

Introduction

Although it may prove to be the case, the function of the university is not solely to prepare students to get better jobs or to earn more money than they would without a university degree. Nor is it merely to cultivate the intellect or to pursue the truth for its own sake. The university's primary function, according to the Yale Report of 1828, is to lay the moral and intellectual foundations for a life of honest, responsible, and intelligent service. Learning, scholarship, and professional excellence must all go hand in hand. Thus, in the words of the Report, the well-educated individual is one "who is not only eminent in professional life, but also has a mind richly stored with general knowledge, has an elevation and dignity of character, which gives ... a commanding influence in society, and a widely extended sphere of usefulness" (Report, as cited in Calhoun, 1969, p. 230).

Soka University of America's new MA Program in Educational Leadership and Societal Change is one such attempt to interject bold new ideas and practices into the field of education. We need to send sensitive, humanistic, well-trained educational leaders not only into countervailing institutions but into these precincts as well, if for no other reason than to help uphold the public in public education, even as the private sector becomes increasingly influential in this area. Thus, SUA's MA program is designed to provide students with the foundational knowledge and skills to become transformational leaders in any field where education plays a central role, including but not limited to traditional and nontraditional school settings.

While it is often implicit in other programs, the SUA program is unambiguous about the way it links educational leadership with societal change, that is, with the ability to effect positive change not only in our schools but within the larger society, the sea so to speak in which our schools swim. We drew our inspiration for the link between educational leadership and societal change from disparate sources, including the educational writings of the founder of our University, Daisaku Ikeda, who has said that "education is an essential driver of national development," reversing the common cant that the business of education is the business of social reproduction, that is, the transmission of a society's most cherished values and assumptions more-or-less intact from one generation to the next (Garrison, Hickman & Ikeda, 2014, p. 33).

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References

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