

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF LDS HIGHER EDUCATION:

## The Genius of Large and Small

“Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the  
foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that  
which is great.”

Doctrine and Covenants 64:33

President Rodney K. Smith  
Southern Virginia University

State of the University Address  
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Thank you for that kind introduction, Provost Edwards. I have learned that kind introductions often reveal as much about the person introducing the speaker as the speaker himself. Your kindness and academic leadership are appreciated on a daily basis.

I am thrilled to be here. I was on the road 21 out of the 28 days in February, so it is always good to be home, and Southern Virginia and Buena Vista are home for me.

You know that I love grandparent jokes. When I feel one coming on, there is little that I can do other than tell it. So, here it is. My daughter-in-law called to share an experience she had with our very precocious 5-year old granddaughter. Our daughter-in-law had one of those days that only mothers fully understand – a day filled with anxiety, hard work, and endless interruptions. It is not always easy to keep one’s composure in the midst of such a day. With some exasperation, my daughter-in-law directed my granddaughter to get in the bath. Without missing a beat, my granddaughter replied, “Someone is having issues, Mom.”

In these tumultuous times<sup>1</sup> as we observe corporations falter, industries wane, and the stock market tumble, I have heard a few people ask whether Southern Virginia “is having issues” – whether a small liberal arts college serving the Latter-day Saint community, that was founded in 1996 in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, can survive. The answer is a resounding yes! In fact, in some very significant ways we are better positioned to continue offering an exemplary undergraduate education in an environment that cherishes LDS values than larger institutions are.

Most private colleges are dependent on endowments and have been deeply affected in their daily operations by the slump in the stock market. We too have an endowment, and thankfully during the past four years we have consistently operated in the black and have managed to amass reserves, but we have not been dependent on endowment income or our reserves to operate. Even more significantly, while we have made some strategic adjustments to our budget this year and have had to call on many to sacrifice in some measure, we have taken great care not to sacrifice the very high quality or rigor of the academic program we deliver.

While many universities attempt to trim their budgets by placing more students into a large classroom where they can be taught by a faculty member or graduate student, or by substituting technology for the interchange between students and faculty, we have maintained a very low faculty-student ratio, having fewer than 16 students per class. Each class is taught by a highly qualified

faculty member, with 32 of our 38 full-time faculty members having a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their field of study from very distinguished universities. We remain committed to providing an engaging academic experience inside and outside the classroom, an experience that is designed with the express purpose of helping to prepare the next generation of leader-servants so needed in today's world. I could elaborate, but suffice it to say – Southern Virginia is weathering this economic storm and, by doing so, we will become much better known for our commitment to delivering a quality and engaging educational experience for every student, because that is the focus of all we do.

To ensure that everyone can better understand my optimism, it will be helpful for me to take some time to explain where Southern Virginia fits in the history of Latter-day Saint higher education. In doing so, I trust you will leave feeling, as I do, that we – everyone associated with Southern Virginia – are pioneers in a very special and historic movement in higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we take advantage of what I refer to as the genius or efficiency of large (the “large Church”) and the genius or effectiveness of small (the “small Church”).<sup>2</sup> The large and small functions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints work together in a complementary and highly effective fashion.<sup>3</sup> The general Church offices and organization, and the wonderful men and women who serve therein, with their capacity to act globally, clearly take advantage of efficiencies related to their large size in effectively fulfilling the functions of a worldwide church in an optimal manner. General Conference broadcasts, which bring edifying and prophetic messages to members throughout the world, are a part of the genius of large. The capacity to deal with crises and global need is another part of the genius of the large Church. I have been blessed as I have grown older to see firsthand the great good that the large Church, with its capacity marshal and distribute resources to address global issues, is doing. How grateful I am for the genius of the large Church.

The strength of the large Church, in turn, is enhanced by the genius of the small Church – our branches, wards and stakes.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, much of the strength of large has its genesis in that which is small. As The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has grown from a small congregation of six members to millions of members throughout the world, the small Church – the branches, wards and stakes – has provided leaders trained to serve in capacities within the large Church with its global mission.

There is clearly an inspired synergy between the large and small functioning arms of the Church. We know that, “out of small things proceedeth that which is great.”<sup>5</sup> Wards and stakes are situated in areas throughout the world and provide local members with very personalized growth opportunities in smaller units. When those units grow they are divided, so they can continue to fulfill one of their important functions – providing opportunities for the growth of each and every member through meaningful service and very personal instruction. Having lived for more than a decade in the south, where congregations in other wonderful faiths are often considered successful only if they are large, I have come to see the great blessings that all active members derive from the genius of the small Church. Even wards and branches are divided into classes and quorums so that instruction can be very personal, tailored to our needs as sons and daughters of a loving God, who is intimately involved in the details of our lives. Of course, even greater than the genius of small that we enjoy in the stakes, wards and branches of the Church is the blessing of families, that eternal unit. I am deeply grateful for the genius of the small Church and the great good that it is designed to further in all of our lives.

The genius of large and small, and their capacity to work together in unity in blessing souls, is dramatically evidenced in our temples. We have large temples that can efficiently provide significant numbers of patrons with the blessings of the temple ordinances in more populated areas of the Church, and small temples that serve smaller numbers of members in areas in which Church membership is smaller, providing all faithful members with access to the eternal blessings that can only be had through temple ordinances and service.

The genius of large and small in the Church was clearly demonstrated in the life of the Savior, as well. In the entry under “education,” the Bible Dictionary notes that at the time of the Savior’s mortal ministry:

The divine law impressed upon parents the duty of teaching their children its precepts and principles, but little is known about the methods of teaching that were employed. Up to the age of six years of age a child was taught by the mother. The schools that all boys from six years old had to attend were generally held in the synagogues. Until a boy was ten no textbook was used but scripture. The aim was to encourage study by sense of duty rather than by reward or fear. Reading, writing, and grammar were taught, and in order that teaching might be thorough, no class even in the elementary school might exceed 25 pupils. . .

At the age of 12 a Jewish boy was taken to Jerusalem at one of the feasts, and tested by the doctors of the law in the temple as to his knowledge of the duties and privileges to which by circumcision he had been admitted. In passing this test he was regarded as freely and intelligently “taking upon himself the yoke of the law,” or “of the kingdom of God.”<sup>6</sup>

Luke, in turn, specifically addresses the early education of the Savior:

And as [Jesus] grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.<sup>7</sup>

The Joseph Smith translation clarifies the interchange between the doctors and young Jesus by adding that “they (the teachers) were hearing him (the student), and asking him questions.”<sup>8</sup>

The Savior’s early education occurred in the home, synagogue and temple, where he studied and learned through an engaging and very personal educational process. He learned line upon line, or in the words of Elder Talmage, “His advancement was from one grace to another, not from gracelessness to grace; from good to greater good, not from evil to good; from favor with God to greater favor, not from estrangement because of sin to reconciliation through repentance and propitiation.”<sup>9</sup>

Later, we learn of Jesus “being led by the Spirit into the wilderness,”<sup>10</sup> where “He would be free to commune with His God,”<sup>11</sup> as he faced the great temptations that had to be confronted as part of his final preparation for a mortal ministry like no other. As he assumed the full mantle of his earthly ministry, during those momentous days in the wilderness, the Savior, who had prepared himself perfectly, surely learned through prayerful reflection and very personal and engaging interaction. With that education,<sup>12</sup> he was fully prepared for a ministry that would feed thousands and impact worlds without end. His ministry touches each of us personally and yet the breadth and depth of its span is awesome, larger than we can comprehend, bound as we are by mortal limitations. His life demonstrates so perfectly the blend between the genius of large and small. His ministry focuses on the one, but his reach is endless and eternal.

With some sense in mind of the genius of large and small, let us turn next to inspired higher education in the Church in the dispensation of the fullness of times. During a recent visit to Southern Virginia, Dr. Richard Bushman, who is one of the most highly esteemed Latter-day Saint historians of our era, publicly stated:

It has long been my hope that somehow we would recover the educational ideal that is outlined in the revelation on the School of the Prophets. We circle around it but are so enthralled with the image of the research university with its tremendous power in our culture that it is hard to see what that ideal means for us today. I believe that BYU-Idaho . . . and Southern Virginia University . . . are returning us to that ideal.<sup>13</sup>

In order to more fully understand Dr. Bushman’s reflection, we need to situate Southern Virginia University in the context of Latter-day Saint higher education in this dispensation and examine how BYU-Idaho and other large institutions are using the genius of large and Southern Virginia is using the genius of small to touch lives in meaningful ways.

Dr. Bushman refers to the School of the Prophets. The education received in that school was highly personal and helped prepare those in attendance for daunting responsibilities. It also provided them with a sociality – a sense of belonging – that blessed the lives of all in attendance. It was the small Church in its most effective form.

The Nauvoo Charter, in turn, was largely general and provided for broad powers. In articulating those broad powers, however, the early Saints specifi-

cally noted their determination to be permitted to do two specific things: build a temple and develop a university, The University of the City of Nauvoo. It served members of the Church but was not formally owned by the Church.<sup>14</sup>

Later, in outlining the mission of The University of City of Nauvoo, the First Presidency, under the guidance of the Prophet Joseph, issued the following proclamation on January 15, 1841:

The 'University of the City of Nauvoo' will enable us to teach our children wisdom, to instruct them in all the knowledge and learning, in the arts, sciences, and learned professions. We hope to make this institution one of the great lights of the world, and by and through it to diffuse that kind of knowledge which will be of practicable utility, and for the public good, and also for private and individual happiness. The Regents of the University [of whom, the Prophet Joseph was one] will take the general supervision of all matters appertaining to education, from common schools up to the highest branches of a most liberal collegiate course.<sup>15</sup>

Not surprisingly, given that it was built on the general model of the liberal arts colleges of its day, which featured small and engaging faculty-student interaction, The University of the City of Nauvoo was designed to draw on the genius of small. In its limited existence, with its rich curriculum in letters, arts and sciences, that also characterized the liberal arts colleges of the day, the university provided its students with opportunities for engaging analysis. It furnished the students with a breathtaking exposure to the best in literature and the arts, with an appreciation for science as the basis for the creation of worlds, and with a foundation that the students could draw on as leaders. This education was rooted in the best books and was similar to the education received by most of our nation's founders.

It was not really until after World War II that higher education in the Latter-day Saint context began to deviate away from the effectiveness of small in order to take more advantage of the efficiencies of large. For example, Brigham Young University had 273 students in 1876-1877 and had only grown to 438 students in 1920-21. Even by 1944-45, prior to the end of World War II, BYU had a student body of only 1,508. By 1951, however, with the influx of veterans and other students in search of higher education, BYU joined with many land grant and state universities in seeking to find efficiencies to deal with increasing demand and had a student body of 5,957 students. Today, as

the flagship of higher education in the Church, BYU has approximately 30,000 students and has assumed more of a research mission, although it continues to be predominantly under-graduate in its focus. It has drawn on the efficiencies and genius of large in its efforts to provide a quality education on a single campus to a dramatically increasing number of students.

Ricks College and BYU-Hawaii, on the other hand, remained small until the latter part of the twentieth century. Today, Ricks College is BYU-Idaho and has a plan in place to serve as many as 30,000 students by 2015, all of whom will be undergraduates. BYU-Hawaii, in turn, is developing a plan to double in size to 5,000 students in the near future.

As I travel, I am often asked why the Church-owned institutions – BYU-Idaho, BYU-Hawaii and the LDS Business College – are so determined to grow. My answer is simple: it is all about souls. We know that students are generally more likely to graduate temple and tithing faithful if they attend schools that cherish Latter-day Saint values, inside and outside the classroom.<sup>16</sup> One need only visit the campuses of many secular institutions to learn, as I did while serving as a bishop in a student ward at a large state university, that the world seemingly seeps under the doors and into the lives of LDS students on those campuses. Even with wonderful institute programs, many students are overcome by the distractions of the world that pervade campuses that do not cherish LDS values. It is not surprising, therefore, that under the able guidance of an inspired Board, wise presidents and committed faculty and staff, BYU-Idaho and BYU-Hawaii are looking for ways to provide quality education while quickly increasing the numbers of students on their campuses. They are also seeking to increase their numbers in a way that does not require significant additional Church funding or subsidies.

To do this on a single campus often requires creating efficiencies such as increasing class sizes and teaching loads for faculty members to avoid a costly research or graduate school model, and using new and innovative technology to complement and sometimes substitute for an in-class experience. When wisely implemented, these changes are founded in the genius of large, and represent an effort to bless more souls and provide a solid educational experience.

The efficiencies of large in higher education are well known throughout the Church, given the well earned prominence of BYU. In addition to the capacity of a large institution to serve more students on a single campus, there are other efficiencies of large that are noteworthy.

## **The Genius of Large in LDS Higher Education**

The most significant expense on most campuses, whether large or small, is instructional – the cost of faculty and instructional support. Large universities are able to place more students in a single classroom; and, if the university is a research or graduate university, classes can often be taught by graduate assistants, lowering the overall cost of instruction per student. Even at some schools that do not have graduate programs, instructional costs can be lowered by using upper-division students to teach or assist faculty members teaching larger numbers of students in a single class.

Another benefit of the genius of large is the capacity to invest more dollars in technology. In higher education today, more schools are using technology to save administratively and in the classroom. Increasing numbers of classes are being taught online or through the use of technology as a means of complementing or substituting for instruction by a faculty member in a traditional classroom. BYU-Idaho is a recognized leader in this effort to use online technology to deliver high quality education to a larger number of students at lower cost.<sup>17</sup> Using technology wisely can lower cost and, if done well, can be achieved in a manner that is as effective as teaching in large and perhaps, in some instances, even small classroom settings, given that it can be responsive to learning styles.

Large universities are also able to offer more majors because they have a larger and more diverse faculty. With an emphasis on majors, larger institutions are able to provide students with significant opportunities to develop technical proficiencies and specialized skills in specific areas. This function of large universities helps ensure that we have a technically proficient workforce and offers a wide array of career choices to students. Early declaration of a major provides an additional benefit: students can be placed in majors and tracked or guided through the maze of a large university.

Large research universities provide a major related benefit: they perform much needed research and development functions in a highly technical world. In a recent discussion with President Michael Young at the University of Utah, for example, I learned that the University is a national leader in spinning off new technologically based businesses. The research mission of large universities does much to provide the basis for new business opportunities in technology and related sectors of our economy that can be incubated in the laboratories and halls of great research universities. Graduate programs can also provide individuals with sufficient expertise to work in those businesses. Among

the Church-related universities, only BYU-Provo has a noteworthy research and graduate mission. It provides some technological spin-offs and highly recognized graduate programs in a number of areas, although it continues to espouse a strong undergraduate teaching mission.

Larger universities, with their efficiencies, subsidies and capital budgets, often are able to provide newer and more spacious facilities than their smaller counterparts. With a broader resource base and significant capital budgets to build on, major building projects are often the norm at larger universities. Facilities can be designed to provide efficient delivery of services, as well. For example, testing centers can be designed to provide efficient means for testing and student evaluation, which have the added benefit of reducing faculty time spent on grading and evaluation. Since exams at large universities are often offered in an objective format, students can take exams at flexible times and receive prompt feedback. Multiple choice or objective exams provide flexibility and reduce the grading time necessary on the part of more highly paid instructors.

In addition to providing facilities that help make the delivery of educational services to large numbers of students more efficient, large universities have the facilities and capacity to provide many entertainment and educational options to students. Large universities often bring highly regarded educators to lecture on their campuses. They also often have strong student services staffing in order to provide students with a wide variety of enjoyable activities. BYU-Idaho, for example, has taken advantage of its size to provide an array of activities and opportunities for socializing to its students, including very extensive intramural athletic programs and other entertainment and related activities designed to engage the student body. Larger universities can also bring well-known entertainers to campus, where they can be enjoyed by thousands of students in a single venue. Studies have also indicated that major Division I athletic teams, particularly in basketball and football, provide entertainment together with a sense of community at large institutions. As we root for the BYU Cougars or other teams at large schools, we see this clearly and are reminded that sporting events can reinforce a sense of community at universities with large student populations that might otherwise be viewed as impersonal.

At large Church schools, student wards provide a major sense of belonging and draw on the benefits or the genius of small in the Church. Larger secular universities sometimes endeavor to use fraternities and sororities to give students a sense of belonging, but those organizations often bring drinking, drug use and related problems in their wake.

Strong honors programs, like those at BYU and the University of Utah, with smaller and engaging classes, are also often available at fine large universities and draw on the genius of small in delivering a quality academic experience. Recognizing the genius of small, and merging it with their research mission, BYU and some other large universities provide top students in a variety of fields, including science, with opportunities to work closely with highly regarded scientists and professors. Large universities, including BYU, BYU-Idaho and BYU-Hawaii, often provide their students with an opportunity to take advantage of internships that, when operated effectively, can provide another genius of small opportunity in a large university setting.

Given their size in terms of numbers of students, and based in part on the fact that in contemporary society major collegiate athletic teams receive much more media attention than academic programs, larger universities are often much better known than their smaller counterparts. I learned this when I was attending graduate school at The University of Pennsylvania, a highly regarded Ivy League university in Philadelphia. When I would return home to the west, I was often asked what I was doing. When I responded that I was attending graduate school at Penn, my friends would respond by saying something like, “Wow, you have a great football team.” They were thinking of Penn State University, a larger public university, with a football coach – Joe Paterno – who is better known by most Americans than the Nobel Prize winners on the faculty at Penn.

All of the efficiencies that come with size can, if used effectively, add up to a major benefit for students – lower tuition costs by finding ways to decrease the cost of delivering educational opportunities to students. Tuition costs are also lower because larger universities are often subsidized by the state or occasionally, as in the case of the BYU campuses, a religious body. This tuition benefit together with the other benefits that have been discussed and are part of the efficiencies of large model of higher education contribute collectively to make large universities appealing to a significant number of students.

### **The Genius of Small in LDS Higher Education**

There are also, however, ways in which smaller universities are quite effective in delivering a high quality educational experience. They draw on the genius of small in a manner that complements the genius of large at major universities and offers a much different educational choice to prospective students. Given that the effectiveness of small in higher education is less well known in

the Latter-day Saint community, I will use our experience at Southern Virginia University to demonstrate those benefits and will spend a bit more time discussing the genius of small in that light.

Smaller schools provide an environment of enhanced engagement for their students, inside and outside the classroom. The classroom experience at a small school is often quite different from the classroom experience at larger institutions. With their smaller class sizes and qualified faculty teaching each class – at Southern Virginia our average class size is 16 and our courses are overwhelmingly taught by faculty with doctoral or other terminal degrees in their teaching areas – students are typically much more engaged in the classroom on a daily basis than are their counterparts at larger universities.

Most respected large and small universities use the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to assess the level of student involvement on their campuses. NSSE was designed by the graduate school of education at The University of Indiana, in an effort to evaluate institutions on what educators believe to be the key ingredients of an excellent educational experience: level of academic challenge; student-faculty interaction; collaborative learning experiences; enriching educational experiences; and supportive campus environment.<sup>18</sup> In using this assessment, colleges are able to compare themselves with other groups of institutions. At Southern Virginia, we compared ourselves with large universities, universities with large LDS populations (the BYU campuses and other campuses in Utah, Arizona and Idaho with large LDS student populations), and other small liberal arts colleges. We discovered that, in statistically significant ways, we outperform the group of large universities and universities with large LDS student populations in all five areas. When we compare ourselves to other small liberal arts colleges, our results are similar to their results. It is clear, therefore, that student engagement in a rigorous academic experience is enhanced at smaller colleges – it is a part of the genius of small.

This effectiveness of small has been corroborated in each academic area that we have assessed at Southern Virginia. Our students perform well on a regular basis on national exams offered in their respective areas of study, even though our emphasis is very much on a core experience. For example, our largest major is business; and, on the exit examination in business, which tests the business knowledge of graduates of business programs at universities throughout the country, our students are consistently in the top 20% (on two of the last three examinations our students have been in the top 5%),<sup>19</sup> even though we have open admissions to our business major.

We also use the Collegiate Learning Assessment,<sup>20</sup> which assesses student improvement in writing, analysis and related skills. Once again, we see the effectiveness of small at work, with stronger comparative performance in terms of analysis and writing on the part of our students. In order to strengthen our writing further, we have developed a matrix that is used by all faculty to grade papers in their respective areas. It is not surprising that stronger writing and analysis is a characteristic of small liberal arts colleges, given that students at smaller schools tend to write more, receive more faculty feedback on their writing, and are expected to engage in analysis regularly in the interaction that goes on between faculty and students in the small class setting.

The nationally recognized Noel-Levitz survey of student satisfaction also evidences that students at smaller institutions are generally more satisfied with their educational experience than students at larger universities. We found, for example, at Southern Virginia that our students are generally more satisfied with their educational experience than their counterparts at larger universities.<sup>21</sup> In a recent study done of our students, we also found that they have a greater sense of belonging and a feeling that their confidence or self-esteem is being enhanced than do their counterparts at larger universities.<sup>22</sup>

Southern Virginia, like the BYU campuses and the LDS Business College, has strong student wards that are thoughtfully integrated into the spiritual and social fabric of university life and provide more of the genius of small to our students. Southern Virginia also has a strong honor code that helps foster a community that strengthens the faith of our students, 97% of whom are Latter-day Saints, and builds a sense of community. The Institute of Religion at Southern Virginia, which is operated by the Church Educational System, is also a strong part of university life for our students. Last year, for example, with 700 students, the Institute had to offer 55-60 different sections, with duplicate courses such as Missionary Preparation, Book of Mormon, and Teachings of the Living Prophets, in order to meet student demand which is as high or higher than exists at any other university.

While they seldom are able to compete with their larger counterparts in terms of the variety of activities and entertainment offered to their students, smaller colleges do significantly outperform larger universities in terms of student engagement in intercollegiate athletics, the fine and performing arts, student government, etc. For example, at Southern Virginia the vast majority of our students are very involved in experiences designed to enhance their educational experience, with each experience intentionally designed to prepare them as leader-servants. Approximately 40% of our students participate in intercol-

legiate athletics, 33% participate in significant ways in the fine and performing arts, and many others engaged in other major activities designed to strengthen them as leader-servants. Smaller schools are more about participation than observation.

In the last study of its kind that I am aware of, which was done in 1998, small liberal arts colleges were found to be significantly more likely to produce CEO's, Pulitzer Prize winners, presidents, and members of the National Academy of Sciences than were larger universities.<sup>23</sup> This is not surprising, given that the smaller classroom experience more nearly replicates the Boardroom, with its emphasis on analysis and not on memorization. Small schools do not have the laboratory facilities of larger schools, but they emphasize thinking like a scientist, which may explain why they are successful in producing renowned scientists. A recent article in the Wall Street Journal also noted that students graduating with a baccalaureate degree from a liberal arts college earn approximately 10% more mid-career than do their counterparts who graduate from larger universities.<sup>24</sup>

Smaller schools have a strong track record of preparing their students for the rigors of graduate and professional school. Faculty members know their students well and are able to mentor students on an individual basis. Faculty members also write strong letters of recommendation that evidence a close relationship between the faculty member and a student. At Southern Virginia, we have a very solid track record of getting our graduates into medical, dental, law, and other graduate and professional programs.

Smaller colleges emphasize a core experience more than majors. In our catalogue at Southern Virginia, for example, we introduce our curriculum by emphasizing our core:

The core provides a common intellectual foundation for all Southern Virginia students. It focuses on great artistic, literary, philosophical, political, scientific, and social achievements, comparing these when appropriate with the insights of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. Core courses emphasize careful writing, critical thinking and analytic reasoning. Students discuss, write and present on issues of the highest importance to humanity thereby preparing themselves to be articulate and knowledgeable leader-servants. The Core requires at least intermediate knowledge of a second language to ensure deeper understanding of another people and of language in general, and it requires competence in mathematics in order to reason well about quantitative data and claims.

Finally, it ensures attention to the well being of others and oneself by encouraging meaningful service and wholesome physical activities.<sup>25</sup>

Larger universities also generally offer a core curriculum, but often their emphasis is more on majors and technical proficiency than on a common intellectual experience. Smaller colleges typically place more emphasis on providing a broad based education, which is designed more for versatility and change than for technical proficiency, although smaller institutions, like Southern Virginia, seek to provide a limited number of majors and some technical proficiency in a particular field.

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute, a respected national educational organization, selected 50 All American Colleges, based on their emphasis on the great ideas in our civilization and their commitment to a strong core experience.<sup>26</sup> Southern Virginia was honored to be included in that prestigious group that included many smaller liberal arts colleges and a few larger institutions that focus on their under-graduate core, including Princeton and the University of Chicago.

Southern Virginia is the only college in the Latter-day Saint higher education context that has been successful in obtaining the accrediting stamp of approval from the American Academy of Liberal Education that scrutinizes the quality of the core curriculum and the content of the under-graduate education offered at its member institutions. The AALE is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting body and has accredited small colleges throughout the world. Larger universities are generally accredited on a regional basis by regional accrediting bodies, which are also recognized by the Department of Education, but which place less emphasis on the substantive side of the curriculum offered at member institutions.

Given that smaller colleges do not have graduate and research programs, they are less likely to spin off major technological and related businesses. They do, however, often play a major role in terms of economic development in smaller communities. Southern Virginia is now the largest employer in Buena Vista, Virginia, and plays a major role in economic development by its presence and through its graduates who remain in the area. Students at smaller colleges, which are often located in rural areas, provide service in local schools and throughout the broader community. Southern Virginia, for example, has done much to vitalize the arts in a historically blue-collar community and our students provide thousands of hours of service within our community on an annual basis.

Smaller colleges are typically private and generally do not receive major subsidies. Even small faith-based colleges generally receive only limited operational resources from their respective denominations. Not surprisingly, given the cost of providing a smaller classroom experience and their lack of subsidy, smaller colleges tend to be tuition dependent and more costly, in terms of sticker or tuition price. Nevertheless with strong advisement and limited shifting between majors, their small size often makes it possible for liberal arts colleges to graduate students sooner than their larger counterparts, thereby reducing the overall cost to students. They also tend to offer more scholarship support than their larger counterparts. For example, approximately 97% of students at Southern Virginia receive institutional scholarships or grants and approximately 20% of our graduating students are able to graduate in 3 or fewer years and that number is likely to increase as we move toward formalization of a 3-year graduation program. As a small school, with strong and personalized advising,<sup>27</sup> we are able to offer a four-year graduation guarantee. These attributes of a small college have the effect of lowering our overall cost and making us quite competitive with many larger universities, where students often take 5 to 6 years to graduate and, as a consequence, often have to pay additional years of tuition, room, board, travel and other educational expenses.<sup>28</sup> The value of each year saved is estimated to be worth approximately \$80,000, because that is the average mid-career value of a year lost in the marketplace.

If one looks at net cost, and not just sticker or tuition price per year, it becomes clear that the average cost or expense of a private smaller college experience is often comparable to the average cost of an education at a larger university, even though the tuition at larger institutions may be subsidized.<sup>29</sup>

There are efficiencies of large that have supported the growth of impressive major universities and there ways in which small colleges are also, by their nature, quite effective. There is genius in the large and small models of higher education, leaving students and their parents free to choose between the two, determining which best fits the learning style and interests of a particular student.

Small colleges and large universities have learned from each other. Large universities have often created vibrant honors programs, which are designed to provide students at large universities with the rigorous academic benefits of a small college educational experience. Larger universities have also sought to replicate small college extra-curricular engagement by providing an excellent array of activity options for their students. Small colleges, in turn, have learned from their larger counterparts. Small colleges are seeking to incorporate tech-

nology into courses in which such technology can complement the engaging classroom experience that characterizes the small college experience and without diminishing the strong social and educational benefits that come from interaction with faculty and other students inside and outside the classroom. Smaller colleges, which do not have the capacity to deliver all of administrative and related support available at larger universities, are also developing consortia and are looking to outsource certain functions that can be better performed by larger more specialized institutions. Small and large universities also often cooperate by providing for articulation agreements that will permit their students to transfer from one institution to another. For example, Southern Virginia University has a strong articulation agreement with BYU, which makes it easy for students to benefit from the strengths of each model without losing significant credits when they transfer, as is often the case when students transfer from one institution to another.

Small liberal arts colleges intentionally choose to remain small, but there is a way in which they can draw on the genius of small and serve more students: they can refine their model and replicate. The final statement in our mission statement states that, “Southern Virginia University seeks to establish a replicable self-sustaining model of higher education that can serve Latter-day Saints throughout the world.” Building new colleges on a small scale, where the need is greatest, is far less costly than trying to replicate a large university. In the Church, we know this well. The small Church expands primarily by drawing on the genius of small and building new wards and stakes and small temples where there is a demonstrated need.

An exciting related recent development in higher education is a movement on the part of many larger universities to develop smaller satellite campuses that are designed to draw on the genius of small and that provide economic or community support in needy areas throughout a state or region, by educating students in that community who can remain in the area to strengthen the economy and by bringing institutional dollars into the community. While efforts are underway at these large universities to provide distance and online educational opportunities to off-campus locations, most educators recognize that students need opportunities to interact and socialize to maximize their educational experience. For example, therefore, Penn State University has developed a system of small under-graduate focused campuses that are supported by the administrative strengths and name recognition of a large university. The University of Virginia, in turn, has developed a liberal arts college – The University of Virginia at Wise – which is deliberately designed to provide a residential liberal

arts experience in a rural part of Virginia. Many other large universities have recognized the strengths of small and are creating or supporting smaller colleges within a larger state system, rather than expanding further on single large campus. Some religious denominations offer support to large and small colleges, although that support is often more ecclesiastical than financial in nature. Schools like Baylor (Baptist), Notre Dame (Catholic), Liberty (Evangelical), and Southern Methodist (Methodist) are larger universities in faiths or religious traditions that also support, at least ecclesiastically, many smaller colleges.

It is clear, therefore, that Professor Bushman was right when he noted that Southern Virginia University is playing a significant role in LDS higher education. It seeks to draw on the genius of small, with roots that intentionally run back to The University of the City of Nauvoo. Like its counterparts in other faiths, and in the tradition of the University of the City of Nauvoo, Southern Virginia does not receive significant operational or formal support from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Indeed, I was once asked whether we would accept a subsidy if offered, and my answer surprised the person asking the question. I replied, “No, because if we do so, our capacity to replicate by refining a model that will draw on the genius of small will be limited.” After saying that, however, I added, as one who has taught in the Catholic and served as a dean in the Lutheran contexts, “We actually receive more support from the LDS Church for our operations than most of our counterparts in other faiths receive from their respective religious denominations, because the Church provides a correlated and very effective religion program for our students, which constitutes a significant part of our curriculum.” Our students are overwhelmingly LDS and are able to take Institute courses for credit from a well-staffed Institute faculty, which provides them with strong religion courses. In turn, credit for those courses can be transferred to the university at no cost, thereby lowering the overall cost of attendance for our students. In fact, a student who takes an Institute class for credit and a standard academic load in the fall and spring semesters, together with a May (or June or August) term can graduate in three years, substantially lowering their cost of education and providing them with the economic benefits of early entry into full-time employment or graduate school.

We have been blessed to find ways to build on the effectiveness of small without a subsidy and without the concomitant need to become a large university, in the model of the Church supported universities in our faith. We are being blessed, and I mean this most sincerely, to find a way to draw on the genius

of small that is so prevalent in our faith, while maintaining an appreciation for the benefits of larger universities that do an excellent job of serving Latter-day Saint students. In doing so, we are completely committed to providing an exemplary and unique undergraduate educational experience in an environment that cherishes Latter-day Saint values.

We are pioneers in this great effort, and we have an important role to fill in Latter-day Saint higher education. We are engaged in a work that no one else is doing – we are keeping the effectiveness or genius of small alive in a singular way in Latter-day Saint higher education. I came to Southern Virginia five years ago because I felt inspired that I could make a difference, and I stay because I know that we are making a difference together. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> President Thomas S. Monson recently taught, “Young people, you live in tumultuous times. You have choices to make – choices with eternal consequences. But you are not left unaided in your decisions, however small or however large they may be.” Thomas S. Monson, “Standards of Strength,” *New Era*, October 2008, at 2.

<sup>2</sup> Despite referring to the large and small Church, for conceptual and functional purposes, it is clear that Latter-day Saints belong to a single Church – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – that has developed a unique capacity to deal with global and personal issues, in a manner that blesses all of our lives.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Richard C. Edgley recently captured the inspired manner in which the large and small functioning units of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints work together when he noted:

Often, individuals who are not of our faith – members of other churches, relief organizations, governments, and the news media – comment on how quickly the Church is able to mobilize so many who are willing to help. They ask, “How do you do it?” The response to this question can be simply stated as “We are prepared, we have organization, we have empathy, and we have charity.” It usually takes just a few phone calls from presiding authorities to local leaders to mobilize hundreds and sometimes thousands of individuals to go to the rescue of their fellow brothers and sisters.

Bishop Richard C. Edgley, “This Is Your Phone Call,” *Ensign*, May 2009.

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<sup>4</sup> Elder M. Russell Ballard has taught the virtue or principle of small and simple things in our lives:

We observe vast, sweeping world events; however, we must remember that the purposes of the Lord in our personal lives generally and are fulfilled through the small and simple things, and not the momentous and spectacular.

Elder M. Russell Ballard, "Small and Simple Things," *Ensign*, May 1990 at 6. *See also* Elder Stephen A. West, "Out of Small Things," *Ensign*, May 1999 at 28.

<sup>5</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 64:33.

<sup>6</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version (KJV), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Dictionary, "Education," at 660 (1979).

<sup>7</sup> Luke 2:40-46, KJV, *Id.* at 1276-77. Elder James E. Talmage expounded on these scriptures when he taught that:

It was no unusual thing for a twelve year old boy to be questioned [at that time] by priests, scribes, or rabbis, nor to be permitted to ask questions of these professional expounders of the law, for such procedure was part of the educational training of Jewish youths; nor was there anything surprising in such a meeting of students and teachers within the temple courts, for the rabbis of that time were accustomed to give instruction there; and people, young an old, gathered about them, sitting at their feet to learn; but there was much that was extraordinary in this interview as the demeanor of the learned doctors showed, for never before had such a student been found, inasmuch as "all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." The incident furnishes evidence of a wellspent boyhood and proof of unusual attainments.

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, at 107-08.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*, Luke 2:46, footnote c.

<sup>9</sup> Talmage, *supra* note vii, at 105-06.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*, Luke 4:1: "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness . . ."

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<sup>11</sup> Talmage, *supra* note vi, at 120. To “commune with His God” is clearly a reference to a very personal education at the highest level.

<sup>12</sup> In Luke 4:14-15 (KJV), we learn: “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.” *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Wally Barrus, *Preparing Leader-Servants: A Portrait of Southern Virginia University*, at 91.

<sup>14</sup> In the early period of higher education in the LDS Church context, it was customary that schools did not receive significant Church funding, including institutions like Brigham Young Academy, the predecessor to Brigham Young University, was not initially owned and operated by the Church. Church members, however, were quite supportive. For example, early benefactors, including particularly Jesse Knight, sustained Brigham Young Academy and the university that followed during difficult economic times, prior to the days in which those institutions came to receive substantial subsidies from tithing or sacred funds.

<sup>15</sup> *The Teachings of Joseph Smith*, Vol. 1, Deseret Press at 205-06.

<sup>16</sup> For example, a study prepared by Professor Chadwick at Brigham Young University evidenced that returned missionaries attending Brigham Young University were significantly more likely to be tithing faithful after graduation than their counterparts who attended secular institutions. It is clear, nevertheless, that students who take Institute classes for credit each term during their tenure at institutions that are not Church-related, and are active in their ward, are as likely to graduate Temple faithful as are their counterparts who attend Church-related schools. The problem is that only a very small percentage of Latter-day Saint students attending institutions that are not Church-related attend Institute on a regular basis. Sadly, as a consequence, they often drift into inactivity.

<sup>17</sup> Chronicle of Higher Education article regarding use of technology and BYU-Idaho’s innovative approach that can lower cost per student of delivering education.

<sup>18</sup> Our NSSE results can be accessed at [www.svu.edu](http://www.svu.edu) by clicking on “How Do We Compare,” on the portal page.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

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<sup>21</sup><sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> This study was performed by Cathy Chamberlain and is available through the library at Southern Virginia University.

<sup>23</sup> See, Gretchen Murphy, UT Austin, “What is a Liberal Arts College?” <http://www.utexas/cola/depts/english/graduate/placement/liberalarts-what-is.html> which cites to <http://www.collegenews.org/topliberalartscolleges.xml>. Professor Murphy of the University of Texas at Austin adds, “Though small in number when compared to America’s large public universities, liberal arts college graduates are represented disproportionately among leaders in the arts, education, science and medicine, public service and business. A 1998 study found that even though only 3 percent of American college graduates were educated at a residential liberal arts college, alumni of these college accounted for:

- 8 percent of Forbes magazine’s listing of the nation’s wealthiest CEOs in 1998;
- 8 percent of former Peace Corps volunteers;
- 19 percent of U.S. presidents;
- 23 percent of Pulitzer Prize winners in drama, 19 percent of the winners in history, 18 percent in poetry, 8 percent in biography, and 6 percent in fiction from 1960 to 1998;
- 9 percent of Fulbright scholarship recipients and 24 percent of all Mellon fellowships in humanities; and
- 20 percent of Phi Beta Kappa inductions made between 1995 and 1997

On a per capita basis, liberal arts colleges produce nearly twice as many students who earn a Ph.D. in science as other institutions. Liberal arts graduates also are disproportionately represented in the leadership of the nation’s scientific community. In a recent two-year period, nearly 20 percent of scientists elected to the prestigious National Academy of Sciences received their undergraduate education at a liberal arts college.

What accounts for the distinctive contributions of top liberal arts colleges? In the end, it comes down to a matter of style and scale. Intentionally small in size, a residential liberal arts college permits the active engagement of faculty in promoting the learning of every individual student. Embracing a distinctive style of undergraduate education, these colleges foster a

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broad based knowledge and understanding of the humanities, sciences, and the arts and the cultivation of critical thinking and examination, skills that lie at the heart of liberal learning. In doing so, the nation's top liberal arts colleges uniquely prepare students for lives of service, achievement, leadership and personal fulfillment."

<sup>24</sup> Sarah H. Needleman, "Ivy Leaguers' big Edge: Starting Pay," The Wall Street Journal, at [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com).

<sup>25</sup> See [www.svu.edu](http://www.svu.edu) under Academics, Core Curriculum.

<sup>26</sup> In their press release dated August 15, 2006 and entitled, "Southern Virginia University Honored as One of 50 'All-American Colleges,'" the Intercollegiate Studies Institute noted that Southern Virginia University was included in the publication *All-American Colleges* (2006), which provides "personal, in-depth profiles of fifty *highly recommended* schools and programs. At each of these diverse institutions, students who identify themselves as religious believers, conservatives, or old-fashioned liberals will find programs that connect in a special way with the core values of the American founding, and the vibrant intellectual traditions of the West – schools and programs that are, in fact, often transformative."

<sup>27</sup> Faculty members at Southern Virginia serve as advisors to small groups of students, and students receive graduation audits, which facilitates early graduation. We also offer three summer terms at reduced tuition – the tuition for those terms this year is slightly less than the tuition at BYU-Provo. These efforts, and others like them, facilitate earlier graduation at reduced over-all cost on the part of our students.

<sup>28</sup> I recently compared our students who graduate in three years from Southern Virginia University, using their actual average cost of attendance, with their counterparts at BYU-Provo, who have historically graduated on the average in five years, and discovered that our students leave with less than \$1,000 more in indebtedness. Even if one uses a graduation rate of 4 years for BYU, the additional indebtedness is not significant, particularly in light of lost opportunity costs.

<sup>29</sup> For example, if a student graduates within three years at Southern Virginia, she will pay little, if any, more than a person graduating in five years from Brigham Young University.