

Yale Reunion Notes
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I had not planned to attend our reunion since I felt that Yale had lost its moorings and had drifted into the arrogance of political correctness. I feared Yale was no longer the place where I learned and grew and which I remembered with affection. After all, Yale Sterling Professor Anthony Kronman, in his 2007 book, *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life*, describes the humanities, once Yale's crown jewels, as "in danger of becoming a laughingstock, both within the academy and outside of it."

Nevertheless, over time, Guy Struve, Ian Robertson, Lindsey Kiang, Dick Teitz and others eventually persuaded me to change my mind. I am glad they did. The reunion, with its many well-planned events, was a great chance to catch up with old friends and to remember our time together at Yale.

Unfortunately, the reunion also reinforced my concerns about Yale. The "Informal Discussion with President-Elect Salovey" on Sunday morning was particularly troubling. Once again, in response to my question, Salovey was unable to articulate Yale's strategy for the future in terms of what it hopes to accomplish and how it expects to do this in light of its competitive strengths and weaknesses. Rather, he responded only with anecdotes, which did not bear any of the hallmarks of a *grand strategy* as outlined by John Gaddis at his Friday morning lecture on "Foxes, Hedgehogs, Compasses, and Swamps."

I had asked Salovey the same question on March 22, 2013 during his "listening tour" across the country after being selected as Yale's next president. He had stopped at Stanford to meet with Yale alumni in the area. Because we were on the Stanford campus, I mentioned Stanford's strategy as a benchmark. In essence, Stanford endeavors to address the most acute problems of the day, which tend not to fall neatly within the traditional boundaries between academic disciplines. To do this, it leverages the close proximity of its world-class engineering, law, business, medicine, education, humanities & sciences, and earth sciences schools, none of which is more than a 15-minute walk away from the others. Through interdisciplinary teams for research and teaching, Stanford believes it can assemble the skills and expertise needed to solve these problems most effectively. Stanford's president, provost, and the deans of its various schools present this strategy to many audiences, which indicates an understanding and a commitment by key constituencies of the university.

Yale's strategy as depicted in Salovey's anecdotal responses seems inadequate. For example, he mentioned a brand new center in the school of engineering and applied science (apparently a reference to the \$6.5 million Center for Engineering Innovation and Design), which just opened and quickly won the support of the dean of the school of art. He pointed to this as an example of innovation at Yale that demonstrates leadership in interdisciplinary initiatives. However, Stanford has had a comparable program for years, anchored by the \$35 million Hasso Plattner Institute of Design begun in 2005, with participation of students and faculty in engineering, medicine, business, law, the humanities, sciences, and education.

Despite this failure to identify distinctive core competencies, Salovey seemed to exude a sense of complacency. He stated that he was becoming Yale's president at a time when *no change* in strategy was required. Since President Levin had just reiterated his longtime goal for Yale to become a global university the day before at the "President's University Update" at Woolsey Hall, I asked Salovey what it meant to be a "global university." I had read Levin's 1997 white paper, "The Internationalization of Yale" (apparently, it is no longer available on the web), and recalled it as vague as to what a global university would be, which constituencies it would serve, how it would operate, and who would want to fund it. Salovey responded that a global university was one that simply incorporated global elements into its curriculum. This appears to be a shockingly timid implementation of a potentially audacious goal. I would be surprised if any major university in the country today lacked global elements in its curriculum. In fact, I believe many American high schools have jumped on the "globalization" bandwagon – my daughter's certainly has.

During my opening remarks at the Friday discussion group on "Key Domestic Issues Facing the Country," I mentioned that I happened to be in France during the summer of 2005, about a month after French citizens refused to ratify the proposed EU Constitution, a great blow to the bureaucrats in Brussels. I took the opportunity to conduct an informal unscientific poll, in which I asked over a dozen French men and women in their native language, what is the "European Dream"? Surprisingly, although all were quite familiar with *le rêve américain*, none could articulate a comparable dream for the EU. I believe many of the EU's problems of integration, growth and leadership result directly from this failure of ambition.

I think Yale suffers from a similar lack of ambition, and I fear that the results could be similar as well.