

The Power of College Students to Accomplish Goals for Campus and Community Health

Summary of the 2002 Sumner Symposium of the Program for Health and Higher Education

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Introduction

The 2002 Sumner Symposium, conducted on April 25 at the Charles Sumner School¹ in downtown Washington, DC, considered the roles and potential of students as assets to our common health – both on campus and in our communities. Building upon the conclusions of the first Symposium² – held in May 2001 – this year’s discussion moved beyond the observation that students are both a challenge and an opportunity in public health to explore the concept of students’ power to influence health, with a particular focus on the origins of that power, its applications, and ways to build and sustain it.

For seven years since its beginning, the Program for Health and Higher Education (PHHE) has emphasized our collective ownership of – and responsibility for – health. This idea – what we have called *our common health* – distinguishes purely personal health and safety concerns from health-related issues that, because of their origin, development, effects, impact, or solutions, affect all members of a group, or a community. Our mutual and joint responsibility for our common health can be discharged only through systematic, planned, and collective action. On campus, the social, cultural, and environmental factors that influence health behaviors, the health status of individuals, and the common health are particularly evident, but similar forces affect all of us, in all communities; in a changing, increasingly interlinked, and progressively more global society, no one’s health is an isolated quality, subject only to personal events, decisions, and risks.

Common Safety as Common Health: Student Responses After September 11th

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath provided a compelling new framework for considerations of our common health and safety. The urgent questions of homeland security and the worldwide risk of terrorism both redefined Americans’ understanding of the world order and created a sudden, deep, and abiding anxiety of vulnerability. Just as nations that have struggled with the effects of continuing, episodic terrorism or unresolved civil

¹ Charles Sumner, the school’s namesake, was a distinguished Senator and abolitionist.

² Please see: *College Students as a Challenge and an Opportunity for Public Health: Summary of the 2001 Sumner Symposium of the Program for Health and Higher Education*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2001.

conflict have learned that safety must be a shared, public concern, so the people of our country – including our college students – found in the horror of September 11 the strongest possible case for *the common safety* – safety that is a collective good, shared by all or, otherwise, assured to no one. Any illusion that we, as individuals, could completely control our own risks independently surely vanished that morning.

The responses to the events of September 11 on our campuses demonstrated with precise clarity how students can be powerfully engaged in improving health and safety both for themselves and for others. These observations strengthen the more general finding that students have made meaningful and substantive contributions to addressing and alleviating pressing problems in the common health of campus communities. Because the events on our campuses after September 11 allowed us to see what happens when students unleash their knowledge, creativity, energy, and agency in managing a complex problem of health and safety, the 2002 Sumner Symposium adopted as its theme, “Common Safety as Common Health,” and used the experience of colleges and universities after the attacks as a commentary to advance our national conversation on the power of students to influence campus and community health.

In January 2002, PHHE convened a forum during the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) and the American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD) to collect the experience of leaders in higher education and extract from their descriptions of the events, activities, and reactions on their campuses after September 11 the most common and meaningful themes. Instead of reporting primarily about programs and services organized and deployed by institutions for the benefit of students (as described in the bulk of published accounts in professional journals and the mass media), the participants in our forum consistently described something else: *efforts by students not only to care for one another, but also to offer and provide assistance to their teachers, college administrators, and staff members*, many of whom, especially in the regions near New York City and the District of Columbia, were distracted or absent because of concern about their own families. With the perspective and distance of a few months, these leaders affirmed that their campuses would not have “gotten through it” without their students. Later, PHHE collected other narratives in written reports from some forum participants and others in campus communities; taken all together, those narratives and the observations made at the forum illustrate persuasively how students can be assets and resources in matters of health and safety. These themes emerged most strongly:

- Students realized their own vulnerability. Not only on campuses near the scenes of actual attack, but all over the country, students would struggle for weeks – or months, or still – with questions of meaning, relevance, and purpose.
- Students, seeing the need, responded quickly, effectively, and constructively. Students were essential in generating creative responses and in helping their campus communities restore communications, essential services, and hope. Not only did students volunteer, organize memorial services, rally to support students who felt especially unsafe (such as Muslims), and give blood, they also suggested or arranged for new academic courses that focused on some aspect of the disaster, from religious diversity to bioterrorism. Professors nationwide reported new courses, increases in enrollment in classes concerned

with international diplomacy, Islam, or the Middle East, and, more generally, greater engagement of their students with academic material.³

- Students recognized and responded to differentials in safety. Students organized to urge restraint, oppose racial profiling, and prevent harm when anger and threats frightened Muslim students (or others whose physical characteristics, ethnicity, culture, or national origin suggested they might be Muslim).
- Students participated as fully responsible members of their communities. The most striking theme from the reports we received was this: that students not only took over certain responsibilities for members of the faculty and staff who were coping with their own fears or losses, or caring for their own families and friends, but also provided support for their teachers and other campus employees as well. Many observers said that students had been more resilient and resourceful in the first days after the attacks than were the faculty, staff, or college administration. The usual distinctions between teachers and learners, or faculty and staff, were erased; new forms of commonality were created.
- Students' responses have helped administrators, faculty, and staff see them as agents and assets, rather than as risks or liabilities. Although the elements of a renewed, freer, and more open relationship with students were not formally "programmed" in the tense hours and days following September 11, the participants in PHHE's forum spoke passionately of wanting to identify, and, if possible, reproduce those elements – to permit the development of campus programs that effectively mobilized and supported student power.

Students, like other responsible members of campus communities, witnessed the urgency of the crisis and created new programs and services in response, more or less from scratch, without scripts, policy manuals, permission, or approval. Advocacy for students' power was unnecessary. But in the more ordinary circumstances of academic life, documenting the nature and value of students' contributions to campus and community health and safety is essential – as is advocacy. Thus, the Symposium sought to answer these three key questions:

1. What roles did students play in responding to the events of September 11? Was their response somehow anomalous, or did it illustrate a more general point about their potential to make important contributions to improving health and safety on campuses and in our communities?
2. What can students' responses after the terrorist attacks teach us about ways to strengthen, reinforce, and release their power to influence health and safety? What practices and strategies might facilitate student leadership in developing and implementing effective programs to promote our common health? What approaches would be most likely to liberate student agency, while neither romanticizing them nor underestimating their

³ Cox AM. The changed classroom, post-September 11. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 26, 2001, page A16.

capacity to analyze and solve problems?

3. What are the most important next steps in advancing this continuing national conversation about the health of college students, and about their capacity to contribute to the nation's health and safety? Especially, how might the three envisioned PHHE working groups – Programming, Research, and Advocacy – contribute to these efforts? What, exactly, might persons who seek to advocate for greater attention to students' health do, and how – and when? How can we identify, understand, and alleviate inequities in health and safety among college students? What are the roles of student learning, collaborative research, and community-based learning in solving student health problems? What approaches produce good results both in education and in the common health?

Exploring the Connections Among Students' Power, Learning, and Health

In this second Sumner Symposium, students, scholars, leaders from colleges and universities, national policy makers, and representatives of professional organizations in higher education gathered to explore a new way of conceptualizing, defining, and understanding students' institutional and civic relationships, power, and agency. In the Symposium's discussions and presentations, the participants explicitly investigated the connections between students' power and agency, on the one hand, and their learning and action, on the other, using issues of health and safety as the foundation and springboard for analysis and conversation. In her remarks at a reception on Capitol Hill on the evening before the Symposium, Carol Geary Schneider, President of AAC&U, emphasized students' emerging roles as co-creators of knowledge in alliance with changing assumptions about liberal education:

We think that liberal education is going to have to place new emphasis on preparing students for the unexpected, for the uncharted, for the unscripted...More and more, students will be themselves engaged from the outset of college in inventing knowledge and becoming co-collaborators with their faculty in advancing those unscripted, uncharted questions that are the work of our time. This kind of co-creation is going to be accomplished in a wide range of situations from traditional research to community-based research to civic activities to civic leadership.

Applying that concept of co-creation (“...how student ideas, commitments, and energy can be powerful, and a sustainable resource...”), Representative Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), who hosted the reception because “...these questions of student power and improving the common health are very, very important to me,” asked her audience “not only to acknowledge and address (students') vulnerabilities, but, more important, to think of them as assets, crucial allies in fact, in our struggle to make campuses healthier and to improve our common health.” And the next morning, opening the Symposium, Dr. Louis Sullivan, President of the Morehouse School of Medicine, Co-Chair of the President's Commission on HIV and AIDS, and former Secretary of Health and Human Services, encouraged participants to be bold in their thinking:

The memory of Charles Sumner and his bravery as an abolitionist should hold out hope for us as we probe existing relationships between colleges and universities, their students, and our society at large...Let's pledge to making something worthy of the memory of Charles Sumner and of all those who struggled in the past to liberate power, to increase freedom, to achieve justice, to enlarge our humanity. If you adopt such a charge and a goal, there will be no stopping you and what you can do for our society.

Thinking *With* Students...Not *About* Them

Acknowledging the weighted significance of the word "power" – and the administrative and political complexity of the concepts it conveys – the Symposium used a fundamental democratic tool – an unfettered discussion among equals – and a series of prototypically democratic assumptions (open and equal access, free discussion, and real engagement with the issues) to bring students, and the history of their experiences, into a rigorous and spirited conversation. The method, if you will, of the Symposium thus reciprocated its principles and supported the findings of PHHE's preliminary investigations. As Janet Smith Dickerson, Vice President for Campus Life at Princeton University, put it: "Let's also remember and recall that we're not here to think *about* students, but to think *with* students."

Students from more than ten colleges and universities were active, thoughtful participants in the Symposium. Recounting – and reflecting upon – their experiences, actions, and learning related to health and safety, they grounded the Symposium's discussions and inspired rich questions about pedagogy, power, and the relationship of the classroom and the curriculum to the problems of our nation and the world.

Some of the students' reports amplified and affirmed the findings of PHHE's Forum in January 2002. Diana Rodriguez, a junior at Audrey Cohen College in lower Manhattan, lost her aunt in the terrorist attacks. David Gonzalez, a student at Pace University's downtown campus, located only a few blocks from the site of the World Trade Center, described September 11 there: "...it was really chaotic, as you can imagine, but what I did see what a sense of togetherness in the students. Sort of like a family atmosphere, everyone looking out for each other." Another Pace student, Sara Shikhman, told her personal story:

I used to think of my professors as the guy I have to get the "A" from...if I have to come to his office for a half an hour and tell him my interest in English literature, I'll do that. But on September 11th, I had the misfortune, I guess, of being together with a professor and it changed my whole perspective, you know? College is all about learning. And that's great. But so much of that learning goes outside of the classroom...on September 11th we were kind of without anything...We didn't have any central department telling us you should do this. So we had to have these student leaders, we had to have all those other professors come together.

In the same vein but a different context, the participants heard from a Princeton student, Robert Accordino, who told of the leveling of his relationship, as a resident assistant, with the students living in his hall: "So I was supposed to be this RA to advise these freshmen who had been at

Princeton for two days and all of a sudden we were totally equal. And those boundaries collapsing everywhere really helped collaboration at the University.” And Erin Levi, who goes to college at George Mason, near the Pentagon, spoke of the discussions that happened on her campus in the hours after the attacks: “We had what was called drop-in dialogues...24 hours in our main Student Center were filled with people from all walks of life coming for the sole purpose of discussion and engaging one another in how do you feel about this?”

New Pedagogies, New Relationships, New Relevance

Almost universally, the students had “moved on” – integrating the experience of September 11 into their lives, taking its lessons, regaining some feeling of safety, returning to the routines and patterns of their lives. But, whether focused on what happened after the terrorist attacks or on other provocative stimuli to active learning, they emphasized how much they had been changed, and how difficult it was to go back to “business as usual” at college or in the rest of their lives, and how irrelevant some classroom material then seemed. Barbara Harrell Carson, Professor of English at Rollins College, summarized the challenge of linking learning with life in her remarks:

(Listening to the students) I kept thinking, “You know, if somehow the classroom doesn’t illuminate life, in a very real and lived way, maybe we need to rethink that.” But I think it does...not necessarily in that particular moment, but in a larger sense...I think we have to find a way to justify to our students what we’re doing in the classroom when people are dying around the world.

That linkage – the classroom illuminating life – was one that students had explored, both in relation to the events of September 11 and through other academic and service projects. Erin Ogilvie, a sophomore at George Mason University, reported on an alternative spring break program in which she had participated:

(I was in) a week-long intensive program working with AIDS organizations, HIV organizations, and a needle exchange program, which was very, very eye-opening for me because I was taken out of this suburban bubble and put into the reality of people that I’d always heard about in classrooms but not actually seen or actually talked with. Not actually shared experiences, or learned from their experiences. It was very, very influential. So I think, mainly, it’s making connections. Everybody trying to make connections between your life and somebody else’s...

The concept of “bubbles” – restricted small environments that provide predictability, but no challenge – resounded throughout the Symposium. Both students and teachers emphasized how important it is to “step outside your bubble” – and described the transformative value of doing so. Peter A. Facione, Provost at Loyola University of Chicago, spoke of the influence of these kinds of experiences on students’ ability to think differently about health: “...the point of worrying about our common health is to make the transition between my health or your health and our health...It’s a transition that comes from maturation, and from living and talking and working with people.” Illustrating that transition from his own experience, Kyle Stedman, a

Rollins senior, told the story of a hard time he and his housemates in an alternative living residence had when they had to take responsibility for a fellow student – also a resident of the house – who had an eating disorder. “One of the neat things about the whole deal was how the community did come together and, I think, share responsibility at the end,” he said – though he acknowledged at the same time the pain and stress associated with the process of stepping outside their “comfort zone.” And Jeff Cooper, another George Mason student, recounted his personal transformation on the same alternative spring break trip that Erin Ogilvie had described:

...at first I felt why me, I gave my spring break, I gave my money, my time, and I don't owe these people anything...it was an emotional trip and I told them, look, I want to go home, I don't want to be here. So we talked about it and the more I thought about it, personally, and I thought I do owe these people something. And they shared their life with me and I can help them and their problem is not just their problem. It's also mine, in a way...it's just that I dealt with it and tried to cast away all the mainstream...I turned my cell phone off. No more cell phone calls, you know. And I got away from my life is here and their life is there...I thought of my life as me and them. But now, after the trip...and reflection...I thought...there's common interest. These people are people, you know? All they want is food to live. And I thanked them for sharing that with me, for showing me...what they have to live through...I learned a great amount about myself. I came back to school. It was really hard to get back into school. It was hard to take things seriously....I just kept wanting to say this really is missing the point.

Later, Jeff reflected further on his experience and its effects:

...now I feel safe shaking hands with someone who has AIDS, or I feel safe...getting close to someone who has it. Which...it's a bad thing to say, but at first...I didn't, because I never really had personal relationships with people who had HIV/AIDS and now I do and it's because I'm gathering these experiences. ...no one goes and gets experiences just to have experiences; you go to gather as many experiences as you can so you can do something with them, and I think that I am using my experiences and I think that's what's happening is that they're all combining together and that I'm learning from them and then feeling safer...

A common theme in students' reports about their significant and transformative experiences – and in teachers' reflections on new pedagogies that might offer students better learning – was the stimulus that the loss of control (whether at Pace, near Ground Zero, during service learning activities, or in classroom discussions) provided to creativity and the liberation of students' power and agency. In comments reminiscent of Carol Geary Schneider's plea that educators prepare students from the outset of their college experience to expect and cope with unscripted and uncharted events and ideas, Professor Carson spoke of “the power of serendipity, or the blessing of the un-programmed, the unscripted, the unexpected...Control is a word that can make us flounder.”

Liberating Power Through Learning

Linking the lessons of September 11 to a new pedagogy, Barbara Carson affirmed the value of the moment of growth induced by a loss of control:

...creativity is possible in a moment of dysequilibrium for all of us, where we've lost control. Isn't that supposed to be the moment of growth, when we're all off balance? ...That may be the very instigator of our figuring out other ways of relating to each other besides control...(we can't continue to have) the metaphor of faculty needing to be in control.

But Gail Dinter-Gottlieb, Dean of Dyson College at Pace University, described the challenge of encouraging faculty to adopt new teaching methods that depend upon more open and equal relationships with students:

One of the issues is a demon that I struggle with...the faculty need for control, and perhaps in the classroom, and the reluctance of the faculty to realize that there are other ways of teaching and learning...that are not contingent on "I'm in control and you're not."

Professors Carson, Helen Lemay (Distinguished Professor of History at Stony Brook) and Dinter-Gottlieb, among others, in exploring this "pedagogy of September 11," also sought ways to liberate learning and unleash creativity that did not require tragedies. David Burns wondered how we might use our intellect and our learning to internalize an idea of crisis without experiencing that crisis directly and immediately; what are the key features of learning that has the power to unleash creativity – and students' agency – in regarding to critical health challenges, such as HIV/AIDS? Noting the transformative effects of learning in an unconventional environment, or in unfamiliar circumstances – such as were reported by so many of the students – the teachers in the Symposium observed that *innovative learning experiences by themselves* liberate students' power and support their agency. Carson noted, in fact, that professors need not empower students: they have power already; the challenge to teachers is to find ways to make that power – and the creativity associated with it – available and manifest. Doing so, all agreed, demanded a change in the relationship between students and teachers, and between students and institutions of higher education – just as Secretary Sullivan had challenged the group to imagine.

Both students and teachers at the Symposium spoke fervently about the need for different approaches to learning and action about health that required exactly those kinds of different relationships. Kaydee Bridges, from Georgetown, described the principles with which a group of Georgetown students had formed a new, grassroots group called "Friends" to organize new approaches to heavy drinking and its consequences on their campus and in the neighboring community.

Friends declined the opportunity to become a formal University task force. We wanted to stay unconventional, because we felt that would be the key to our success. Task forces have a stigma about them, and we wanted to be something different, and different we were. Friends is unique in many ways and its uniqueness will help to preserve its effectiveness.

Students and professors alike thus sought new metaphors with which to explain the kinds of improved relationships they envisioned; some emphasized the loss of control (and, therefore, a change in the power balance), and others the search for community (which also implies a different power structure). At Georgetown, the students reported, the Friends group never meets without sharing food; in breaking bread together, they undo old assumptions about student-faculty or student-administrator relationships and start their discussions from more even positions. Helen Lemay and her students from Stony Brook spoke of the beneficial effects of learning structures – what are called Federated Learning Communities there – that put college students, high school students, and professors in new relation as they work together to discover and apply knowledge about issues that have immediate and current relevance in the communities near the university.

The Tension of Supporting Student Power: Toughness and Openness

But this call for greater community – and the Symposium’s investigation of new relationships between students and colleges – did not equate with the usual demands for interdisciplinary teaching, as an alternative to deep disciplinary content, or for service learning as the only strategy. Professor Carson summarized this element of the discussion:

It’s an interesting perspective here about the balancing acts between focusing in on one’s discipline and having the passion that comes out of that, while still being open to students...I realized that professors live in bubbles, too...it seems that’s what professors need to do...to step outside the bubble...to be able to help students with the development of their own power.

The teachers in the Symposium suggested that professors must inevitably live and work in some tension between an essential disciplinary rigor and their openness in relation to students. Carson’s research at Rollins College revealed that what students remember most about their college experience is the influence of professors who had high expectations of them; toughness in a professor brought respect and created strong memories. At the same time, Professor Mary Burgan, who now serves as General Secretary of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), advocated “letting the veil lift,” sharing some of their own experiences of health with their students; “I think,” she said, “that faculty needs to be encouraged that it is not an intrusion on their students’ lives to reveal their own health experiences and to offer some guidance in the way that students may be able to respond.” Neither students nor professors suggested that health issues should be at the core of every faculty member’s concern – but, instead, several speakers recommended that “all faculty need the awareness and the understanding of health issues and how they have an impact on learning, and how they can foster and facilitate the total development of students in their care.”

Supporting New Relationships and Pedagogies

There was no desire in the Symposium, then, to expect professors not to be demanding teachers; there was no sense that a renewed relationship with students that fostered or unleashed students’

power required a weaker engagement with the discipline. At the same time, many speakers acknowledged the institutional barriers that oppose innovative educational methods and designs. Saying, “You just have to take the interdisciplinary structure and go further to challenge the university structure itself,” Helen Lemay reminded both teachers and students that new learning models and renewed relationships with students will usually require fundamental – and more democratic – systems and assumptions in universities. Greater support for students’ power will, then, lead to – and come from – substantial alterations not only in the conduct of teaching in individual classrooms, but also in academic and curricular structures themselves. A new pedagogy that liberates students’ power will depend on freeing universities themselves from some of their most basic educational models.

Students pointed out challenges, as well. Georgetown’s Friends group, like other grassroots student efforts, has the potential to make remarkable contributions to the dialogue about health on their campus. Fulfilling that potential, though, will require that Friends solve certain key problems – notably, sustainability. Too many student initiatives perish at graduation. During the Symposium, both students and teachers suggested that a central role for faculty and administrators working in close relation with students is to help student groups survive from one year to the next – that is, that one way to liberate student power is to make sure students’ groups find ways to continue and grow after their founders graduate.

Lloyd Kolbe, director of the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), addressed an even broader point: the need to have a truly national effort to address the health and safety of college and university students, and to disseminate the ideas and practices that show promise in engaging students with issues of our common health. Dr. Kolbe pointed out a national deficiency:

...I suspect you can (see) the usefulness of having a national effort – that is to say that if each campus is doing things on its own, it’s out there on its own, as it were. There is no national effort that can allow us to hear from Georgetown and take that to other universities to blend those ideas together...to give more power, more authority, more mandate to the colleges and universities to move this agenda forward.

Suggesting that using the “lens of liberal education” and the “notion of common health” – in a systematic way – would help our nation improve the lives of our people, Dr. Kolbe reminded the Symposium of Dr. Sullivan’s challenge to think, and act, boldly.

Next Steps: the Sumner Working Groups

The three Sumner Working Groups – Research, Advocacy, and Programming – met after the general discussion to consider specific needs and issues in each area.

- The Research Group explored ways in which research might support better programs or more effective advocacy. A core question was how to engage the faculty with new pedagogical designs; the Group suggested faculty needs assessments on each campus, and ongoing research to define best pedagogical practices. To challenge the traditional

divisions that segregate faculty from students or Student Affairs staff, the Group advocated collaborative, crosscutting research projects and models that would explore the links between health and academic achievement.

- The Advocacy Group tried to define what we might be advocating for, and what kind of advocacy is needed to support the liberation of student power. The Group recognized that communicating with students and student organizations in a robust and durable way is an essential foundation for advocacy; it suggested that PHHE not only develop its own ideas and positions, but that it also partner with other organizations, such as the National Collegiate Scholars or the United States Student Association. The students and teachers in this Group recommended that we advocate for systematic attention to the health of college students as a population – as was suggested in the first Sumner Symposium – and for the infusion of health in core learning in colleges. The Group suggested that we have high expectations and noble goals: a Surgeon General’s report on the health of college students, and a sentence added to an education bill in the Congress that would acknowledge the urgency of the need for a systematic effort to address the health of students and to enlist the capacities of students as agents of improvements in learning and the common health.
- The Programming Group identified characteristics in programs that would authentically liberate student power and encourage the use of that power in ways that would improve campus and community health. They focused on:
 - Passion: making students aware of their own importance as contributors in any program, and creating conditions that inspired students’ passion – such as smaller classes and community-based learning opportunities.
 - Inclusiveness: building learning options that might appeal to many different kinds of students.
 - Creating space for students: permitting, and encouraging, students to be the motivating force in new efforts on campuses.
 - Developing new courses and learning models: bringing students into early phases of developing new courses and programs.
 - Expecting a sequence of ideas: anticipating that some apparently good ideas may not work, it is important to engage students in a continuing process of finding effective and successful programs.

Conclusion

The Symposium concluded with a sense of urgency; in the shadow of September 11th, participants agreed that finding ways to apply students’ intellectual assets, energy, creativity, and passion to improving the common health and safety has a new and more pressing pertinence. Its findings and recommendations included these:

- Students played crucial roles on college campuses in response to the terrorist attacks; their actions and ideas demonstrated the potential of liberating students’ power, and

illustrated a more general capacity of students to contribute intellectual and other assets that improve our common health and safety.

- To unleash students' power, learning must illuminate life. Education can transform – liberating students' power – when it creates new connections and exposes students to unexpected, uncharted, or unscripted problems and experiences.
- Learning experiences and pedagogies can support students' agency when they challenge the traditional relationships and balances of power between students and teachers – whether through moments of dysequilibrium or experiences of community.
- Both academic rigor and intellectual toughness and openness to students are necessary to supporting students' agency.
- To liberate students' power to address pressing questions of health and safety, professors need not make health issues their core concern; instead, they should understand how health affects learning, and how to recognize and address health concerns that pertain to what, and how, they are teaching.
- A new pedagogy that liberates students' power will depend on freeing universities themselves from some of their most basic educational models.
- A national effort to support colleges and universities in their exploration of new pedagogies and relationships with students that inspire students to address issues of our common health and safety is needed.

The first Sumner Symposium concluded that students are as much an opportunity – an asset – as a challenge in public health. It recommended that we find better ways to engage them in solving important health problems in their communities and throughout the world. In the 2002 Symposium, participants addressed the challenging questions of how to engage students – how to liberate their power, support their agency, and increase their capacity – to make their assets available to a nation newly concerned about the common health and safety. The Symposium, hearing equally the voices of students and their teachers, found its most encouraging answers in emerging pedagogies that let learning itself be transformative. And it recognized that a broad national effort to support colleges and universities in marshalling students' power to improve health is indispensable.