

This is an excerpt. For the full report, please inquire with mciampi@ramapo.edu.





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O to emerge
from the ordeal of COVID-19 was Anthony Fauci,
director of the National Institute of Allergy and
Infectious Diseases. Fauci is a gi ed scientist and
researcher, and he has a long history of combating

throughout for the idea of the integration of the major disciplines and domains of knowledge, bringing the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences into deeper, prolonged conversation and collaboration. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that the fragmented knowledge produced by disciplinary specialization is inadequate to our circumstances. In the post-pandemic world, we will require an increasingly integrated understanding of what is happening. Realizing new forms of curricular and pedagogical integration will put the liberal arts and sciences back on the cutting edge of higher education and the production of knowledge.

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Relaxing the hold of traditional patterns of disciplinary specialization and graduate and professional education on the undergraduate curriculum also opens the door to innovations more attuned to the needs of students seeking broad preparation for moral, working, and civic lives. One form of attunement I've explored is connecting the curriculum to prominent issues, questions, and challenges that await our students following graduation. While certainly not exhaustive, I hope that the examples I've offered might stimulate further thinking about what a problem-based curriculum, attuned first and foremost to the futures of our students, might look like. It is unlikely that more than a meaningful minority of future undergraduates in the United States will earn their degrees in programs and institutions that legitimately lay claim to the educational ideals and practices of the liberal arts and sciences. But preserving that strong minority position is vital. The American system of higher education is still the best in the world. Its preeminence is due in part to the dazzling success of specialized research and technical education, but it is also due to the long history and stubborn persistence of the notion that higher education serves civic and moral as well as economic purposes. The utility of this vision of higher education will only increase in the post-pandemic world, where experience will reward breadth as well as depth of intelligence, understanding, and interpretive capacity.

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