of the Internet expands into the university setting.

A good part of the campus climate of the future may be seen in an article by Jon Katz in *Wired* magazine.<sup>15</sup> Katz describes the evolution of a young generation — liberal on certain cultural issues like gay rights, but distrustful of government and committed to personal and economic freedom.<sup>16</sup> The Internet, for this cohort, isn't just a form of communication: it's a symbol of liberty and autonomy, not unlike the automobile.<sup>17</sup> And like parking tickets on automobiles, restrictions on the Internet provoke intense reactions.<sup>18</sup>

The word that comes to mind in reading Katz's analysis is *individualism*. Individualism, of course, is the heart of American exceptionalism, but it takes new and renewed form on-line, with values described by Katz as “libertarian, materialistic, tolerant,

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13. *See id.* at 87–89.

14. *See, e.g., Stanford Speech Code Unconstitutional*, SYNFAQ WKLY. REP., Mar. 6, 1995, at 332. For an overview of the campus politics related to speech codes, and reasons why one supporter of such codes changed his mind, see Jeffrey Toobin, *The Shalala Strategy*, NEW YORKER, Apr. 26, 1993, at 53.

15. *See* Jon Katz, *Netizen: Birth of a Digital Nation*, WIRED, Apr. 1997, at 49.

16. *See id.* at 49–52.

17. *See id.* at 186.

18. *See id.*

rational, technologically adept, [and] disconnected from conventional political organizations.”<sup>19</sup>

This is a generation that will drive aging, ideologically-motivated baby boomers to distraction, since Katz observed it is defiantly “[not] politically correct . . . rejecting liberal notions like affirmative action” as efforts by government or opinion elites “to dictate private personal behavior.”<sup>20</sup> Some educators may respond with a frontal attack — motivated, perhaps, by personal distaste, or political enmity. They will quickly learn the power of youthful enthusiasm, high intelligence, and technical skill — all riding on and accelerating the deep, 200-year-old American cultural current of personal liberty.

A heavy reliance on censorship won't work in dealing with “the digital nation.”<sup>21</sup> Candor and suasion might. That's because other values frequently displayed in the digital world include: *commitment, precision, diligence, hard work, playfulness, and loyalty*. Those values can be a foundation for multi-generational respect and cooperation, especially if students and administrators work together (perhaps borrowing ideas developed in traditional honor codes) to make many forms of incivility unfashionable.

▪ **Values are formed in communities, especially communities with a purpose.** On many campuses “diversity” and “tolerance” are the only explicitly affirmed values and virtues. The inevitable questions arise: “Diversity for what purpose? Tolerance to what end?”

John Gardner has written that:

[T]o speak of community implies *some* degree of wholeness. What we seek — at every level — is pluralism that achieves some kind of coherence, *wholeness incorporating diversity*. I do not think it is venturing beyond the truth to say that wholeness incorporating diversity is the transcendent goal of our time, the task for our generation . . . .<sup>22</sup>

There was a time when defining “wholeness” was possible on most college campuses. It encompassed a range of secular and religious values framed in official charters, sometimes reduced to a few

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19. *Id.* at 52.

20. *Id.* at 186.

21. See Katz, *supra* note 15, at 190.

22. JOHN W. GARDNER, BUILDING COMMUNITY 15 (1991).

key paragraphs signed by students and faculty members in matriculation ceremonies. Some contemporary faculty members, displaying the fashionable skepticism associated with self-inflation, deride such rituals. More parents and students, however, will come to expect them, especially as the best secondary schools develop comparable variations.<sup>23</sup> At heart, the values more colleges will explicitly affirm will include a commitment to the pursuit of truth, and the virtues associated with making that pursuit possible and meaningful.

▪ **Truth and virtue can be affirmed, even in a skeptical age.** Gertrude Himmelfarb, writing in the *The American Scholar*, sought to define what she believes to be the dominant academic ethic, at least outside the sciences:

The mainspring of postmodernism is [the] . . . skepticism, and subjectivism that rejects . . . the very idea of truth. For the postmodernist, there is no truth, no knowledge, no objectivity, no reason . . . . There is no correspondence between language and reality; indeed, there is no “essential” reality . . . . What appears to be true is nothing more than what the power structure, the “hegemonic” authority in society, deems to be true. To those of you who have been happily spared this latest intellectual fashion, it may seem bizarre and improbable. I can only assure you that it is all too prevalent in all fields of the humanities.<sup>24</sup>

There is a radical inconsistency in radical postmodernist thought. It was revealed in Duke University Professor Stanley Fish's response to New York University physicist Alan Sokal's intentional publication of a nonsensical article in the postmodernist journal *Social Text*.<sup>25</sup> To challenge Sokal, Professor Fish (a leading proponent of postmodernism) was put in the awkward position of having to assert what appears to be a universal truth; namely, that human beings are not pursuing an illusion in trying to form some understanding of the social and physical world around them (otherwise, why be critical of Sokal's hoax?) and that the shared effort to do so requires certain ethical standards, like honesty and trust.

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23. See Ernest Boyer's proposals for values-based education in “*The Basic School and the American College*,” SYNFAQ WKLY. REP., Oct. 2, 1995, at 402.

24. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Revolution in the Library*, 66 AM. SCHOLAR 197, 201–02 (1997).

25. See *Postmodernism Deconstructed*, SYNFAQ WKLY. REP., May 27, 1996, at 488.

Again, another term for this approach is *the scientific method*, a concept frequently ridiculed by postmodernists in other contexts.<sup>26</sup> That method assumes some kind of external truth (even if it can never be fully grasped), accommodates intuition and a sense of beauty in forming a hypothesis, and contains many implicit *virtues*, like honesty and humility. These are values and virtues that can and should be affirmed as definitive for colleges and universities. Without them — or some comparable formulation — there are no standards. And without standards there can be no civility.

▪ **A widespread pattern of sexual exploitation should be seen and identified as a manifestation of incivility — and incivility's self-defeating nature.** The fact that casual, frequently exploitative sex is common among students needs little confirmation — although confirmation is available in a national survey of college students published in the youth-oriented magazine *Details*.<sup>27</sup> The survey found that thirty percent of heterosexual men and twenty-seven percent of heterosexual women had six or more sex partners, and that forty-five percent of men and forty-two percent of women had “cheated on a steady partner.”<sup>28</sup> Increased sexual activity, however, didn't seem to be a source of pride or happiness: only thirty percent of men and forty percent of women said “relationships today are better than those of their parents' generation.”<sup>29</sup> Most sought something more lasting, and meaningful: sixty-five percent of the men and seventy-five percent of the women said they “love the idea of being married to one person for their whole life.”<sup>30</sup>

The vast majority of college students may know intuitively what psychological researchers have concluded: the work (and joy) associated with building lasting relationships is more satisfying than frequent — and, especially, casual — sex, particularly as people grow older. This was the conclusion of George E. Vaillant, based on his landmark longitudinal study — ongoing for over forty years — of men who attended a “highly competitive liberal arts college” in the East.<sup>31</sup> Evaluating the men at age fifty, Vaillant concluded that:

26. The whole point of postmodernism is a rejection of objective “truth.” Naturally, rejecting objective truth means rejecting any *process* designed to “discover” it.

27. See Amy Sohn, *Crazy, Sexy School*, DETAILS, May 1996, at 159.

28. See *id.* at 163.

29. See *id.* at 160.

30. See *id.*

31. See GEORGE E. VAILLANT, ADAPTION TO LIFE (1977).

the conventional Freudian wisdom that maturity and “genitality” are defined by happy sexual adjustment was only weakly borne out by this study. Whether a man can love friends, his wife, his parents, and his children proved a far better predictor of his mental health and of his generativity than whether at fifty he found bliss in a marital or extramarital bed . . . “Yea, though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am but a sounding brass and a tinkling bell.”<sup>32</sup>

There is a connection between love, social life, happiness, and civility that needs to be communicated to students: all are grounded in *self restraint*. No one said this better than Plato, in his dialogue *Gorgias*:

To me, at least, this seems to be the end and aim which a man must keep in mind throughout his life. He must turn all his own efforts and those of his country to bring it about that justice and self-control shall effect a happy life. He must not allow his desires to run riot nor, by serving to fulfill the endless torment of satisfying them, live the life of a brigand. Such a man could not be on friendly terms with any other man, nor with God, for his would be incapable of sharing; and where there is no sharing, there can be no friendship.<sup>33</sup>

▪ **Civility is learned by instruction, and by example.** A commitment to the pursuit of truth promotes civility and friendship by encouraging a form of discourse called “dialectic.” Dialectic entails discovering contradictions in a colleague's argument, and proposing better alternatives, in an effort to enhance mutual understanding.<sup>34</sup> It is described by University of Chicago Law Professor James Boyd White:

[R]hetoric naturally treats others as means to an end, while dialectic treats others as ends in themselves. Rhetoric persuades another not by refuting but by flattering him, by appealing to what pleases, rather than to what is best for him . . . . Dialectic is wholly

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32. *Id.* at 326.

33. PLATO, GORGIAS 83 (W.C. Helmbold trans., Macmillan Publ'g Co. 1985).

34. See James Boyd White, *The Ethics of Argument: Plato's Gorgias and the Modern Lawyer*, 50 U. CHI. L. REV. 849, 861–62 (1983).

different both in method and in object. It proceeds not by making lengthy statements . . . but by questioning and answering in a one-to-one conversation. Its object is to engage each person at the deepest level, and for this it requires utter frankness of speech on each side . . . . This is not a competition to see who can reduce the other to his will, but a process of mutual discovery by mutual refutation . . . . *The object of it all is truth, and its method is friendship . . . .*<sup>35</sup>

Although dialectic has been supplanted by lectures at many large schools (and ideological proselytizing at some small ones), the teaching of dialectic still continues at places like St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland.<sup>36</sup> St. John's and comparable institutions may become national models again,<sup>37</sup> perhaps as more individualized instruction permits something close to dialectic on line.

Formal instruction aside, most students learn dialectic by seeing it. There's a role here for student affairs administrators, who can arrange for faculty colleagues who are capable of genuine dialogue to engage each other on issues students would find interesting (*e.g.*, affirmative action). An important part of the encounter should be explicit discussion about the importance of civility in conversation.

▪ **Civility is promoted when values and good manners are discussed and affirmed, especially by peers.** Professor Donald McCabe's research has shown that schools with active honor codes have less academic dishonesty than comparable schools without honor codes.<sup>38</sup> The reason is a peer culture that sees academic integrity as a concern of the entire student body, not just the campus administration.<sup>39</sup> Similar approaches can be applied in other areas, like a student advisory council on alcohol abuse, or a student committee charged with helping draft a computer-use policy. The latter group may be especially helpful in suggesting ideas that might be overlooked by older adults. For example, in his *Wired* magazine

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35. *Id.* at 870 (emphasis added).

36. See Amy Argetsinger, *Trading Rancor for Respect, Shouts for Civility; St. John's College Teaches the Right Way to Debate*, WASH. POST, Apr. 10, 1997, at MD1.

37. See, *e.g.*, *id.*

38. See Donald L. McCabe & Linda Klebe, *Academic Dishonesty: Honor Codes and Other Contextual Influences*, 64 J. HIGHER EDUC. 522, 533 (1993); Donald L. McCabe, *Academic Integrity: What the Latest Research Shows*, SYNTHESIS: L. & POL'Y HIGHER EDUC. 340 (1993).

39. See McCabe & Klebe, *supra* note 38, at 536.

article,<sup>40</sup> Jon Katz offered an insight other young people might share and could be induced to discuss publicly with their peers:

As anyone who writes on the Web knows, criticism comes fast and furious. Some of it is cruel . . . . But as an experiment, I began responding to angry e-mail as if it were civil, addressing the point being made instead of the tone of the message. The pattern was clear: at least three-quarters of the time, the most hostile emailers responded with apologies . . . . In hundreds of instances, flammers said things like, "Sorry, but I had no idea you would actually read this," or "I never expected to get a reply." [Even when] [p]roven wrong, many of the most hostile flammers became faithful correspondents, often continuing to disagree — but in a civil way. I found myself listening more to them as well.<sup>41</sup>

The amount of pornography and sexually offensive material online is equally troublesome. Colleges tempted to resort to censorship might consider an approach explained by Marjorie Hodges, Policy Advisor for the Office of Information Technologies at Cornell University. Hodges reported that Cornell would take legal or disciplinary action in a case involving obscenity or child pornography, but would not impose sanctions simply because a student displayed lawful but "offensive" material on a campus web page.<sup>42</sup> Still, even without the imposition of sanctions, Hodges has found that "most students are embarrassed that an official of the university has seen the material — and most students chose to take [it] off the webpages as soon as possible" after being confronted.<sup>43</sup> Her comment brings to mind an important tool some administrators overlook: *moral suasion* — often expressed by a simple inquiry or observation, or by informing students of the impression they may be making on friends and family members.

▪ **Civility is developed and enhanced by cooperative action.** National attention to community service and service learning seems to grow weekly. Proponents should make the argument that enhanced civility is one of many positive results. This is so be-

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40. See Katz, *supra* note 15.

41. *Id.* at 190.

42. See *Responding to Coarseness and Incivility on Campus*, SYNFAQ WKLY. REP., Apr. 21, 1997, at 603.

43. See *id.*

cause the ethical values associated with civility are grounded in empathy rather than reason. Empathy, of course, is not learned by precept; it is fostered and enhanced by human contact and cooperative action. One of the most important roles for campus administrators is *asking people to help*, especially people ready and willing to volunteer, who have been overlooked in the past.

The role of empathy in promoting civility is sometimes overlooked, especially when ethical reasoning is given priority over ethical behavior. Yet ethical action is sometimes “unreasonable” in the sense that it may require taking risks (like hiding Jews in Nazi Germany) that run contrary to the natural instinct for survival. Empathy is usually evoked by cooperative human contact, but the essence of “empathy” (or altruism) remains a wonderful mystery, suggestive of a human stature that transcends the animal world. Harvard Professor Stephen Jay Gould has written in this regard that:

[I]n most cases, I would concur . . . that a claim for human difference only represents the peculiarity of an odd species . . . . But altruism falls into a different category of intrinsically human conundrums because its classical moral and philosophical focus has not been addressed by the evolutionary solution: why are humans so prone to perform acts that both benefit others and endanger themselves. The evolutionary argument holds that animals perform such altruistic acts toward relatives who share enough of their genes to render the potential sacrifice beneficial to the altruist's genetic heritage. But since most human acts of altruism are performed in the service of non-kin, this explanation cannot hold for our brand . . . . Within the little community of professional evolutionists . . . the gene-selectionist account of “altruism” matters greatly, but we cannot and dare not claim that we have thereby solved the classic philosophical issue generally encompassed by this word.<sup>44</sup>

▪ **Civility is fostered by carefully designed physical settings and social environments.** Colleges are likely to survive as physical entities, even in the age of the Internet, if they are attentive to creating appealing surroundings. That is because people are

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44. Stephen Jay Gould, *Confusion over Evolution*, N.Y. REV. OF BOOKS, Jan. 14, 1993, at 44.

attracted to beauty, and fellowship in partaking of beauty. Even attention to seemingly mundane matters such as litter control are important, since disorder in social life seems to be associated with a disorderly environment.

Likewise, administrators need to be attentive to creating social environments conducive to civility. For example, in his book *The Moral Sense*, James Q. Wilson cited research showing that the absence of women in early American mining towns seemed to be the main reason why many of those towns “came close to the Hobbesian state of nature.”<sup>45</sup> This doesn't mean the presence of women is the solution to all human problems — as most sorority advisors can attest. It does indicate that segregated settings, especially male youth ghettos in residence halls and fraternities, are likely to be troublesome places.

Most college administrators have seen the disadvantages of gender segregation. Now, as more older students arrive on campus (and as larger numbers of traditional-age students participate in off-campus internships), the value of integrating different age groups is also becoming apparent. Careful planning and programming is necessary to foster more interaction across the barrier of age. The end result may be a quantum leap in civility — the kind associated with the blending of young and old, male and female — in one of the best human creations: a thriving family.

### CONCLUSION

Civility is grounded in a recognition of the standing and dignity of other human beings. People cherish civility because it promotes the highest happiness — including human interaction grounded in affection and love.

Promoting civility on campus requires an understanding that perfect rectitude isn't possible or desirable. While limits must be set and enforced, civility is best promoted by example, suasion, and the creation of a social environment permitting a broad range of human interaction and friendship, including friendship that crosses lines of gender and age.

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45. JAMES Q. WILSON, *THE MORAL SENSE* 173 (1993); see also David T. Courtwright, *Violence in America: What Human Nature and the California Gold Rush Tell Us About Crime in the Inner City*, AM. HERITAGE, Sept. 1, 1996, at 36.

An important aim of civility on campus is the creation of a community. The campus community is a special one, committed to the pursuit of truth, and the companionship that makes truth worth finding.