



The Meaning of Merit

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The English Way



High, purely academic, individualized prior achievement measured by reasonably sophisticated tests of learned content and

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Why call this *merit*?

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Why call this *merit*?

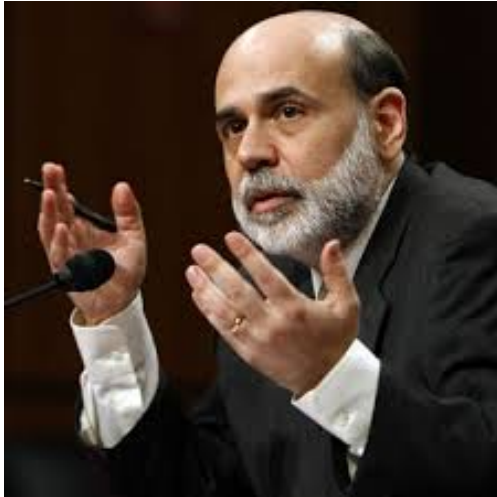
Reflects talent and industriousness.

What's wrong with the English way?

Multiple intelligences

Past success imperfect predictor of future success

Developed talent is not really merit



A meritocracy is a system in which the people who are the luckiest in their health and genetic endowment; luckiest in terms of family support, encouragement, and, probably, income; luckiest in their educational and career opportunities; and luckiest in so many other ways difficult to enumerate--these are the folks who reap the largest rewards.

The parable of the islands

Island of the Best. Violinists. Ever

Island of the Pretty Good String Quartet

The Island of Greatest. Violinists. Ever.



The Island of the Pretty Good String Quartet



The sum of the talents

Violinists = 44

Pretty Good String Quartet = 28

How to think about merit: why do we *want* higher education?

Development of the higher level knowledge and skills the use of which, in concert, will optimize social good, and the attitudes and dispositions that incline those with those skills to use them to that end

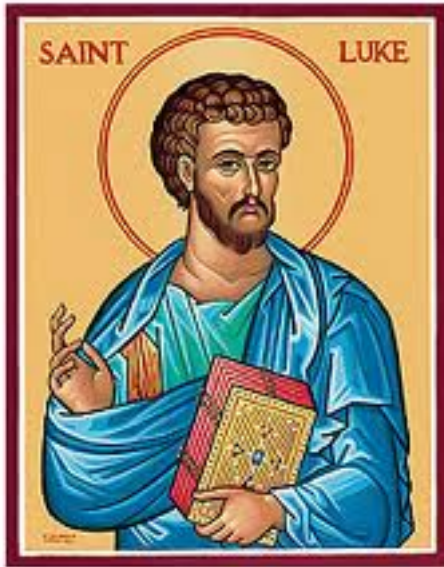
Contribution to social mobility

Social Good

Good: the outcomes of social, economic, political and civil activity that enhance the quality of people's lives

Social: Extra weight to the good of the less advantaged.

Luke



“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded”

So what does merit *mean*?

Possession of those traits that predict a student will gain more from a spot that they will contribute to the social good than a rival candidate would.

The *American Way*

Recognizes the value of diversity

“Constructing a class”

Allows affirmative action

Allows pursuit of diverse missions

Allows distinct institutional identities

What is merit for *my* institution?

“What is *our* contribution to the social project of higher education?”

turns on:

Identity

Discovery

Intention

What is *our* contribution to the social project of higher education?

We seek the student body that will optimize our contribution to the overall mission of higher education, given who we are, given what others do, and given what we predict we can do

Unpacking the American Way

Dimensions of diversity across and within institutions:

Socio-economic

Professional orientation

Racial

Political outlook

Religious tradition and practice

Cultural

Geographic background

And now for a word from the
people you sponsor...

What kinds of student do *the faculty* want?

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Does our institution's ethos align with these values?

“While I am an ambitious person who wants to take on a challenging career and succeed, I also know that what I am passionate about is something involving children and helping people and families...[the messages I get leave me] feeling guilty and somewhat un-ambitious regarding my career choice”

-- Fall 2014 Freshman at UW-Madison

Does our institution's ethos align with these values?

Early Childhood
Education
Nursing
Political Science
Philosophy
Pre-Medicine
Pre-Law
Social Work

Does our institution's ethos align with these values?

Sorted by institutional status

Pre-Medicine

Pre-Law

Political Science

Philosophy

Nursing

Education

Social Work

Early Childhood

Does our institution's ethos align with these values?

Sorted by prospective social value

Early Childhood

Social Work

Nursing

Education

Pre-Med

Pre-Law

Political Science

Philosophy

Do our institution's practices align with these values?

Can a case be made that the admissions advantage or scholarship some students get better enables you to contribute to the mission?

Race

Social Class

Gender

Geography

Athletics

Legacy

High ACT/SAT scores



Conclusion

The American Way is better



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The English Way is like the British
Monarchy



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The English Way is like the British Monarchy so don't be fooled!



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Live, don't just talk, our values