

# From the President

MARK SCHULMAN

**M**OST OF YOU HAVE PROBABLY heard the announcement that Antioch University is “suspending operations” of the Antioch College campus in Yellow Springs, Ohio. It probably strikes you, as it does me, that there’s been a remarkable amount of publicity generated around this event, including gloating by the enemies of progressive, non-traditional, alternative education and lamentations from supporters (as well as plans to fight the closing by Antioch faculty and alumni/ae).



I’m not sure how many of you are aware that my own Antioch ties run deep. I graduated from the college in 1969, taught there from

learning, adult-education venue, with the implicit assumption that we are less than we were before. Yet it becomes obvious that this “venue” is blooming—with a 34 percent increase in enrollment since 2002—the moment people learn about the Goddard of 2007. Are we “distance learning”? No, we are not. Are we “adult education”? Yes, we are, if by that you mean an age range of 18 to 80. Most importantly, we are growing with

students who have a sense of place, a vibrant community, a transformative educational experience and a democratic process, even if they are in Plainfield, Vt., or Port Townsend, Wash., only 16 days a year.

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1976 to 1979 and was president of Antioch’s campus in Southern California just before arriving here in 2003. As you might imagine, I have roiling emotions, and ambivalent attitudes, around all the issues that end up circling around who is to blame for this tragedy (for it is that, no matter who is to blame) and the questions of whether there can really be a “new Antioch” in 2012 (the plan their board announced).

There is clarity in my mind, however, that, despite superficial similarities, Goddard’s situation is very different than Antioch’s.

It is true that we no longer have a residential, undergraduate program. It is true that we lost something by closing that piece of Goddard. And that’s the same piece of itself that Antioch is suspending, for reasons (it appears) parallel to Goddard’s: declining enrollment, facilities needing much upgrading and not enough support from an endowment to buttress tuition income.

Some think we have become a distance-

What Goddard lost—the experiment in democracy of 100 or so 18-to-22-year-olds in residence together for 30 weeks of the year—has been balanced by what we gained: more than 600 students of all ages who are tremendously excited with their learning; and nearly 100 faculty members who are astonishing in their diversity and expertise working with students in small groups and individually, engaged in personal and social change, in the most radical and progressive curricular structure (I would assert) in the United States.

Of course, I don’t know what the future holds for Antioch University after the college is closed. But I do know what’s happened to Goddard: we are stronger financially, philosophically and operationally (including a now-wonderful, fixed-up campus—come see in October!) than we have been for many, many years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Schulman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.