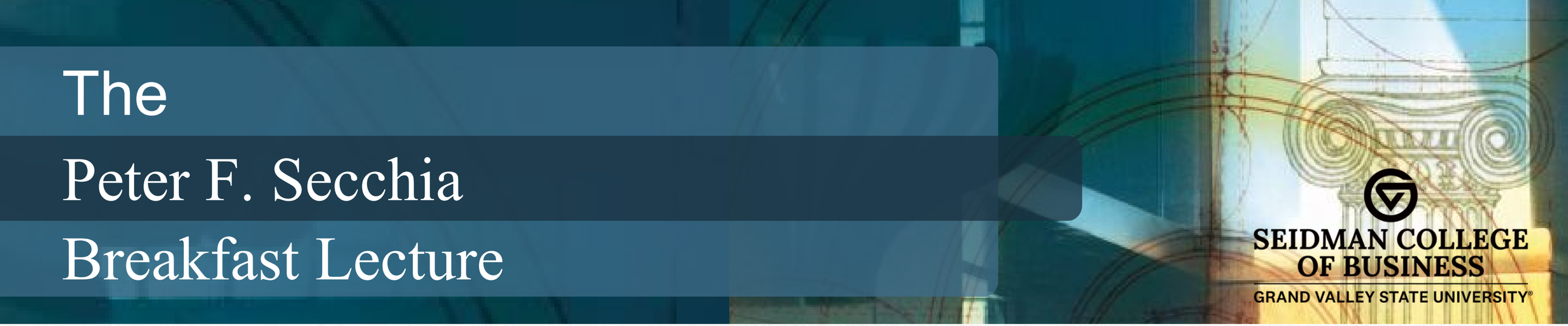


The
Peter F. Secchia
Breakfast Lecture

SEIDMAN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY®

WELCOME

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 1

TO UNIVERSITIES, BUSINESS, AND THE COMMON GOOD: TIME FOR A REALIGNMENT?

TRUST IN BUSINESS

SMALL BUSINESSES: HIGH CONFIDENCE AND POSITIVE VIEWS

- Small businesses consistently rank near or at the very top, with roughly **68% to 70%** of Americans reporting a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in them.
- **Broad Appeal:** Support for small businesses cuts across political lines, with high positive views shared similarly by both Democrats and Republicans (around 86% to 88% viewing their national impact positively).
- **Perception:** Americans generally associate small businesses with the local community roots, hard work, personal accountability, and the American Dream.

TRUST IN BUSINESS

LARGE CORPORATIONS: LOW CONFIDENCE AND SKEPTICISM

- **Low Trust Ratings:** Public confidence in big business has fallen to historic lows, with only about **15% to 16%** of Americans expressing substantial confidence or a "great deal" of trust in large corporations.
- **Negative Perceptions:** Only around **26% to 37%** of Americans view large corporations as having a positive impact on the country.
- **Perception:** Big businesses are frequently associated with impersonal bureaucracy, corporate greed, profit-seeking over fairness, environmental degradation, and a disconnect from local communities. No commitment to, or even any real understanding of, a “common good.”

Public confidence in U.S. higher education has fallen to a historic low, with recent Gallup polling showing that only about 38% of Americans express “a great deal” or “quite a lot of confidence” in the institution.

CURRENT STATE OF TRUST

- **Long-Term Drop:** Confidence dropped from 57% in 2015 to 36% by 2024
- **Partisan Divide:** A wide gap persists along political lines, with Democrats expressing significantly higher confidence (roughly 66%) than Independents (~40%) and Republicans (~26%).
- **Education Gap:** Trust varies heavily by educational attainment; roughly 49% of postgraduates retain confidence compared to about 36% of bachelor's degree holders and 35% of those without a college degree.
- **Institutional Hierarchy:** Public opinion surveys consistently rank community colleges as the most trusted sector, public universities second, and elite private or Ivy League institutions as the least trusted. Do graduates seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the community? Has the hollowing out of public support led to that?

MAIN DRIVERS OF DISTRUS

- **Soaring Costs & Affordability:** Rapidly rising tuition—approaching $100,000 annually at some elite private schools—and heavy student debt lead many to question the financial return on investment.

- **Perceived Politicization:** Public perception that (most) campuses promote specific political agendas and ideological perspectives, and, oddly, are in the business of restricting free speech and expression that does not align with predominant views. The “Commitment to Truth” vs. “Social Justice Warriors” argument. Business Schools as exceptions? Depends…

- **Value & Workforce Alignment:** Worries that universities are failing to teach practical skills or adapt quickly enough to workforce disruptions, e.g, AI.

- **Administrative Bloat:** Growing internal criticism regarding inflated campus administration, admissions transparency, and the governance roles of trustees and faculty.

COMMON GOOD

In ordinary political discourse, the "common good" refers to those facilities —whether material, cultural or institutional —that the members of a community provide to all members in order to fulfill a relational obligation they all have to care for certain interests that they have in common. Some canonical examples of the common good in a modern liberal democracy include: the road system; public parks; police protection and public safety; courts and the judicial system; public schools; museums and cultural institutions; public transportation; civil liberties, such as the freedom of speech and the freedom of association; the system of property; clean air and clean water; and national defense. The term itself may refer either to the interests that members have in common or to the facilities that serve common interests. For example, people may say, "the new public library will serve the common good" or "the public library is part of the common good." The terms "public good" and "common good" are sometimes treated as synonyms and at other times the modifier "public" is used to draw attention to the role of the state in the authoritative allocation of goods.

~ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy




No Child Left Behind


RACE TO THE TOP
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
RACE TO THE TOP
WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV



GRPS Blandford School 1970s

“The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity.”

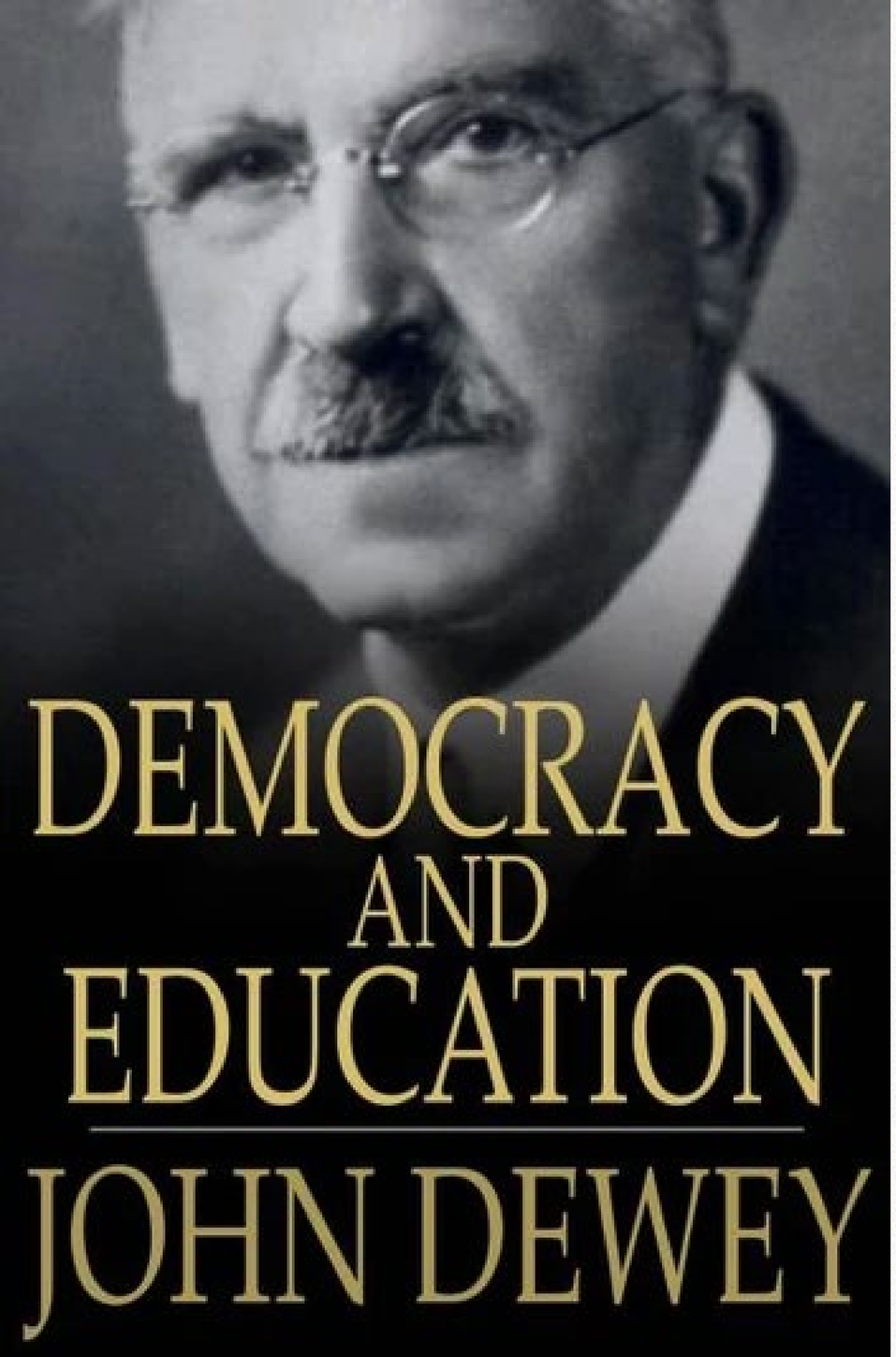
— James Baldwin, “A Talk to Teachers”



‘Has Harvard Indeed Lost Its Mind?’

Jill Lepore on AI, angry students, and absent leadership.





- "Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not a preparation for life but is life itself.“
- "The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education.“
- “Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.”

JAMAL
1974





Relational Obligation

Universities as Dynamic Creators of Value for Society

Focus on Output: Graduates

LIFESTYLE • CAREERS

Americans Without College Degrees Are Having One of the Best Job Markets in Years

Unemployment among younger workers who didn't go to college has rarely been lower in recent decades. It is the opposite story for college grads

By Theo Francis and Ray A. Smith
Sept. 6, 2026 9:00 pm ET

Aa 2089 Listen (2 min)



Hidden Curriculum

Growth Through Discomfort



Doubt and Failure



Fear and Some Success



Finding My Own Limit

Doubt, Fear, and Failure Create Epistemic Unsettling




Strategy Prompt of the Day:
How can you use spin to gain the advantage?
Scoreboard:
Professor 5
Student 3
GVSU
JOOLA


GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
Ford
Build What's Next
DeVos PLACE GRAND RAPIDS
Deloitte.
Make an impact that matters.
Steelcase
Amway
Ford
Consumers Energy
Count on Us®

Each Student Has Their Own Extreme

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THANK YOU

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FOR ATTENDING UNIVERSITIES, BUSINESS, AND THE COMMON GOOD: TIME FOR A REALIGNMENT?