

Sympathetic Intelligence and Processification in Higher Education

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1 Introduction

Many Universities and Colleges are reporting a reduction in the number of students successfully completing their programs of study, and too often today, we also see fewer students actually following through with their study for an intended career. Worse still, too many colleges and universities are now also reporting reductions in enrollment. In addition to demographic issues, there is likely a connection between the first trend and those worsening enrollment numbers. Combined, we now have an even bigger and ever blossoming 'disconnect' with students that has been the subject of many articles before this one. We are not 'visionaries' in this reporting, but two of us are professors with decades of experience as senior administrators in Higher Education. One of us is a past Provost and Interim President, one of us is a current Dean, while yet another of us is an instructor, musician, and peace activist. What brings us together is the concept of Sympathetic Intelligence, or the resonance between people that brings us together as a college or university. Without it, we have an ivory tower.

If there is any positive way to view the threats that the confluence of issues currently pressing on higher education present, it is to see that perhaps the reality of what lies ahead can provide both the motivation and the momentum to spur education on to make courageous, and creative decisions on how to move forward. We must do so while also driving innovative pedagogical techniques that complement the prevailing modern demands that both society and the constant advances of technology present. And we must do this together as administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The thesis of this document is then twofold. First, that one of the oldest, most deeply rooted, and perhaps the most systemic of all problems in Higher Education lies at the center of this burgeoning disconnect. We call it *processification*. Processification is the dominance of process over purpose, even if that original purpose was a good one. It alone can and will eventually suck the living force out of any breathing institution, even colleges and universities. Add to that the post-pandemic world with its modern construct, and you have a dangerous environment poised to inflict pain on our higher education institutions and further exacerbate efforts to reverse this disastrous trend and ever deepening disconnect with its students, faculty, and staff.

Second, that there is now a developing concept and powerfully fresh approach at our disposal, which the writers feel has the potential for rolling back disconnects of all kinds. In this article, we will introduce this new concept called *Sympathetic Intelligence*, which focuses on the natural resonant connectedness of people whether at a rock concert or in a classroom. We believe it could significantly contribute to, and support better engagement between Faculty and Students, release the stranglehold of processification, help reverse the trend of diminishing retention, and finally help spawn a reversal in plunging enrollment.

As you will see, these two concepts are juxtaposed such that the interplay between them means that any change in one has an opposing impact on the other. It is this feature that makes Sympathetic Intelligence a useful tool for addressing and reversing the impact of

processification. Most importantly, we believe that the dynamic between processification and Sympathetic Intelligence is such that the synergy between them presents as an ideal vehicle to direct the aforementioned desire and potential for change towards finally taking on the problem of processification and steering us through the rocky waters in which we currently find ourselves. In fact, if higher education was a dancehall ballroom, processification and Sympathetic Intelligence would be the perfect dance partners. All that would be needed is the right piece of music.

2 What is Processification?

Every purpose needs a process. Stated simply; *processification is the placement of process over purpose*. It typically occurs gradually, increasing incrementally and perhaps subconsciously over time so that the process takes precedence over the purpose it was created to serve. The result is that the purpose is either poorly served, or not served at all. Unfortunately, universities are replete with the development of processification over their long existence, and its presence is now systemic. The biggest single problem with processification is that, because it can develop slowly and incrementally over time, it is difficult to feel or identify. Its discovery is usually only made when it's too late, and that is rarely a good place from which to try to recover.

In this way, processification is the development of what was perhaps an initially well-intended process, to a currently existing process that can, for example, draw a passionate instructor out of the classroom experience to work on their scholarship and keep the students from fully engaging. In fact, some examples such as the process for achieving tenure and processes that favor faculty research productivity have developed over centuries. Both examples occur at the *Institution Level* but ultimately have an impact on the quality of an institution's teaching at the *Engagement Level* mission. Other examples are more local and can be identified exclusively at the class management or *Engagement Level*. For instance, grading assignments with formats (e.g. multiple-choice tests) that better serve the process of grading them, than the original purpose of learning. Grade inflation and dropping pre-requisites in favor of higher student enrollment are other examples. While we will identify and discuss processification at both levels, it is important to note that they are intrinsically linked and sometimes it is difficult to disconnect one from the other.

3 What is Sympathetic Intelligence?

Any approach to addressing processification should involve a broad-based set of strategies. We believe that an approach that would couple those strategies with *Sympathetic Intelligence*, can be implemented broadly and fairly painlessly. We believe that the inclusion of Sympathetic Intelligence will also act as a natural and ongoing counterbalance to the worst effects of processification, effectively enabling us to keep our finger on the pulse of our institutions. So, what is Sympathetic Intelligence?

Sympathetic Intelligence is a concept and theory based on observable phenomena that is currently in development¹. The term Sympathetic Intelligence was first coined by Robert as a musician contemplating the high levels of energy and bonding that took place in the music concert venues of London in the early nineties.

¹ For more information visit: www.thecenterforsympatheticintelligence.org

In later years as an Instructor at the State University of New York in Albany, he discovered the same phenomenon existed in the classroom. In fact, he discovered its presence was everywhere.

While the presence of Sympathetic Intelligence is found first in each individual's capacity to engage with others, its presence goes beyond the individual and influences the quality of interpersonal, group and community engagement generally. It is within, between, and amongst us. Consequently, in addition to remediating the worst ramifications of processification, we believe a healthy presence of Sympathetic Intelligence at any institution, with its capacity for creating strong connections between people, may also provide a means towards addressing the myriad of other issues referenced at the outset and presently creating the current crisis in Education.

We will look at the emerging concept of Sympathetic Intelligence in more detail over the course of this piece, but first, let's consider some instances of processification that exist at the institution level in higher education and contemplate the way Sympathetic Intelligence may help either reduce its impact, or remove it completely.

4 Processification in Universities

Consider first professors at research universities, often referred to as "R1" institutions, whereby the priority of research is quite obvious. Expectations of research compete for a professor's time with demands of teaching. In a hallway conversation between two professors, you might hear a discussion surrounding one's "teaching load" versus "research opportunity." This language reflects a cultural dynamic that starts early. One of us experienced that when told by his PhD-granting department faculty before starting an assistant professorship at Harvard University to "*be careful not to pay too much attention to the undergraduates or they will line up outside the office door and interfere with your time for scholarship.*" Furthermore, research universities do not typically award tenure for teaching, but rather for a strong reputation in scholarship in the field. Consequently, to secure tenure or the next academic position in case tenure is denied, one must do research and publish in a highly competitive field of mature scholars. This example of processification shows how this time-competing element will over time drain a young faculty member's initial energy for teaching. It also amplifies the classic perception of universities as "ivory towers," where professors are great scholars, but can seem a bit out of touch with their undergraduate students.

To unpack this idea further, in addition to the excitement of doing novel research in an ever-evolving scholarly field, there is the fact that a research university professor's tenure and promotion depends upon written testimony solicited by their academic department. These "external reviewers" who are independent of the candidate, must strongly support the candidate's *research* contributions. At many institutions, such pledges of support come from accomplished national scholars in the field who would know about the impact of the candidate's scholarship, but who are not often familiar with the quality of their *teaching*. This is not to say teaching is unimportant for tenure, rather that scholarship is typically much more rigorously evaluated and rewarded than teaching. All of that is known from the beginning by the starting professor, thus setting up a reason for the development of individual processification that favors a professor's greater time commitment to research, as the consequences for not getting tenure are severe.

For the non-tenured (probationary) assistant professor, a negative tenure evaluation typically results in the loss of employment with that university after one additional year to get another job. This process has the potential to stamp out the spark for teaching that Sympathetic Intelligence or a natural resonance that would otherwise ignite with the undergraduate students.

Another consideration is that professors are typically chosen because they earned a terminal (or ‘highest’) degree in their field, often a PhD. In turn, they entered this field and ultimately received these credentials because they fell in love with the subject matter and pursued it with a passion as a research topic and to contribute to the field. Everyone recognizes, and even admires this passion. Professors start out similarly and we see in this initial passion a capacity for not only doing research but sharing the vast knowledge of this field with students. In our observation, it is particularly present in new faculty. This starting passion coupled with Sympathetic Intelligence is a powerful combination and has the potential to turn great research professors into “Teaching Rock Stars”.

Consider that passion in light of the analogy of a painter who “works to live and lives to paint.” Imagine being a close friend of this painter. You visit their studio, where you see their latest work. They talk excitedly with you about a new technique they are using and what they are trying to convey in their paintings. Then, you go home to sleep, and they go back to their painting. The next morning, they get up, maybe a bit tired, and go to their work job but *not* as an artist and *not* as a job that requires the passion they reserve for their art.

But something can happen to this similar passion for teaching in many professors after years in their positions. As they typically grow in stature in their research field and as they may teach the same or similar classes repeatedly, it is easy to see how their investment in the classroom may gradually decrease. Indeed, this can even occur, notwithstanding an increased efficiency in the classroom operation that could, in theory, leave more time and focus for working with individual students. This increased efficiency takes the form of process, but the process could now be taking the place of passion and interaction. The process has invisibly become more important than the purpose of teaching with passion. It happens slowly, but here once again we see the presence of processification. A kind of adaptation has set in that slowly but imperceptibly allows a small distance to develop and grow between the undergraduate students and the professor. Now, processification at the student engagement level has set in. Classes may become more standardized, utilizing assessments, such as multiple-choice tests versus harder to grade essay questions. Busy professors may leave class right after lecture to get back to their research, leaving the graduate student teaching assistants to answer questions and talk to students. The content facts and theories provided by the professor become the order of the day, and while this saves time for the professor, it can interfere with student engagement and the perception of the professor as authentically *caring* for their students. The point is that the students can feel the energy and authenticity, and when they do, they naturally engage. If they do not, they may disengage. We think that processification may be a principal reason for the guide-on-the-side teaching movement versus the classical sage-on-the-stage approach. In these cases, processification over time has removed the initial passion from the teaching equation.

We must note that the aforementioned ‘transformation’ is not always a foregone conclusion. Some professors maintain their “rock star status” as instructors with their students, offering the kind of interaction that displays a high level of Sympathetic Intelligence.

Some of them are also great scholars and that perhaps embody the university ideal of a teacher-scholar. However, for too many, the growing demands for research excellence and productivity pulls back on the time-demands for continual improvement and reflection in developing and maintaining teaching excellence.

Another important process in the career of any professor is the social development in their scholarly field that may come from a collaboration with a group of colleagues. These kinds of collaboration typically begin at the time of research training and grows as the professor develops their scholarship over many years. This scholarly cohort stays with the professor, even if they change fields, and maintains a strong adherence to their scholarly development. Teaching has the same potential, but because teaching is often done in a solitary fashion and can be culturally perceived as a “load” versus an “opportunity” as previously discussed, it does not attract this same level of cohort or collegiate support. Sharing the joy of discovery for how to be a better teacher in one’s field therefore should leverage the power of Sympathetic Intelligence and avoid the path towards becoming subject to processification. However, the shortage or absence of similar or equal collegiate support means the flame of enthusiasm for teaching does not get the benefit of the oxygen that the Sympathetic Intelligence provided by cohort support would otherwise provide. Centers for Teaching and Learning within universities and colleges exist and are important, however, support for teaching in a research university typically receives less attention than the support of scholarship. These Teaching Centers would be excellent places where the concept of Sympathetic Intelligence could be fostered, nurtured, and deployed for on-campus implementation.

Professors are the canonical classroom instructors in the college experience, although other types of instructors exist, and they range from full-time lecturers to part-time adjunct faculty hired to teach a course or two. A separate but troubling fact is that in today’s America, fewer than a quarter of college courses are taught nation-wide by full-time professors², a dramatic change in a generation or so. Even if the recent good news is that more of these instructors are full-time, nonetheless the professors, particularly those with tenure, still drive the educational offerings of the institution and conduct its management. Thus, the various forms of ‘professorial’ tensions outlined above between processification and Sympathetic Intelligence in teaching remain. In other documents, we have addressed how these two opposing forces work in other types of instructors, advisors, and other staff employed at institutions of higher education.³

Finally, as already mentioned, much of the organization of a student’s curriculum and learning takes place outside the classroom. While faculty instructors may be very important to classroom delivery and learning there, the power to set departmental classroom teaching operations falls to the department head or chairperson who is almost always a tenured professor. The department head and the departmental tenured faculty have nearly complete authority over departmental course offerings and tend to make up the academic administration above the department. They, at least implicitly, create the university culture that leads to teaching processification.

² <https://www.aaup.org/news/data-snapshot-contingent-faculty-us-higher-ed#.YtF9luzMLt1>

³ See a blog series on Sympathetic Intelligence and on Processification (<https://otherlobe.com/papers/1238/>)

As an aside, we note from our observations that in this culture, some adjuncts who are hired to cover courses on a yearly basis sometimes report being very cautious about experimenting with new teaching methods, as a temporary reduction in their teaching evaluations by students can mean the department head is more reluctant to keep them on for future terms. Therefore, for different reasons, processification that affects professors can also settle strongly into this rather substantial group of university teachers with negative impacts on undergraduate student engagement and at the expense of passion driven and innovative teaching. Of course, we also know that many of these adjunct faculty members are outstanding deliverers of an engaging course, and why that happens deserves scrutiny in this general conversation.

We have previously considered the role of passion in teaching, but one final point on teaching is that *good* teaching is typically time and energy consuming. In fact, a mantra that one of us has become known for is that, *if you find teaching easy – you’re probably not teaching well*. The demands that quality teaching imposes occur even after the new professor gets beyond the initial creation of lecture material, course structure mapping, and several iterations through their delivery. The problem is that even as the course delivery becomes easier, more familiar, and more comfortable over time, engagement with students requires the same amount of time and energy. For the Sympathetically Intelligent professor at any rank, students can *sense* the caring. If students find a professor who has it, they gravitate towards them for advice and/or mentoring, exacerbating the problem. Professors and all instructors who *care* know that this engagement takes time in the form of quality conversations, written letters of recommendation, resume review, career consultations, etc. Of course, this is time that could have been spent on scholarship. An institution that recognizes and promotes Sympathetic Intelligence will see to it that professors get the support they need to navigate the tension between teaching and research. It is critical that the polar pull of research doesn’t detract from a professor’s ability to provide a form of student engagement that will lead first to student success, and then to student retention.

5 Processification in Colleges

While our discussion thus far has focused on the research university, we also note that similar phenomena are seen at the college level, and at any teaching university that is not research intensive. In other words, not an “R1” institution. At first, one would think that these instructors would be more united by the application of Sympathetic Intelligence to the classroom. After all, these institutions are typically smaller, with lower full-time student enrollment and can consequently be strongly focused on their students. They usually place a higher emphasis on high competency in classroom teaching than they do on research. This emphasis usually translates to heavier teaching loads up to (or exceeding) four courses per semester for a typical college professor, significantly greater than at a research university. The tenure process at teaching universities and colleges typically also places much heavier emphasis on teaching competency and less emphasis on research productivity.

However, here the teaching-research pendulum can swing the other way. This is processification coming at the professor and their classroom, but from the flip side of the time competition between research and teaching as discussed previously. It can also be as damaging to engaged teaching. For example, once actively engaged and productive scholars leave their graduate programs behind, it is not uncommon for these new professors, with heavier teaching loads, to de-escalate their research momentum.

Often, their research comes to a complete halt, and often in favor of a more manageable set of classes so that they can teach more successfully.

Unfortunately, this separation from research, industry and scholarly activity can reach a point where college faculty struggle to connect their lectures and course content to relevant real-world modern cases, and current research trends. As a result, there is a potential in some cases for the faculty to lose the “spark” within the classroom that once connected eager students with their passionate faculty. So here we have an inverted form of processification where time and classroom management take precedence, and we see an example of how institutional-level processification manifests materially in engagement-level processification in the classroom.

Both professors and students do expect a different form of engagement in a college environment. However, the natural tendency for processification to grow exists in other ways. Processification does not distinguish between Universities and Colleges and for sure, the remedy in Sympathetic Intelligence remains, albeit that the application for either may differ.

As we have discussed, processification co-exists at both the Institutional and Engagement level. Now, let’s examine how Sympathetic Intelligence can negate the impact of both and at each of those two levels.

6 Sympathetic Intelligence and Processification at the Institutional Level

We believe that Sympathetic Intelligence deployed at the institutional level can be used to counteract not only processification, but also the many other challenges presently undermining higher education. We also believe that Sympathetic Intelligence could be used to navigate the improvement of caring teaching and subsequent university retention without doing harm to the research-interested professor – a stalwart of the educational system for centuries, and deservedly so. But, how?

Sympathetic Intelligence is presently at its earliest stage of development. The authors with others have created and registered a Research Center under applicable US laws as a Not-For-Profit based in Albany, New York. The mission of the Center is to conduct research into the concept and develop programs for its application in all social environments where it can contribute positively to society. For example, the Center presently has a panel of experts and academics looking into how it can be introduced into modern police training and methods. The reader will not be surprised to learn that the Center also has a panel for researching the role that Sympathetic Intelligence can play in Higher Education.

At the Institutional level, we believe that the deployment of Sympathetic Intelligence begins with awareness. Viewing the mission of each institution through the lens of Sympathetic Intelligence becomes the second step in putting the concept to work at the Institutional Level, and for the third step, we are already developing programs and techniques to develop the practical means of deploying Sympathetic Intelligence in cross-campus applications. When faculty and students are on campus, they will know that it is a campus that has Sympathetic Intelligence present at the Institutional Level, simply because they will be able to feel it at the Engagement Level.

One way the authors believe Sympathetic Intelligence can be used at the Institutional level is by better connecting universities and colleges to the workplace. An example of the application can be found in Contributive Pathways⁴, a model created by members of the Center for Sympathetic Intelligence. Here are two elements of that model:

Mentoring

Mentoring is a way that Sympathetic Intelligence can be manifest between the undergraduates and the department. It can be done by a variety of faculty and staff, while not undermining the research mission of the professors in a department, provided the time demands are properly considered. Some mentors can be rooted in industry and either brought into the classroom for a guest lecture, or to assist students with real-world projects. Career services, alumni engagement, entrepreneurship centers, community service, internship, clinical experience and other university programs often result in the establishment of a mentoring relationship between an individual and the student. While not all of these operations are necessarily associated with mentoring, they *can* be and that can be a powerful manifestation of the kind of caring triggered by Sympathetic Intelligence.

To illustrate this, a strong mentoring relationship often exists between a professor and the graduate students they are directly conducting research with, and with undergraduates who are interested in participating in that professor's scholarship. Often these undergraduates come out of one of the professor's courses, or the institution promotes research exploration with showcase programs. In many fields where the departments also provide master's degree or PhD programs, undergraduate students will seek a professor's advice about how graduate admissions works. Undergraduates interested in pre-professional programs in all fields, but especially the classical ones of business, medicine, and law, often seek out advice and mentoring from professors. Even students seeking internships in these fields will sometimes go to their classroom professors for advice. When a mentoring relationship develops, it can be a powerful experience for both parties: *high* in Sympathetic Intelligence and *low* in processification.

Project based courses

A Project-Based Course can be a place to find Sympathetic Intelligence as two of the authors witnessed first-hand in their classroom. During a typical semester, the same instructor taught three separate courses, each with similar enrollment, all within the same department at the same institution. Two of these courses ended successfully, with students generally happy with their advancement towards learning objectives, showing appreciation to the professor, yet mostly uneventful. The third course ended much differently. Students stayed long after the class ended, hugging each other (and the professor), sharing stories of their experiences throughout the semester, and generally emitted a different energy than they professor had ever previously witnessed.

Why were students in this third class showing such outward expressions of the course's impact? A significant variable was that it was project-based and featured industry mentors working with the instructor both in-person and over video conferencing.

⁴ Contributive Pathways - <https://otherlobe.com/papers/contributive-pathways/>

The role of the instructor shifted from what would have been expected from most courses offered at this particular institution to one that also involved facilitation with the industry mentor and a focus on a real-world outcome. This course flew in the face of processification and the traditional lecture format, and the students rejoiced. There are many other examples of such courses delivered in different ways that promote high student engagement. Often this kind of teaching is recognized by institutional teaching awards, promoted through teaching centers, etc. Where appropriate, much more of this needs to be done to better utilize the existing course structure for higher Sympathetic Intelligence and departmental engagement.

In addition to the traditional mentor, the contributive pathways model also includes workplace peers who act as peer-mentors. Workplace peers are students who have already gone through a program that interconnects the college with an external workplace. They facilitate the introduction of new students to the program by making sure they are ‘connected’ in a way that ensures the maximum benefit for all involved in the implementation of each program. So, this would also be a great example of the deployment of Sympathetic Intelligence at the Engagement Level.

7 Sympathetic Intelligence and Processification at the Engagement Level

We believe that every community has potentially rich seams of Sympathetic Intelligence already running through it. The successful application of Sympathetic Intelligence in communities and institutions means that those institutions can tap into those seams at the Engagement level and when they do, the result is a vibrant spirit that connects those who belong to it in a way that is powerful, fulfilling and nourishing. In such a university, students persist and grow, and faculty thrive and develop. The university takes on what we can call a ‘*vibe*’, similar to a sporting team where the momentum has just shifted in their favor, or what one may feel attending a good rock concert. From a university perspective, it is this aspect of Sympathetic Intelligence that makes it so compelling, so important, and drives us to develop an understanding of its operation.

Sympathetic Intelligence at the Engagement level starts when an individual has a desire to belong to a group. Within the individual, it is a potential that harnesses all of our faculties - our instinct, intuition, cognition, emotional intelligence, senses, talents, and skills to establish an external connection with the people around us and with our environment. Like one of two tuning forks set to the same frequency, when the first one is struck, the sound waves in the air will set the second one vibrating in sympathy because they share a fundamental connection through a sympathetic vibration.

In Sympathetic Intelligence, the connection between humans is analogous to those tuning forks. It is important to see here that an individual’s Sympathetic Intelligence cannot operate singularly. Rather, it requires more than one person to manifest. Each of us can have thoughts and feelings on our own, but to engage our Sympathetic Intelligence, we need at least one other (and separate) element: an environment or another living being, for example. Further, this engagement can extend easily to many people, as seen when some of us played large rock concerts.

Once there is another individual or a group, the potential for Sympathetic Intelligence then manifests itself in a bid to synchronize and be in sympathy with that individual and in that context. For our purposes here at the Engagement level, it exists as an interaction between two or more people.

It is no longer potential, rather it is like an energy or synergy, and it exists *between* people. From here, it becomes a group characteristic and is also visible in the way a community behaves, like in a good rock concert or a good university class.

To just look for now at the individual classroom at a higher institution, Sympathetic Intelligence may begin with a student's interest in a topic, but it blossoms when the instructor not only shows the expected mastery of (and affection for) the subject matter, but also when the instructor connects their students to that affection in a passionate way. The students feel that the instructor *cares*, and they consequently *engage*. They engage not only with the subject and the instructor, but also with each other. The classroom becomes a connected place, like a rock concert where everyone is moving together through the energy and vibrations of the music.

8 Application of Sympathetic Intelligence to Teaching

The *Teaching Professor* is one of the structural ways with which some research universities are beginning to develop what we see as a sympathetically intelligent institutional application to teaching. The best example of teaching professors are ones that have terminal degrees, are tenured or tenure-track, and are paid similarly to regular classical professors. However, they have an arrangement that is very different from the position of lecturer or instructor. Through position and salary, the institution is signalling respect so that the teaching professor holds the same prestige in the department culture as their counterparts in the classical type of professors who are required to perform both research and teaching.

Teaching professors are primarily hired for teaching and have the majority of their time dedicated to this responsibility. They do engage in some level of scholarship; however, it is most often devoted to pedagogical research in their field, and it is not their dominant assignment. In a department that has a high-functioning faculty culture of Sympathetic Intelligence, the traditional classical professors find these colleagues attractive not only because they can assume larger, time-demanding course loads, which frees up additional time for research, but also because they experiment with new teaching techniques, develop innovative methods, and exchange these methods and motivations with the classical professor. This effect can extend to lecturers, instructors, and even adjuncts who may have a much lower status in a department and thereby tend to undo the effects of processification as discussed above by raising the profile of teaching in the department culture.

One important and last point on Sympathetic Intelligence and teaching. We believe that Sympathetic Intelligence is a fundamental component found in all forms of teaching, from early education Montessori, Elementary, High Schools and beyond. Obviously, its application at each level is vastly different, but its presence at each is clear.

9 The University Budget and Dealing with Processification

Within most colleges and universities, academic deans and provosts are well-aware of how increased budget limitations present a counterforce to faculty support and particularly for teaching effectiveness. In recent history, nothing has had a more profound financial effect on higher education than the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to several institutions implementing cuts to staffing and budget lines that directly impact faculty.

As mentioned earlier, these budget implications sit on top of a many-decades trend towards more part-time and non-professorial instruction that is less expensive and dictate student-to-teacher and full-time instructor-to-course ratios. In terms of budget efficiency, any administrator will tell you that large classes are the most efficient, as full-time tuition per class does not vary with class size.

There may be work-arounds. When one of us was a provost and freshman-to-sophomore persistence was declining, the university was losing money in tuition and incurred costs in finding new freshmen for the next year. This decline was also negatively impacting institutional ranking. As part of a trend to counter this decline, enrollment caps for freshman writing classes were reduced from 25 to 19. While counter-intuitive to optimal budget management, such a reduction led to more time for each writing instructor to work with freshmen. The result may have surprised a budget manager: simply put, the persistence *increased* and it offset the extra costs of smaller classes. To be specific, the idea was that the revenue generated by larger sophomore and junior classes offset the costs of hiring more lecturers to teach in the freshman writing program. We now see that these efforts created an environment more suitable for deploying Sympathetic Intelligence in those classes and building on that throughout the university. While just one example, this point clearly illustrates that while limited budgets feed processification, deployment of strategies that encourage Sympathetic Intelligence may still be possible within existing budgets or to support those budgets through increased retention.

10 Conclusion

Given the aforementioned challenges facing higher education, we believe we should leverage Sympathetic Intelligence to improve student interest and engagement, while combating the counterforce of processification. As we have shown, the tug-of-war between teaching and research, the tenure system, budgetary issues, and other factors contributing to processification will remain and present an upstream swim for some time to come. Problems that have developed over centuries do not typically get solved overnight. However, we believe the application of initiatives that are based on the concept and phenomenon of Sympathetic Intelligence can start the process of turning the tide.

As we have shown, the student experience in higher education does not fall solely on the backs of professors and instructors. Broader applications of Sympathetic Intelligence may be found within administrative departments, such as Student Success, Academic Advising, Career Center, Residence Life, Spiritual Life, just to name a few. These critical departments have direct input into a student's motivation and increase their chances of success in college. Employees in these support departments may occasionally fall victim to processification, especially if they have not been provided adequate resources and opportunity for professional development and staying current with the ever-evolving student population landscape. On the other hand, these same employees can be uplifted by Sympathetic Intelligence if properly applied to their work leading to the same kind of engagement on which we primarily discussed in the classroom. Students in know if the institutional officials with whom they are dealing *care* about them, or whether they stand primarily on process or rules. While we all need rules and processes, how the institution develops Sympathetic Intelligence within its members from staff to students depends on focusing on caring first, and therefore inspiring students and bringing out the best in them.

This topic is as rich and complex as the university itself, but the very words “Sympathetic Intelligence” can provide a beacon for improvement that is in the hands of the people, and therefore provide an authentic power for transformation that is much needed in today’s world.

We are not saying that process is bad. In fact, our definition of processification acknowledges that ‘*every purpose needs a process*’. However, what we are saying is that when purpose is playing second fiddle to process - we are going backwards, and education is not reaching the quality that is required for it to sustain either the development of society, or indeed the growth of any individual university, college or place of learning. Clearly, Sympathetic Intelligence is a *head to tail* element of each institution. Its presence and integration is felt from the top down, and from the foundational elements of teaching in the classroom all the way back up to the top. The success of each institution will be a function of the quality of its presence at that institution.

We have made generous use of musical reference throughout this piece, and it is only fitting that we should end on a similar “note”. So, for those of you who, like us, are struggling to see an end game in sight in higher education, take heart - *the opera ain’t over till the fat lady sings*.