

## Responses to Specific Questions

### 1. Who or what are we?

King's College is a Catholic community of students and educators committed to intellectual, spiritual, moral, and personal growth.

We are a Catholic College.

We are an important place that serves students, faculty, staff, and the community in a number of ways.

I think the story that King's began to serve the children of coal-miners and other working class families is a compelling one and one of the most frequently descriptions I hear faculty give of King's. It is a source of pride. It is part of King's "creation story" that must continue to inspire its values and goals. Those values are still to offer an excellent, affordable education to ... (and the trick here is just how to describe the target student population in an appealing way. The current mission statement just speaks of attracting "talented" men and women. Could better adjectives be used? – I think of our student population as one from "hard working" roots and that they see themselves as working hard while they are here, though perhaps that would not be seen as an attractive word to a marketer. I also see our students as full of potential—that a main part of my job is to help them access that potential (I'm tempted to use mining metaphors, but am holding back.)

We are a community. We are a community of learning, of welcome, nurture and support. We desire to understand, to know, to serve, to learn about the human community and its search for the good and the true (and its failures in that search), we seek to grown and share the gifts we have been given, for the good of the human community and the earth.

-King's College is a small liberal arts school in Wilkes-Barre PA that was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1946.

"A Christian liberal arts college in the Catholic Holy Cross tradition."

(Some of) these words, I suspect, are already on their way into any future mission statement. Should there be adjectives added?

*An “academically rigorous, socially engaged, justice-oriented Christian liberal arts college in the Catholic Holy Cross tradition, making higher education a living reality for all socio-economic classes.”*

We are educators who value the concept of service and the common good and who feel strongly that students need a broad based set of virtues

a Catholic, Christian institution of higher education animated by the charism and guided by the traditions of the Congregation of Holy Cross (education as a work of resurrection, cultivation of both heart and mind, preparation to make a living and to live well)

a community of teachers and scholars dedicated to the pursuit of truth, understanding, and wisdom

a community dedicated to learning, justice, and compassion

teachers, scholars, and administrators committed to the cultivation of community; to education as a work of resurrection, bringing forth new life; to the inculcation of both moral and intellectual virtues; to care for the vulnerable; and to justice for the poor and lowly

We are not only an institution for higher education, but a home for those who are fortunate enough to be a part of our campus. We not only provide educational excellence, but do so with a lot of heart and passion.

A small, catholic, liberal arts college in Wilkes-Barre, PA dedicated to higher education.

*We are a small Catholic liberal arts school which is specifically dedicated, through the Holy Cross charism and our location in north-eastern PA, to educate the hearts and minds of the great-grandsons and great-granddaughters of coal-miners. This translates into guiding through a college degree those who have been under-served in the educational area prior to arriving at Kings, due to a legacy of socio-economic depression from coal-mining days.*

We are a faith based community. Our teachings, actions, mission, behaviors need to reflect that. “They should know we are Christians by our love”. We are called to be different.

King’s is a public trust with an educational purpose. We are land set aside that serves a public interest, and we are a complex of buildings that form an institution of higher learning for the public good. Since 1946, the College has provided quality liberal arts education and professional training in the Wyoming Valley, focused on two principles: the dignity and full human development of workers and their families, and a more just and loving society in Northeastern Pennsylvania. It is also true that King’s serves the local church and is in this way

what we might call an “ecclesial trust.” Foundationally, this *trust* that is King’s College is a community animated from its origins by the Congregation of Holy Cross. This Catholic faith and distinctive spirituality are the creative source and drive of King’s College as to this day we aim to provide a relevant and thorough education for the good of each and all.

All of higher education is a “public trust.” I like the language of “trust” because it implies the “entrusting” of the land and institution to a board of overseers who become the mind and will of an important human activity through time and circumstance. Beyond the legalese, the language summons a moral and religious duty in the overseers (an all-inclusive term for all who work at the college) as trustees of a sacred task. I like the language of “public” (despite King’s being a private institution) because King’s College has a social responsibility that cannot be ignored or downplayed even by its private, religious purposes and interests. Further, the language of “public” reiterates the important societal vocation of higher education, which is diminished in the economic reality of higher education today. That this public trust represent the mind and heart of the founders (i.e., the Congregation of Holy Cross) is critical to our moving forward and responding both faithfully and creatively to the challenges of our time. There is a distinctive love (i.e., the love of God) that grounds and generates the learning task at King’s (a reading of the history shows this), and so what we do now we ought to do with deference and respect for this love. We do this by being a community animated by Holy Cross.

We are, then, more faithful to our history and vocation when we educate with religious zeal as a community of hope.

We are a liberal arts college.

First and foremost, we are a college, an institution of higher education.

We are also an employer, a temporary home to students, a corporation in Wilkes-Barre, a property owner, a religious institution, and many other things. We ought to do these things well and justly, but they are all means of supporting the mission to educate. (We could shut down the dorms and still educate; Holy Cross could pull up stakes, and King's would still have a mission to educate, etc.)

We are a small liberal arts college with a Catholic identity encompassed in an embracing environment.

A list of important nouns that come to mind for me when I think of King’s: a college, a community, a home, a safe haven. The most crucial part of our identity comes the first item on the list. We are a place where students come to learn and grow intellectually, professionally, emotionally, and spiritually. The other three nouns are important, too, however. As a community, we are working on a common goal, whether we are fixing, say, just to pull an example out of thin air, the HVAC in Hafey-Marian; recruiting potential students; or teaching philosophy. I think this is one of the reasons why the

firing of several employees in Sep 2012 was so painful for us all. We are also a haven for our students (and for many, a literal home). More than other colleges of my experience, King's encourages connections with students outside of the classroom. In surveys, the "caring" atmosphere is mentioned again and again by prospective students, current students, and alumni. We provide (ideally) comfort and guidance to the whole person.

## 2. What do we do?

- *King's College combines professional, skills-based curricula with a broad liberal arts program, creating an environment in which students develop the tools for making a living while building the foundation for thoughtful and purposeful lives.*

Kings is committed to teaching students to reason effectively and critically about the world.

We provide students with an education grounded in the teachings of Christ and help them to live Christ life lives.

We provide students with collaborative ways to learn. We provide a home away from home for students. We provide a place where students can work and play, love and pray, and become someone.

We provide classes of high-academic caliber, with an emphasis on student-centered learning, small classes, and faculty-student interaction. We welcome diversity (at least theoretically...) and value each and every person. We offer leaning opportunities to the whole person, from travel abroad to academic support services, we build a caring community at King's and we reach out to serve the many diverse communities around us. We prepare students for lives enriched by their experience of living in the community of learning, values, and commitment at King's.

-King's College strives to provide invaluable knowledge alongside ethical and moral principles to its students while guiding their spiritual development; thereby providing the keys to success in life no matter what path the student is ultimately led.

We provide a richer education for a richer life.

Educate students for successful and fruitful lives.

we seek to bring alive love of learning; we seek to foster our students' moral, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development; we seek to cultivate community; we seek to be a place where the church does its thinking; we seek to serve the Wyoming Valley by being a

place of intellectual freedom and ferment; we seek to prepare our students for satisfying professional lives; we seek to give our students the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual wherewithal to flourish as siblings, husbands and wives, parents, citizens of this nation and the world, and persons with a transcendent vocation; we seek to introduce our students to the riches of the history and traditions of the Roman Catholic church; we seek to introduce our students to the truth claims of Christian theology and faith; we seek to ensure that our students are versed in the history and traditions of the West; we seek to ensure that our students have the skills and competencies required for professional success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; we seek to ensure that our students are prepared for the diverse, globalized civilization and economy beyond the King's campus; we seek to deepen our students' understanding and appreciation of the human condition and the wonders of creation; we seek to cultivate in our students enthusiasm about learning, wonder, an appreciation for the mystery that they themselves are, intellectual humility together with intellectual courage, passion for justice, and understanding that the life of faith is by no means opposed to the life of the mind, but that each enriches the other

We are intricate members of our community and not only concern ourselves with what our campus community or local area needs, but look to service beyond our geographical scope. Our campus community needs come before our own more times than none.

Teach people not only how to making a living, but how to live. I think this popular phrase encompasses all that King's has to offer and should remain the same. It is important to learn how to do something and how to do it well, but it is also important to serve others through volunteer work, strengthening relationships, and responding to a higher calling, which is God's calling.

*By an educational ministry to the economically and educationally disadvantaged, we seek to level the playing field in skill-set acquisition and cultural knowledge, so that those who have grown up in this area will be able to compete in the job-market with their peers who come from more privileged socio-economic and educational backgrounds, as well as enjoying the cultural benefits (e.g., art, music, literature) which are part of the human cultural heritage.*

We are in the business of education; liberal arts within professional programs that prepare our graduates to be productive, caring, engaged individuals in their place of work, at home, and in the world at large.

We educate the whole person. To my view, this King's and Holy Cross education is (ought to be better) characterized by (1) a core academic curriculum in which the various lines of Catholic thought intersect with all other forms of human knowledge; (2) philosophy and theology courses that confront the challenges of modern belief, including religious ignorance and

diversity; (3) professional preparation and vocational/career discernment; and (4) a Christian pedagogy of holistic student development for the commuter and residential student, especially in the way of faith, morality, and social justice.

I think that a great mission/vision statement should include these educational elements (many that I've drawn from publications by my former AACU colleague Jerry Gaff). We are striving to help students develop: ☑Strong written communication skills—and public speaking skills. Deep Understanding, and hands---on experience within the disciplines that explore the natural, social, and cultural realms (knowledge and understanding of science; knowledge and appreciation of the fine and performing arts; knowledge and understanding of historical and social phenomena; environmental understanding and sensitivity). Intercultural knowledge; international and global understanding; appreciating diversity. Collaborative problem---solving skills. Civic, social, and personal responsibility; building communities that acknowledge and respect difference; engaged, responsible citizenship in a democratic society Ethical reasoning; ability to engage meaningfully with challenging ethical, moral, and human dilemmas, and to understand social justice issues. ☑Capacity for continuing, lifelong learning.

We educate. Which means we "lead out," transform, edify, train, challenge, develop, form. We help turn people into better versions of themselves--into versions of themselves even they may not have known could exist. We educate students intellectually first of all, but also morally, spiritually, socially, culturally, and physically.

We educate and nurture students to be good citizens, to mbrace charity and to achieve satisfying/rewarding careers.

We educate. The obvious one. But I think we also really, really care. Good luck transforming that into mission-ish language. Seriously, though, it's such an important element of King's identity. Time and again I have seen faculty and staff reach out to students who need some kind of extra help, whether this is because of health problems, financial problems, or sometimes, problems that are entirely of their own making. As a parent myself, this would be the thing I would stress to the parents of potential students: at King's your child will not fall between the cracks. Your child will be cared for and cared about. I do see that caring as having a dark side; we run the risk of enabling students who have a hard time taking responsibility for themselves. After 13 years here, I think, though, that we typically work to help students help themselves, as opposed to making excuses for them.

### **3. For whom do we do it?**

*King's directs it best efforts towards students who benefit from strong institutional support structures as they strive to meet their educational, professional, and personal goals.*

For a diverse religious, racial and cultural population that respects and understands through our educative process that we are Catholic.

Students, faculty, staff, and the community. I'd also include alumni as important stakeholders.

Should the "we" here be the whole King's community, or mostly students? I think students come here for themselves, for their families and for their communities. I think all of these are worthy.

If the "we" is more faculty and staff, then I think we do it for the students, for the community and for our love of King's and the role it plays in students' lives and in the local community. I think there is genuine love for the character of King's in the King's community and I would like to see that character named well so that we can continue to value and uphold it.

-Everything that King's College does is for the benefit of its students. In serving its students, King's College is thereby praising and honoring the one true teacher – God.

-In serving its students, King's College is encouraging them to go ahead and serve their own communities just as King's serves in its own.

For students: to help first generation college students to become the vanguard of the proletariat, and to help them develop a scrutinized, reflectively stable personal outlook and the critical bearing to answer profound questions about faith, morality, politics, science, and culture. For society: to produce engaged citizens, truly prepared for excellence in professional life. For faculty: so that they can meaningfully share their life-long pursuit of learning with others.

Those who need it the most

for many working-class students and many students who are the first of their families to attend college

for the local community

for the church

for the good of our culture

for the poor, vulnerable, and oppressed

for the voiceless and ignored

For those who want to work and educate themselves under the Holy Cross Mission

The greater good; the students and everyone whom we encounter whether it be NEPA, Peru, or any of the various locations we go to on SERVE trips. We aim to reach people beyond our campus to educate them about compassion, social justice and social responsibility along with professional skills.

*For the largely locally-based clientel: students who have a strong work ethic and huge amounts of potential, but who have been largely under-served by their previous educational experiences due to socio-economic forces.*

For our students. We are here to provide them opportunity to learn, grow, experience, serve, and be served. Without students, there would be no reason for us to exist.

Historically and vocationally, our education aims at the children of miners and mill workers from the Wyoming Valley. In other words, it aims at students in view of the creation of a better world and lifestyle especially for the underserved and underrepresented. This is our bread and butter. I take inspiration from the Nativity schools which provide a faith-based education at the middle-school level and strive to break the cycle of poverty in underserved cities across the country. I believe that while all should be welcome here if this kind of learning is desirable, a good portion of our student body (and staff?) should be working, underprivileged, and marginalized populations. We must become more a place where such populations are truly welcomed to flourish in society today. I also believe we must continue to reach out and support alumni, including the recruitment of legacies.

We do it for our students. And who are our students? Mostly, they are traditional-age undergraduates. Traditionally, they are the working class and first-generation students from this region. In my experience, about half of our students come from working-class families, though that means about half don't. It's important to keep this in mind, though to be honest, we shouldn't kid ourselves into thinking that our student population is especially unique. Wilkes educates exactly the same population (and with a similar religious composition!). The percentage of students who are first-generation at King's mirrors the percentage nationwide. Now, we may have a preferential option for the working class, but if that's true, then we should say it. If it's not true, then we shouldn't pretend it is.

Our students come to King's looking to find a more secure spot in the American middle class. This is a worthy thing for them to want. We should help them get that. But we also should transform their desires, so that they can want other things, too; once they are secure in their social position, they can fulfill those other desires, too.

Students from all walks of life.

#### **4. How do we do it?**

*King's offers a range of quality professional programs complimented by an extensive core curriculum of skills-based courses, content classes, and extra-curricular opportunities all supported by the networking between campus services and dedicated faculty.*

We do it by modeling Christ-life across the campus from the business office, to facilities to the classroom. We do it further by teaching students about the mission and spirituality of Holy Cross. We also ensure that we treat everyone on campus as the truly unique gift of God that they are, we do this justly and humbly.

Speaking from my own experience I seek opportunities for students to learn through social construction. I look for ways to challenge students each day.

I could just list strings of virtues here... We do "it" with integrity, honesty, compassion and commitment... -- probably need to add something like "academic excellence" so as not to lose the focus on academics.

Or, I could point to programs: We do "it" through the liberal arts core program, through the majors and professional programs, through student services, through campus ministry, through King's commitment to serve the community and especially the poor. – and I'd probably need to add things like sports teams and clubs...

#### Ethical Principles through Service:

-By offering countless service opportunities through the Shoal Center.

-Service allows us to grow faster than any other activity.

-*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others"-Ghandi*

-By requiring a certain amount of volunteer hours to introduce the idea of service into the minds of those who can truly make a difference.

#### Moral Principles through Spiritual Growth:

-By offering a clear avenue to spiritual growth.

-By keeping many Holy Cross priests close by that are more than willing to help you with anything that you are dealing with at any time.

-By offering plenty of masses throughout the semester.

-By offering are a plethora of other activities that aim to better our relationship with God.

#### Education through a Small, Intimate Setting:

-By offering a small classroom setting which leads to a strong relationship with one's teacher which leads to a more comfortable and easier learning environment.

-By hiring respected professionals in each field who have but one goal: to provide an outstanding education to any student who steps foot into a classroom.

#### Personal Growth through Extracurricular Activities:

-By offering quite a few clubs, sports, and extracurricular activities that aim to create not a well-rounded student, but a well-rounded adult capable of making this world a better place.

Through a four-year conversation—between students, faculty, contemporary writers, and world-historical thinkers—a conversation that is messy, full of competing voices, hard to sum up, and the very best means for fostering, in students, both the excellent writing and critical thinking skills that are professionally useful and the excellent character traits necessary for moral and spiritual maturity.

By awakening the curiosity of our students. By giving them the room to be creative. By allowing them to fail, but always learn from it. By teaching them things about themselves that they never knew.

through a core curriculum that has questions of fundamental importance at its heart

through a core curriculum that encourages moral, spiritual, and emotional growth over four years

through learning communities, service learning, serve trips, study-abroad, and internships

through rigorous instruction

with the grace of God

It's a community effort. One person has to mirror the work of another. Students, faculty and staff unite to create an experience of warmth and growth.

Through community service, education, and by being a role model to everyone else.

*We ideally integrate a challenging liberal arts curriculum with attentiveness to the moral and spiritual development of the whole person. A liberal arts education at Kings enables students to not only gain a high-quality wage post graduation, but to also increase their enjoyment of art, literature, and music as well as increasing their ability to be high-functioning, informed, and analytical members of a democracy. In a word, it helps to form a certain kind of person and citizen...one who can continue to appreciate and contribute to a more fully just, peaceful, and happy society.*

Faculty and staff that give above and beyond so that students know that our college is "student oriented". We need to build relationships, bridge gaps, foster interdependency, and work in collaboration within and among our institutional departments.

What ought to characterize our "doing of education" both in terms of curriculum and co-curriculum is a Christian pedagogy of the poor. We tend to look more American than Christian, more typical than exceptional. While there are pockets of Christian pedagogy about the campus, I find it hard to find a shared vision or direction. I believe that Catholic social teaching along with the insights of liberation theology can provide the fundamentals of this pedagogy (as well as institutional practice more broadly) and in ways that respect the autonomy of the higher education project more broadly. We live in a broken city that hopes to revitalize, and our location at the heart of this city/valley situates us to ground our learning in urban justice and revitalization, worker rights, and other issues of the common good.

Because students' intellectual development is our first concern, we train their minds. In accordance with state and federal law, we require that they complete 120+ hours of coursework in order to earn a bachelor's degree (and 60+ for a master's). To do this, they take classes, which are taught by qualified, inspiring faculty. That is to say, the classroom is the primary site for King's to accomplish its mission, and the primary agents of this mission are the teaching faculty.

We educate students of every major program liberally. That is to say, specialization in a single technical discipline is not good enough for us. So we educate students through a multidisciplinary Core curriculum, and, ideally, we teach business and medicine and so on *liberally*, recognizing that "professional studies" and "liberal arts" are not truly in competition. (Michael Roth's new book, *Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters*, addresses some of this. Roth, president of Wesleyan University, is an outstanding observer of higher ed and a great mind.) I have at times used the notion of "intellectual fitness" as the outcome of a liberal education. Josef Pieper's reflections on the liberal arts in the context of a technical civilization have also given me a lot of

inspiration (see *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*).

We also educate students holistically, so that they can integrate their intellects with the other aspects of their person. Because we educate holistically, we aim to educate students in person and *personally*, meeting them as persons ourselves and addressing them as persons. We have to know who our students are and recognize their inherent human dignity. Likewise, we educate students residentially if possible, and we encourage their moral and religious growth both within and outside the curriculum.

We do it in a warm, friendly, helpful environment.

## 5. Why do we do it?

*In the charism of the Catholic tradition, King's College believes that all people should be encouraged to refine their individual gifts, to develop their intellectual insights, and to enrich their spiritual lives in service of the common good.*

To help students to begin the work of discovering and fulfilling their original purpose as God intended for them.

OR at least that's what we should be doing.

For me it is what I was born to do. Teaching is in my blood as is the Holy Cross tradition. I have four great uncles who have gone to God and were priests (Thomas, Jerry, Ray, and Tony Conmy). Tom, Jerry and Ray were proud Holy Cross priests and servants of God. A part of me feels as though that God has called me to his service in this capacity.

Well, first, here is why I do it. This is my favorite quote from St. Augustine about why we have to teach and learn from each other, rather than getting all wisdom directly from God (though I'd prefer an inclusive language version):

“...but the condition of man would be lowered if God had not wished to have men supply His word to men. How would there be truth in what is said—“For the temple of God is holy, which you are”—if God did not give responses from a human temple, but called out all that He wished to be taught to men from Heaven and through angels? For charity [caritas] itself, which holds men together in a knot of unity, would not have a means of infusing souls and almost mixing them together, if men could teach nothing to men.” (*On Christian Doctrine*, Prologue, ch. 6).

Why do we faculty/staff do it? I think we are intellectually enlivened by our own studies and committed to sharing the benefits and excitement of such studies with others.

-King's College is capable of making a positive and profound difference in the lives of its students and community. It is because of King's ability to do good that it has a moral responsibility to do this. It is as simple as that.

-We do it because it is the most natural thing in the world to help people in any way possible.

-We do this because if institutions like this cease to exist, then there will be quite a bit less good in this world.

Because we are called to do so

inspired by the Gospel  
love of neighbor  
the intrinsic value of disciplined thinking in pursuit of truth  
deep-seated hope  
dedication to the common good  
vocation to education as a work of resurrection  
the joy of the life of the mind

We do it because of how it makes us feel about ourselves and the reward of seeing others do well and become productive members of society.

In hopes of making the world a better place.

*We do it because we care about the youth of today, because we care about the future of our nation, and because we want people to be as happy as possible in this life which is fraught with difficulty, limitation and pain. We do it because justice is important to us, and therefore fighting economic and social injustice, as well as fighting the ignorance born of lack of exposure to social and environmental data, is vital for the healthy functioning of an individual within the body of Christ.*

Because it matters...life matters. I can make a difference to the people who fall within my sphere of influence. We can make a difference in the world; one person at a time. How we spend our time, talents, and treasure all matter. We are blessed as a community of faith and part of our purpose is to give back and make the world a better place, one student at a time.

Simply, love of God and neighbor. The Holy Cross sponsors need to more systematically and prophetically remind the King's community of its Christian inspiration.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic mission in higher education is not to "make Christians" or "preserve the church." The Catholic mission is to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free (Luke 4), and this mission is an event of faith and reason. In my view, it is love of neighbor born of love of God (i.e., faith's inspiration) that orients this college to serve this city and region with intelligent and professionally-trained graduates/citizens of the world who love as Jesus loved; that is, graduates who stop to care for the oppressed and take up the vocation of justice and service, whatever their profession and way of life. Surely, the devout Christian should find this a place to grow in faith.

Individually, we might have varying reasons to do what we do. I would bet that most faculty see it in terms of their own intellectual curiosity and a desire to pass that along to others. Collectively, we do it because we believe that educated people contribute to the common good of society. (I.e., they make possible the flourishing of everyone.) This vision of the common good is derived from the institution's Catholic commitments. Along the same lines, a Catholic theological anthropology leads us to view the "whole person" as encompassing the person's orientation toward God. We aim to transform persons into better versions of themselves because that is the work of resurrection.

We feel the satisfaction of seeing a new student entering our doors emerging as competent, well-educated, well rounded and compassionate graduates.

We do it because we believe that these students will go on to, in some way, make the world a better place, whether that is as engineers, or teachers, or police officers, or mothers and fathers. I would like to think that no matter what happens to them, their four years at King's has given them a foundation from which they withstand the tragedies and appreciate the joys that life will bring. This is why we educate them liberally (no. 4). I don't know if that old statistic about the average American changing careers 7 times still holds, but I often think of that in discussions of how the liberal arts and the professional programs do (or do not) work together. We in the English department have two former students, Megan Michael and Leslie Martin Labauch, whose lives have taken them on different journeys. Megan is a lawyer with Silverblatt and Associates in Wilkes-Barre. For her, the critical thinking, critical reading, writing, and moral reasoning skills she developed while at King's helped her be admitted to law school, accell while there, and go on to have a fulfilling career that make her very happy. Leslie is a stay-at-home mother of three. But never for a moment does it feel as though her education was wasted; Leslie has those same skills as Megan (both were wonderful students), and that makes her a better mother and a better citizen of the world. A King's education should never

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<sup>1</sup> The Moreau Lectures are an example of this systematic and prophetic reminding. This year, Maureen O'Connell spoke about community murals and urban justice. Next year, Fr. John Jenkins will speak about the Catholic mission in higher education. Other recent topics: the church and racism; St. Brother Andre Bessette and the religious vocation; Christian vocation today; Latino spiritualities. The challenge is how to allow these lectures to influence campus culture and learning.

be centrally about finding a job after graduation; it should be about preparing you for whatever come your way in life.