

clockworks

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From the President

MARK SCHULMAN

In July, *Information Science Reference* published *Information Technology and Constructivism in Higher Education: Progressive Learning Frameworks*, edited by Carla Payne of Union Institute and University. I'm pleased to report that Chapter 19 of this ambitious and wide-ranging volume (21 chapters with contributors from nine countries) was my contribution, "To Be in Occasional Touch: Goddard College's Progressive Principles and Distributed Learning."

My title picked up on the flavor of a statement in the first schedule of the first group of Adult Degree Program students at Goddard in 1963: "The student will be in occasional touch with his faculty advisor through the exchange of tape recordings, telephone conferences, regional gatherings of participants, traveling faculty members, correspondence."

I went on to say: "To be in occasional touch is the key aspect of technology's role in Goddard's system of progressive education in the distance phase." What was exciting for me about this research project was the opportunity to look at progressive principles not only in the case study I prepared of our college but also in the context of the wide array of subjects and perspectives in the contributions by other chapter authors. The take-away? Progressive education is alive and well, not destroyed by technology but enhanced by proper choices of digital means to our ends.

I'd like to extend my consideration for the book chapter from the educational delivery system to our relationships in and around Goddard. We are, in fact, in occasional touch – all the disparate members of our community in diaspora, which includes not only alumni/ae but students and faculty as well. In some ways, it is sad that our "being in touch" is only occasional: Wouldn't it be great, for example, if our students and faculty were on campus for much longer times, that our alums and board were local; wouldn't it be great if we ran into each other all the time in our little town in Vermont?

As you know, that's never been an accurate description of our sets of relationships as a Goddard community. All of us, in many different ways, shift our focus from the intimacy of our Plainfield or Port Townsend experiences (whether they are eight days at a time in residency now or long ago as residential students who return infrequently) to our engagement with the world, or at least our piece of it, wherever that may be. I would suggest that there's something about the Goddard ethos that encourages us to develop intense relationships even when they are occasional, a clear case of quality over quantity. How do I know this to be the case, beyond our "classrooms" of short residencies plus independent study? Let me cite just one piece of evidence: my Presidential Tour and the people I meet. I'm sure you can imagine the electricity that occurs when a bunch of Goddard folks, from graduates of the '40s through current and prospective students, spend a few hours chatting, debating, challenging and catching up on what's what at "the New Goddard."

Rather than try to describe that, let me conclude with an invitation so that you can experience it. Our next chance to be in occasional touch may well be at a Presidential Tour event over the next several months. Please check the schedule at www.goddard.edu/tour, see if you can find a venue that fits with your lives, and let us know you'll be coming (bring a prospective student or two with you). I hope to see you there!



Mark Schulman