

MARTYN EVANS & TIM BURT

## INTRODUCTION

*We are such stuff as dreams are made on.*  
[William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*]

There is an argument that the popularity of Shakespeare around the world indicates the triumph of western civilisation and culture. The counter-claim is that Shakespeare transcends culture and the subject matter has universal appeal. The same might be said for collegiate universities: whilst the well-known ones seem to be limited to the Anglo-American world, recent initiatives show that the collegiate model – the *collegiate way* – has application from Macau to Mexico.

A college is, at its heart, an association or community of people having a distinctive sense of common purpose: in the university context this common purpose is the pursuit of scholarship and understanding through education and research. A college is typically small enough to enable its members to experience university life on a smaller and more human scale – a scale that is both manageable and intimate.

College communities are safe, supportive and inclusive – a diverse membership leads inevitable to a sense of respect for others, a precondition of flourishing together. Members of a college enjoy a sense of belonging and they readily build lifelong affinities and loyalties as well as friendships. A college community offers greatly increased opportunities for its members compared to a non-collegiate situation and they carry the skills and virtues involved with them into employment and into life more generally. Colleges encourage new experiences and new understandings: they are places to discover new interests, to live adventurously and, indeed, to dream.

When we launched the *Collegiate Way* website to announce the conference from which this book emerged, we included the following statement:

Establishing and maintaining colleges needs no justification to those who have experience of them – but all who work within collegiate systems are familiar with the need to be able to articulate their benefits, and to show how those justify the additional cost-base of the collegiate experience. How is this best achieved?

The point of the conference and thus of this book was to share experiences of college life, to identify and spread good practice, to bring together in conversation representatives from the widest possible range of colleges worldwide. Like the conference, this book aims to promulgate the collegiate way of organising a university, to celebrate our colleges however different they may be, and to learn

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from one another. As Cardinal Newman would have said: we are sure to learn from one another, to gain new ideas and views, and fresh matter of thought.

Kit Thompson's Prologue to this Volume, 'Setting out along the collegiate way,' formed part of the series of Blog posts leading up to the conference; written – appropriately enough – while travelling, it both summarises and exemplifies the process of bringing the experiences of established colleges to an altogether new collegiate setting, in which Kit is one of a band of pioneering travellers. Later in the Volume (chapter 5) he describes in substance the early steps on this road taken by the University of Macau.



*Figure 1. The first Collegiate Way conference, Durham, 2014*

The book is divided into two parts; the first summons the overall vision and ideals of collegiate life and learning, illustrated by experiences both of leading long-extant colleges and of building and nurturing newly-established colleges, while the second focuses down upon colleges' 'core business' of supporting students in learning, and in broadening and enriching their experience.

Part One begins with Mark Ryan's opening chapter reproducing, as delivered, his magisterial lecture that opened the 2014 conference itself. Drawing on long experience leading Jonathan Edwards College at Yale, his is an inspiring collegial 'call to arms,' from which both the conference and the rest of this Volume naturally follow. The Editors' own contribution (chapter 7, closing Part One) is based on our joint lecture that was the conference's concluding act, takes up Ryan's challenges, and – in part – renews our own collegiate vows in the context of our two Durham colleges, Hatfield (Burt) and Trevelyan (Evans).

Of the five intervening chapters, the first four are devoted to exhibitions of new collegiate practice in contexts formerly unused to them. Greg Clancey (chapter 2)

and Kit Thompson (chapter 5) describe their experiences as the founding Masters of brand-new colleges in Tembusu College, Singapore and Moon Chun Memorial College, Macau respectively. In some respects these experiences are fascinatingly different – the evolutionary experiment at Singapore’s U-Town campus runs in parallel to conventional student life and learning elsewhere in the same university, whereas Macau has effectively re-incarnated itself wholesale, and at a single stroke, as a collegiate university – but both contexts share a conspicuous innovation, in identifying a portion of the students’ actual degree studies as being constituted by their engagement in collegiate life. This is an experiment that will be closely watched and, no doubt, envied elsewhere. William Wahl tells a dramatic story (chapter 3) of the inception of colleges as the response to challenges having both an educational and a politico-cultural dimension: residential college life has been instituted in the University of the Free State as, in part, a means to confronting the racism that still to some extent persists in South Africa. Chapter 4 reprises the memorable symposium presented at the 2014 conference by Kyle Farley, Kenneth Grcich and Mark Ryan, all of them practitioners in existing collegiate institutions who were given the task of ‘exporting’ the collegiate way. Farley and Grcich describe institutional partnership arrangements between American universities and international partners (Yale/Singapore, and New York/Abu Dhabi respectively), while Ryan recounts the rather daunting prospect of being recruited as an *individual* ambassador for the collegiate way in building a new collegiate system in the Universidad de las Américas, Mexico.

These chapters all recount the emergence of colleges in previously non-collegiate contexts. Nothing can be taken for granted however, and Michael Eamon considers the contrasting fortune of a university founded as collegiate from the outset, but forced by external pressures to reconsider its collegiate commitment. If this commitment is to be reaffirmed, it requires that the influence of external culture – important, after all, to all of the foregoing tales of flourishing – be matched on occasion by the cultural force of collegiate tradition. In chapter 6 he discusses the response of Lady Eaton College, Trent University, to the need to evolve, bringing traditions and core values to bear upon the changing environment in such a way as to preserve the collegiate ethos even in challenging and rapidly-changing circumstances.

Part Two is devoted to the business of collegiate life, particularly in terms of the experience of students living and learning together. Husband-and-wife teams are widely to be found in residential colleges; but it is unusual that such relationships be formalised into the leadership structures of colleges, as is the case at Rice University, Texas. Chapters by John and Paula Hutchinson open Part Two. John Hutchinson (chapter 8) argues strongly that students’ experience is substantially enhanced, in terms of both learning and living, by having resident academic faculty within the college. Such important benefits are not easily come by, and Hutchinson describes the challenges of recruiting and retaining talented and committed academics within residential college life. Paula Hutchinson considers the complementary importance of peer-support by students for students in chapter 9. She describes how professional student support at Rice University is

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disseminated through a highly-developed structure of student volunteers in a variety of important and responsible roles – a system that benefits the volunteers themselves, their peers whom they support, and the building of community in the Rice Colleges. In chapter 10 the theme of peer-support is taken up by Philip Dutton, lately of Burgmann College, Australian National University, in the context of exploring the history and practice of one of the defining characteristics of collegiate life, the role of mentor. Citing research conducted in both American and Australian residential colleges, he notes that over a range of issues – including academic questions – students reported seeking support and guidance from their peers significantly more often than from professionals; Dutton concludes that mentoring relationships between students deserve recognition and reward in college life.



*Figure 2. A collegial conference coffee break enjoyed by, from left, speakers Mark Ryan, John Hutchinson and Paula Hutchinson*

In organising the 2014 conference, we conjectured that there might be discussion and perhaps examples of the notion of a virtual college, a college without walls, and wholly non-residential. In the event no examples were forthcoming, and all the colleges represented at the conference inhabited their own

loci and their own characteristic physical structures. A sense of place is, we suspect, intimately bound to the sense of affinity and identity that typifies college membership. Having reviewed some of the personal dimensions of collegiate life and support, Part Two continues with a discussion of how architecture shapes the student experience, by two colleagues who have collaborated on building collegiate residences, a practising architect and a Director of Housing and Residence Life. In chapter 11, Amy Aponte (Balfour Beatty) and Gay Perez (University of Virginia) review the impact of the built environment upon students both in historical or heritage colleges and in new buildings responding to the ‘societal dynamics’ of contemporary learning patterns and information technology. Living and learning are equally-important objectives in college life; thus while where adjacencies, the deliberate intersection of routes, and designs that encourage intimacy are tried-and-tested architectural stratagems for encouraging community, Aponte and Perez argue that today we need also to attend to how spaces moderate the influence of technology upon how students think.

It would be possible in a volume such as this to fall into the trap of assuming that all collegiate undertakings are self-evidently virtuous, and that our chief editorial aim should be to list as many as possible, displaying them rather than criticising them. But Socrates warned that the unexamined life is not worthy of us, and this is doubtless as true of the collegiate life as of any other kind. Psychologist Terri Apter (Newnham College, Cambridge) brings to her role of Senior Tutor long experience of researching the challenges of young people’s transition to adulthood, and long observation of its changing social context. As a result she has come to challenge the view that this transition was ideally accomplished through prolonging it within a residential collegiate model of support. In chapter 12, Apter asks, in effect, whether we risk overdoing things – and concludes that in some cases, what we do in the name of student support can exacerbate the problems of dependency, and can impede a student’s progress to maturity. This can be compounded when college measures are interacted by concurrent parental interventions. Apter concludes that while for the most part collegiate support does facilitate education development, we must be attentive to ensure that we encourage agency and responsibility in our students.

Finally, Adrian Simpson of Josephine Butler College, Durham, considers one of the ‘end results’ of colleges, that is, the making of graduates. He notes in chapter 13 that the nature of learning, and the richness of understanding, are the subject of much debate in academic pedagogy; theories of learning draw on theories of knowledge – epistemology – and students need themselves to understand the nature of knowledge. Simpson argues that the residential college context significantly facilitates the most ambitious form of such understanding, one that *enables* complex thought and understanding beyond one’s discipline. Indeed, the very notion of ‘graduateness’ – which transcends disciplines – ought to be grounded on precisely that conception of knowledge that collegiate life best facilitates. However, as he observes in closing, this position requires articulation and defence, and cannot be taken for granted.

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In saying this, Simpson is in effect expressing in one particular dimension the more general impulse that led us to convene the Collegiate Way 2014 conference and to produce this book. The academic, cultural, ethical and personal virtues of the collegiate way are abundantly plain to us – but not always plain to the world outside, and indeed not always to all our university colleagues. As Heads of Colleges we often remind one another that the price of colleges is eternal vigilance; but strong, confident and persuasive advocacy would be better by far. It is to the task of such advocacy that this volume is committed and dedicated.

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