

# Adelphi Recovers "The Lengthening View"

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Adelphi University is a rare instance in which state regulators intervened to halt egregious academic repression. The university is recovering thanks to its dedicated faculty and staff, and its capable president. Nonetheless, the story of Adelphi is a cautionary tale of what can happen when right wing ideologues seize control of trustee boards. It also bears telling as a reminder of the need for better state and federal regulation of higher education. Hopefully, the story of Adelphi will spur a nationwide movement to empower university employees, students, and faculty to run the institutions in which they work, study, and teach.

In 1985, Peter Diamandopoulos became Adelphi's seventh president, ushering in an entire decade of "shock therapy" for the small commuter school on Long Island. Opposition to Diamandopoulos grew when it was disclosed that he was the second highest paid university president in the United States. Adelphi had purchased a \$1.2 million Manhattan condominium for his use at a time when it was shedding employees and course offerings.

The Committee to Save Adelphi (CSA), an advocacy group of faculty, students and alumni, held its first press conference in October 1995. Around that time, the faculty voted 131-14 for Diamandopoulos to resign. After a *New York Times* editorial called for an investigation into Adelphi's finances, the New York State Attorney General began to look into the perks of President Diamandopoulos and the process of awarding contracts at Adelphi.

The Adelphi administration filed suit to halt the investigation, claiming that New York's "business judgment rule" barred judicial inquiry into good-faith actions of corporate directors. The administration claimed that the attorney general had no jurisdiction over Adelphi, that his "witchhunt" threatened the independence of private educational institutions in New York, and that the attorney general's office had deliberately leaked to the media details of the purchase agreement of Diamandopoulos' apartment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Doreen Carvajal, "Adelphi University Issues Criticism of State Case." *The New York Times* (2 February 1996): B7.

Diamandopoulos' earnings would remain at the center of the Adelphi controversy. His first year salary of \$95,000 in 1985-86 rose to \$145,000 the following year, well above the average for presidents at comparable universities. By the 1995-96 academic year, his total compensation, which included fringe benefits and deferred salary, had soared to \$837,000. Diamandopoulos had refused to disclose his income to the IRS between 1988 and 1994, preferring to pay \$11,850 in fines. He later explained that the secrecy was meant to strengthen his hand with the faculty union.

Adelphi also provided Diamandopoulos with a severance contract worth \$3 million, country club membership, first class trips to France, England, Switzerland, and Greece, and the use of an \$82,000 Mercedes Benz. It reimbursed him for a \$1,000 contribution to the 1992 presidential campaign of former Texas Republican senator Phil Gramm; the premiums on his personal art collection; expensive dinners with fellow trustees John Silber and Hilton Kramer, which included \$150 glasses of cognac; and thousands of dollars in tips to his Manhattan apartment building staff. Adelphi furnished Diamandopoulos' Manhattan apartment with wall-washer lighting, electrified snow melting grids on the terrace, and \$1,800 in bathroom accessories, while giving Diamandopoulos the option of buying the apartment for \$300,000 less than its purchase price.

The trustees also enjoyed the good life. In 1994, they took an expenses-paid trip to Greece. Diamandopoulos claimed that the trip helped the trustees to "think about the connection between democracy and education."<sup>2</sup> Diamandopoulos, himself an Adelphi trustee, brought business executives and right-wing ideologues to the board. They, in turn, adhered to the corporate model of university governance that Diamandopoulos admired. In an October 1992 letter to Donald Koster, Professor Emeritus of English, Diamandopoulos wrote: "The University is neither a polity nor a convenient umbrella for a collective of autonomous professionals. The University is a corporation legally and a hierarchy in terms of leadership, educational responsibility, and authority."

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<sup>2</sup> Doreen Carvajal, "President's Pay Rankles Some at Adelphi." *The New York Times* (31 September 1995): 1, 26.

In a letter to *The New York Times*, anthropology professor Norman Ashcraft expressed the disenchantment of the faculty with this model of university governance:

Some people think of a university as a corporation with a strict hierarchical structure. Power passes from a board of trustees through a chief executive officer and then assistants, provosts and deans, down to employees (faculty), who serve solely to carry out the management's vision. The more we favor this model, the more we release responsibility for education to managers. Teaching and scholarly pursuits are valued less than managing funds, people and curriculum... If other institutions pick up on these developments, education will be reduced to a pedestrian activity and the university will become a place where mandates are issued from a self-ordained cadre of managers.<sup>3</sup>

The presence of former Secretary of the Treasury William Simon as honorary trustee underscored the extent of Adelphi's corporate reorientation. Simon had personally amassed hundreds of millions of dollars by financing hostile takeovers with junk bonds and then asset-stripping the companies. He also attracted negative publicity from his involvement in a pyramid scheme.<sup>4</sup> Simon, who died in 2000 at the age of 72, headed the John F. Olin Foundation, which was created by a munitions manufacturer in 1953 to awaken "business and the public. . . to the creeping stranglehold that socialism has gained" in the United States.<sup>5</sup> The foundation undertook a new mission when Simon became its president in 1977, as he declared in his bestseller, *A Time for Truth*:

Foundations imbued with the philosophy of freedom. . . must take pains to funnel desperately needed funds to scholars, social scientists, writers and journalists who understand the relationship between political and economic liberty. . . This philanthropy must not capitulate to soft-minded pleas for the support of "dissent." Indeed, it is the economics and the philosophy of capitalism which represent "dissent" — dissent from a dominant socialist-statist-collectivist orthodoxy which prevails in much of the media, in most of our large universities, among many of our politicians and, tragically, among not a few of our top business executives.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Norman Ashcraft, "Adelphi Offers Lessons for Higher Education." *The New York Times* (6 September 1996): A26.

<sup>4</sup> G. Bruce Knecht, "William Simon Is Kinder and Gentler, But Investments Lag." *The Wall Street Journal* (15 September 1995): 1.

<sup>5</sup> Jack Sirica, "Olin Yanks Plug on Adelphi." *Newsday*. (23 June 1996).

<sup>6</sup> William E. Simon, *A Time for Truth*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.

In 1995, the year that the Adelphi controversy became public, Olin gave over \$16 million to university think tanks, institutes, publications, and fellowships. The foundation financed numerous programs at prestigious law schools, including those of Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Yale, Georgetown, George Mason, Stanford, Berkeley, Toronto, and the University of Chicago. Olin sought to transform public policy by diminishing the regulatory role of government, in effect leaving the environment, consumer protection, and workplace safety to the mercy of "the magic of the market."

Olin gave out its last grants in 2005 and ceased to exist shortly thereafter, but not before leaving its mark on academia. At Adelphi, Olin funded ten visiting professorships between 1992 and 1996, creating a class of privileged faculty. The Olin scholars, who earned about \$100,000 a year, about twice the average Adelphi professor's salary, included Carnes Lord, a former national security advisor to Vice President Dan Quayle; Edith Kurzweil, editor of the *Partisan Review*; and Ronald Radosh, author of a revisionist history of the Rosenbergs, the couple who were framed and executed for espionage in 1953. Among the "scholars in residence" without teaching duties, were two right-wing former editors, Brad Miner of the *National Review* and Bruce Bawer of the *New Criterion*. Olin also funded a lecture series, which brought Simon, William Buckley Jr., and Irving Kristol to Adelphi.

Diamandopoulos, in turn, gave Olin associates important positions at Adelphi. Newly appointed Adelphi trustees included James Piereson, Olin executive director, and Hilton Kramer, publisher of *New Criterion*, a journal which began with a \$100,000 Olin grant and whose offices were initially housed within Olin's. Mark Blitz, from the Olin-backed Hudson Institute, was named Adelphi's acting provost.<sup>7</sup> In Spring 1996, however, with the Regents investigation approaching, Olin abruptly departed from Adelphi. Simon and Piereson resigned as trustees, thus avoiding the public embarrassment that would soon befall the other Adelphi trustees.

Under Diamandopoulos, Adelphi's students, like its faculty, were stratified into haves and have-nots. Diamandopoulos created an Honors College, an elite institution within the institution, in which students were given twenty-four hour access to state-of-the-art computers, and generous

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<sup>7</sup> Emily Eakin, "Oracle at Adelphi." *New York* (16 October 1995): 42-47.

financial assistance that included full scholarships. Diamandopoulos simultaneously cut back financial aid and support services, a move that severely affected minority students. "I have heard that the President and his administration vow their commitment to intellect," noted David Smith, a business major. "One can't help but wonder whose intellect they are committed to. As a black student on this campus, I can assure you it is not mine. . . All the cuts in aid, the reduction of courses offered, and the president's outrageous salary have shown me that the president is only committed to his pocket."<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, the administration lavished funds on projects of scant educational value. When Adelphi hosted the Greek soccer team during the 1994 World Cup tournament, the administration spent \$250,000 to construct a grandstand, press box, public address system, goal posts, and signs in Greek. Students, meanwhile, were complaining about cuts in athletic scholarships.

Under Diamandopoulos, undergraduate enrollment plummeted from 4,049 in 1987 to 1,895 in 1997. Course offerings were sharply reduced, and many students had to spend an extra semester or year to earn their degrees.<sup>9</sup> When asked about the class reductions, Diamandopoulos replied: "There is a silly and melancholy perception on the part of students, which is exploited by fighting faculty, that the more courses you have, the better education you get."<sup>10</sup>

During Diamandopoulos' presidency, tuition rose one hundred and forty percent, while the proportion of university expenditures devoted to instruction dropped nearly fifteen percent. Between 1983 and 1993, there was a nineteen percent decline in number of full-time faculty, from 329 to 267, while the size of Adelphi's administration nearly tripled.<sup>11</sup> In 1985, the year that Diamandopoulos became president, 958 freshmen enrolled at Adelphi. By 1996, only 311 freshmen enrolled, a sixty seven percent decline that threatened Adelphi's very existence.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Diams Tollinchi, "Do You Feel That Adelphi University Is Fulfilling Its 'Commitment to Intellect'?" *Afrika Unbound* (student newspaper) (November 1995): 8.

<sup>9</sup> William H. Honan, "A Slow and Steady Revival." *The New York Times* (21 August 1997): B1.

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Bazemore, Haendel St. Juste, and Jackie Parker, "An Interview with President Diamandopoulos." *Afrika Unbound* (November 1995): 4.

<sup>11</sup> Lionel S. Lewis, *When Power Corrupts*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2000: 140-141.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis 123.

Because of its minuscule endowment, Adelphi depended on student tuition and fees for virtually all its budget.

Students were upset over the phasing out of the New York State Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) at Adelphi. HEOP provides counseling and financial aid to academically and financially disadvantaged students, those with SAT verbal scores below 600 and low family incomes; at the time, \$18,650 was the eligibility limit for a family of three. Adelphi was supposed to guarantee university matching funds for state HEOP awards. Instead, the university demanded that HEOP students take out loans while Diamandopoulos attacked HEOP as "charity." In response, student newspaper editor Marie Alzi noted that HEOP support services simply gave students the means to complete college.<sup>13</sup> The HEOP cuts led many to conclude that Adelphi was simply casting off minority students.

On August 23, 1995, a terse notice appeared on the bulletin board outside Adelphi's student radio station: "WBAU-FM has ceased broadcasting." The night before, the administration had changed the locks to the entrance of WBAU, having sold the station to Nassau Community College for \$30,000 — a fraction of its actual value — without any bids. The student government association, which funded WBAU, had not been consulted. About half of the station's programming had been Black-oriented. WBAU, Dean Carl Rheins explained, was "at variance with the university's academic mission and philosophy."<sup>14</sup>

At a March 1996 forum, Diamandopoulos finally addressed student concerns, which included the phasing out of HEOP, the closing of WBAU, the lack of fundraising to augment the meager \$9 million endowment, the elimination of academic programs (including Italian and the masters program in English), and the drop in library acquisitions to twenty percent of what they had been prior to Diamandopoulos' arrival. He dismissed the concerns, saying, "I have very strong views about what you need. I don't need to know what you think you need."<sup>15</sup> Diamandopoulos also refused to consider the inclusion of a student on Adelphi's trustee board.

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<sup>13</sup> Marie Alzi, "Skepticism in the Phasing Out of HEOP." *Afrika Unbound* (March 1996): 6.

<sup>14</sup> Jackie Parker, "The Big Lie: WBAU." *Afrika Unbound* (February 1996): 14-15.

<sup>15</sup> John McQuiston, "Adelphi Chief Tells Students His Trouble Is Not Theirs." *The New York Times* (14 March 1996): B7.

When students pointed out that other private institutions on Long Island had student trustees, Diamandopoulos simply said that he wished them luck.<sup>16</sup>

Nor did the Adelphi trustees inspire confidence. There was, for instance, Nicholas Samios, the director of the scandal-ridden Brookhaven National Laboratory, where workers were contaminated with radiation and where radioactive materials including tritium and cobalt-60 were allowed to leech into the groundwater.

And there was Leonard Riggio, the CEO of Barnes & Noble, which owns hundreds of university bookstores, including Adelphi's. At a forum on book publishing at which short story writer Cynthia Ozick was his copanelist, Riggio pointedly told the audience, in what *New York Times* columnist Kennedy Fraser called "a bullying moment of shattered privacy," that his chain had only sold a few hundred of Ozick's volume, *The Shawl*. As Fraser wrote of Riggio, "He is a true Horatio Alger, who has risen from work as a bookstore clerk to being the head of a giant corporation that has gobbled up its competitors like a killer shark. A stocky, feisty fellow in his 50s, he looks like a man who spent his youth prepared to knock down anyone who called him poor and in his maturity is prepared to knock down anyone who thinks he got too rich."<sup>17</sup>

John Silber, the chancellor of Boston University, was arguably Adelphi's most controversial trustee. During the 1994-95 academic year, he was the only university president to earn more than Diamandopoulos. Daniel Gross wrote in *Lingua Franca*:

Setting himself as the ultimate expert on all matters relating to the university, and operating without meaningful oversight from the school's board of trustees, Silber has systematically shut the faculty out of every significant decision... Silber is in many ways a tangle of contradictions: a Kantian moral philosopher who has reaped immense personal gain from his stewardship of a nonprofit institution; a high-minded thinker capable of astonishing pettiness; a relentless promoter of standards who has appointed cronies with questionable credentials.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Miryam Douglass and Mashona Watson, "President Diamandopoulos Speaks To Students in an Open Forum." *Afrika Unbound* (March 1996): 4, 26.

<sup>17</sup> Kennedy Fraser, "As Writers Despair, Book Chains Can Only Exult." *The New York Times* (13 October 1997): E2.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Gross, "Under the Volcano," *Lingua Franca* (November/December 1995): 44-53.

These words might have been written of Diamandopoulos who, taking his cue from his mentor Silber, sought to intimidate his opponents at every opportunity. Harassing phone messages were left on the answering machine of the American Association of University Professors union that represents Adelphi's faculty and librarians. Telephone service to the union office was cut, and the union's executive director, Cathy Cleaver, barred from campus. Adelphi petitioned the National Relations Labor Board to decertify the union. It sued five CSA members and threatened student editor Sara Hajduk with legal action. The intimidation backfired, as it demonstrated the breakdown of the principles of shared governance at Adelphi.

The Regents hearings, which began in July 1996, ended, in the words of Regent Saul Cohen, with a "positive wake-up call to all sectors of the academic community to observe with greater diligence their governance guidelines, as well as other areas of conduct."<sup>19</sup> The Regents chastised the trustees for their conflicts of interest and lack of oversight. A firm owned by a trustee, George Lois, had carried out Adelphi's advertising campaign, for which the university trustees had failed to seek competitive bidding. Diamandopoulos apparently concealed from other trustees the fact that Lois had received \$155,000 in commissions for that advertising. The chair of the Adelphi trustee board, Ernesta Procope, had acted as the broker for Adelphi's insurance policies, awarding lucrative contracts to E. G. Bowman, a company which she owned and of which she was the director.

The Regents also criticized the trustees for failing to disclose pertinent information to those entrusted with overseeing Adelphi's finances. In 1990, William Borten, chair of the trustee finance committee, discovered that during the previous three years administrative salaries had increased fifty seven percent while faculty salaries increased by a mere six percent.<sup>20</sup> Borten decided to investigate the matter further, but when he sought specifics regarding administrative salaries he was rebuffed by both Diamandopoulos and James Byrne, who was then the chair of the trustee board.

At a trustee meeting in December 1990, Borten expressed his dismay about not getting the requested data. Byrne told Borten that he didn't need it. A week later, Byrne sent Borten a

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<sup>19</sup> Saul Cohen, "Regents Panel Report on Adelphi." (10 February 1997).

<sup>20</sup> Lewis 52.

letter informing him that his resignation from the board of trustees had been accepted. Borten, in fact, had not resigned but found that he had been kicked off the trustee board.<sup>21</sup> During the Regents hearings, it was revealed that Byrne's wife, Carolyn, was earning \$100,000 a year as Adelphi vice president of community relations and external affairs. What was at issue was not Carolyn Byrne's salary, but the fact that Borten had been unable to obtain that information as head of the finance committee.

Borten was not the only former trustee disenchanted with Diamandopoulos. William Nadel, who chaired the search committee that chose Diamandopoulos, described Adelphi's president as "a dangerous man who functions as a despot," adding that the decision to hire him was "the single worst example of poor judgment that a number of us exercised in our professional careers, one that I will always regret."<sup>22</sup>

Some Adelphi faculty surmised that the trustees had hired Diamandopoulos to take on Adelphi's faculty union, one of the very few at a private university.<sup>23</sup> Before coming to Adelphi, Diamondopoulos had served as president of Sonoma State University (SSU) from 1977 to 1983. In his study on Adelphi, *When Power Corrupts*, Lionel S. Lewis writes that "Diamandopoulos spent a good deal of time during his first few years at Sonoma State writing verbose and largely impenetrable memoranda... He continually referred to change, progress, and how much more he needed to accomplish, while what he actually did to promote teaching, education, or academic life was hardly discernible."<sup>24</sup>

As president of SSU, Diamandopoulos displayed the same contempt for shared governance that he would later show at Adelphi. SSU faculty were upset that Diamandopoulos had granted tenure to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of Humanities despite the objections of their academic departments. Another concern was the fact that Diamandopoulos had failed to consult with the faculty before deciding to terminate twenty four

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<sup>21</sup> Lewis 52-53.

<sup>22</sup> Lewis 56.

<sup>23</sup> Lewis 114.

<sup>24</sup> Lewis 99-100

tenured professors due to financial exigency. As a result, the SSU faculty senate twice voted overwhelmingly to censure Diamandopoulos.<sup>25</sup>

The Regents hearings highlighted the extent of the corruption at Adelphi. Gerald Jodice, executive director of facilities and planning, who oversaw many bids at Adelphi, had already been imprisoned for embezzlement when Diamandopoulos hired him. Despite warnings from an internal auditor that Jodice had a criminal history and was defrauding Adelphi, Diamandopoulos promoted Jodice, giving him the opportunity to steal even more.

At the Regents hearings, the ever combative John Silber described the Adelphi faculty as “a rather large boil in a very sensitive spot that needs to be lanced,” assuring the Regents that “once that boil is lanced there will be a very fine and effective operating University.” He warned the Regents that should they dismiss the Adelphi trustees “there will be a rash of boils throughout higher education in New York State and around the country.”<sup>26</sup> On February 10, 1997, the Regents removed eighteen of Adelphi’s nineteen trustees, citing violations of the university’s articles of governance and state laws governing non-profit organizations. By this action, the Regents fulfilled the prophecy on Adelphi’s seal: “The Truth Shall Make Us Free.”

The Adelphi controversy sparked a debate over the regulatory role of government in higher education, particularly that of the Board of Regents, which oversees New York’s educational and cultural institutions. Robert Atwell, president emeritus of the American Council on Education, claimed that the creation of regulatory bodies would jeopardize the independence of private institutions. Instead, Atwell suggested, “the governing boards of private colleges should police themselves, by adopting policies to insure that they are operating in the public interest.”<sup>27</sup> Adelphi, however, already had such policies in place. The problem lay with those charged with implementing them.

At issue during the Adelphi controversy was the university’s century-long tradition of liberal education. In 1995, Adelphi commemorated its centennial as an institution of higher

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<sup>25</sup> Lewis 102-103.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis 154.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Atwell, “After Adelphi: Private Colleges and the Public Interest.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (7 March 1997): B7.

learning with an exhibit of giant photographs that traced Adelphi's history from its founding as a college in 1896 by Charles Levermore. The introductory text to the exhibit read: "As the quotations from Adelphi's founding and current presidents demonstrate, the University's history, despite all its twists, turns and returns, finally can be seen to represent the consistent pursuit of the liberal ideal in education."

The exhibit highlighted two quotes, one from Levermore at Adelphi's first convocation at the turn of the century, the other from Diamandopoulos in 1995. Levermore's advice to Adelphi's first graduating class expresses the ideal of liberal education:

Hold fast to the lengthening view, to the widening interest in all the world. Cleave to the broad culture for which you have been so faithfully and wisely prepared in the Adelphi halls. The narrow, practical purpose, however necessary it may be, must yet never stifle your love for things of the spirit, human and divine... Such a thorough yet comprehensive culture has been the object of the Adelphi training for you—experiment rather than recitation, discussion rather than memorizing, ideas rather than repetition, the liberal before the special culture.

Compare this philosophy to the outlook of Diamandopoulos:

The clue to becoming strong in the face of our overpowering and infinitely complex world is deliberately to fit select aspects of the world into your own educated world view; into your construct; into your own determination of who you are and what the lasting pursuits of your lives will be. That is how human beings have dealt creatively over the millennia with their vulnerabilities and fragility, and that is how they have made, despite their limitations, lasting and powerfully significant civilizations.

In contrast to Levermore, Diamandopoulos conceives of education as a means to power and wealth, "to becoming strong." His advice, to "fit select aspects of the world... into your construct," evokes that "narrow, practical purpose" that Levermore admonishes his students to forsake.

During Diamandopoulos' decade as president, Adelphi ran full page ads in *The New York Times* proclaiming, "Good Is The Enemy of Great" (faculty would alter the ones posted on

campus to read "Greed is the Enemy of Great"). Other ads touted Harvard as the "Adelphi of Massachusetts."

Harvard epitomizes the contradictions in our universities. The pride of classicists and humanists, Harvard was also the biggest recipient of Olin money among U.S. colleges and universities. The first university in this country to offer elective courses, Harvard retains its reputation for innovation even as it represents the status quo. Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy may have castigated Harvard as the "Kremlin on the Charles," but its degrees are credentials of privilege.<sup>28</sup>

At Adelphi, the Harvard analogy existed both as an image of excellence and as an example of the fatuous distortions wrought by power. Diamandopoulos, who studied philosophy at Harvard, appears to have been convinced that he was the embattled standard bearer of a meritocracy, the notion of which, writes John Trumpbour, is "a convenient rationalization for entitlement to power, status, security and personal gain."<sup>29</sup> Adelphi had never compared itself to Harvard until Diamandopoulos and his friends came along. They betrayed Levermore's legacy by shortchanging the students that Adelphi had traditionally served, and by turning Adelphi into a parody of a community of scholars.

The new trustees appointed by the regents promptly fired Diamandopoulos, froze tuition, named faculty leaders as deans, and dropped the attempt to decertify the union. Despite these long-overdue measures, Adelphi continued to face severe financial problems after Diamondopoulos' removal. The old trustees had squandered millions of dollars of university funds on their legal expenses. The new Adelphi administration reached a financial settlement with Diamondopoulos, paying him \$1.4 million to avoid protracted legal battles.

The faculty union agreed to accept pay cuts and to allow the administration to lay off tenured professors in case of financial need. Although the professors were willing to make sacrifices on behalf of their university, others simply could not afford to do so. In September

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<sup>28</sup> John Trumpbour, "Introducing Harvard." *How Harvard Rules*. Ed. John Trumpbour. Boston: South End Press, 1989: 8.

<sup>29</sup> John Trumpbour, "The Business-University Revisited." *How Harvard Rules*: 145.

2000, clerical workers at Adelphi went on strike for fourteen weeks. Their average annual salary was just \$23,400, a pittance given the cost of housing on Long Island. To make matters worse, the administration had decided to eliminate their free tuition benefits.

Adelphi faced a crisis of leadership for three years after the removal of Diamandopoulos in February 1997. Adelphi's provost, Igor Webb, became the acting president for the remaining three months of the academic year. Because Webb was tied to Diamandopoulos' corrupt administration, Adelphi's new trustees appointed an interim president, James A. Norton, for the 1997-98 academic year. Students were delighted to see on the president's office door, which had previously guarded Diamandopoulos' bunker, a sign that read, "Open, Please Come In."<sup>30</sup> Norton appointed history professor Armstrong Starkey as provost. He also named other dedicated faculty members as deans, including biology professor Gayle Insler, who is now the acting provost at Adelphi. Soon, Adelphi began to recover. The size of the freshman class doubled within a year of Diamondopoulos' departure.

In fall 1998, Matthew Goldstein, the former president of Baruch College, was named the new permanent president. Many hoped that Goldstein, who had nearly doubled his salary by moving to Adelphi, would revive the university's fortunes. However, in August 1999, with four years still left in his contract, Goldstein left Adelphi to become the Chancellor of the City University of New York which was already being savaged by the conservative trustees appointed by Governor George Pataki and Mayor Rudy Giuliani. The new CUNY trustees ended open admissions and privatized the university system.<sup>31</sup>

After Goldstein's departure, Steven L. Isenberg, a former publisher of *Newsday* and chair of the new Adelphi trustee board, served as interim president for a year. He helped stabilize

<sup>30</sup> Michelle C. Siry, "President Norton: Caring for the Future of Adelphi." *The Delphian* (11 Nov. 1997): 1.

<sup>31</sup> During the eight years that I taught at CUNY, from 1999 until 2007, I witnessed numerous violations of academic freedom, the most recent instance of which was the non-reappointment of sociology professor John Asimakopoulos at Bronx Community College despite his eminent qualifications for promotion on all possible criteria. In August 2008, however, a labor arbitrator reinstated Asimakopoulos in his teaching position. Goldstein must share responsibility for the brutal atmosphere at CUNY. Adelphi was indeed fortunate that Goldstein moved on.

Adelphi's precarious finances. Adelphi finally got the president it deserved in the person of Robert A. Scott, the former president of Ramapo College and a scholar on public policy and higher education. Scott joined Adelphi as president and as a professor of anthropology and sociology in July 2000. Facing a labor crisis, Adelphi did not celebrate Scott's inauguration until the following summer.

Since then, Adelphi has created new initiatives such as *Levermore Global Scholars*, which fosters civic awareness in students through community-based internships, study abroad programs, and two speaker series, "Human Rights in Global Perspective" and "Living with Conflict and Working for Peace." Student participants have donated food to local charities, presented alternative plays, and performed volunteer work abroad. Also noteworthy is *Vital Signs*, a partnership between Adelphi's School of Social Work and the Long Island community, which seeks to identify and address local health needs in order to inform public policy.

The liberal arts are on the mend. Adelphi has resurrected undergraduate majors in Spanish and French and has started new graduate programs in creative writing and environmental studies. The English department, which had dwindled from twenty-seven to just five faculty members,<sup>32</sup> is back on its feet, with fourteen faculty members in 2008. A new performing arts center, funded in part by a \$5 million New York State grant, opened in fall 2008.

Adelphi is greening its campus. The new sports and performing arts centers will use geothermal heating and cooling systems to avoid burning fossil fuels. The university has eliminated the use of petroleum-based fertilizers and chemical pesticides and herbicides on university grounds. It has reduced automobile use on campus by creating a shuttle service and a storage area for bicycles.

Scott's articles and speeches on Adelphi's website, reveal a thoughtful and compassionate academic who honors Adelphi's legacy as an engaged university. In an essay on the university as a moral force, Scott envisions the university as a "culture of conscience" which

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<sup>32</sup> Paul Lauter. "From Adelphi to Enron – and Back." *Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers: Writing Instruction in the Managed University*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004.

is “dedicated to the search for truth, the transformation of meaning, the examination of intended and unintended consequences, and the concern for equity, equality, fairness, and justice.”<sup>33</sup>

Sometimes misperceived as an ordinary commuter school, Adelphi in fact has a history of educational innovation. Adelphi created the first university program in dance in 1938, and the first university program in clinical psychology in 1952. The present Adelphi administration continues to honor that tradition. In his 2007 State of the University address, Scott noted that Adelphi’s legacy of public engagement is hardly recent, describing how sociology professor Annie Marion MacLean, who taught at Adelphi between 1907 and 1912, conducted her research posing as a factory worker, department store clerk, and farmhand. Scott also celebrated the contradictions inherent in the university, central to society in its roles as creator of knowledge and as curator of its cultural heritage, yet on the margins as its critic. Scott appears to enjoy his job immensely and he has even found the time to act in a student production of Thornton Wilder’s “Our Town.”

In 2005, Adelphi raised more than \$9.5 million. To put that in perspective, during his eleven years as president, Diamandopoulos raised less than three million dollars in private gifts and grants for Adelphi’s endowment.<sup>34</sup> Adelphi’s endowment is now over one hundred and five million dollars and likely to grow at a hefty clip as students begin to give back to the institution that nurtured them. According to the latest information from Adelphi’s Office of Research Assessment and Planning, between 2000 and 2006 undergraduate enrollment increased fifty two percent and alumni giving by nearly six hundred and twenty percent. The number of full-time faculty members rose from 201 in 2000 to 293 in 2007, a forty six percent increase that bodes well for Adelphi.

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<sup>33</sup> Robert A. Scott, “The University as a Moral Force.” *On The Horizon*. 11.2 (2003): 33.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis 127.

The memory of the Diamandopoulos years is fast fading. Adelphi has again become a participatory space that fosters ethical and imaginative dimensions of learning. Despite a decade of pillage, "the lengthening view" has triumphed over entitlement and privilege at Adelphi.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> This is an updated version of an essay that appeared in *Thought and Action* (Spring 1998) and *Against The Current* (November/December 1998).