



**Sent: March 13, 2009**

**Subject: Topical Books and Faculty Attitudes Toward Our Core Themes**

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The Kettering Foundation has recently produced several terrific publications on higher education's role in American democracy. We've reported on some of them before, but just in case you missed them, [click here](#).

In the Afterword of *Deliberation and the Work of Higher Education*, Kettering president David Mathews asks, beyond a small number of scholars and their immediate readers, *who else cares* about higher education's democratic mission, teaching, research, and practice? At TDI, we've taken the position that this is a cross-disciplinary, grass-roots movement. We've had anecdotal evidence that the interest is there, but we've never had much of a sense as to how strong it might be - until now.

This week, [HERI](#) released the results of a national survey of faculty attitudes and norms. These numbers were reported on March 5 in [Inside Higher Education](#). Here are a few of the key findings:

72.4 % of professors say they should "engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues."

82.5 % of professors say they should teach students tolerance and respect for different beliefs;

75.2 % now say that they work to "enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups." That is a gain of 17.6 points in the three years since the survey was last done.

57.8 % of professors say they should encourage students to become agents of social change.

55.5 % consider it "very important" or "essential" to "instill in students a commitment to community service," an increase of 19.1 points since the last survey.

71.0 % believe that colleges should be "actively involved" in solving social problems, up 4.1 points in three years.

While the questions did not explicitly ask about democracy or deliberative democracy, we are encouraged by the HERI findings. TDI's [framing paper](#) uses many of the HERI terms - civil discourse, respect, inclusion (rather than tolerance), appreciation for difference, community, active engagement...

As you continue to make the case on your campuses for advancing the teaching, research, and practice agendas for a more deliberative democracy, please use these numbers. We'll be talking about this issue, and more, at the [No Better Time](#) conference this July. Hope to see you there.

