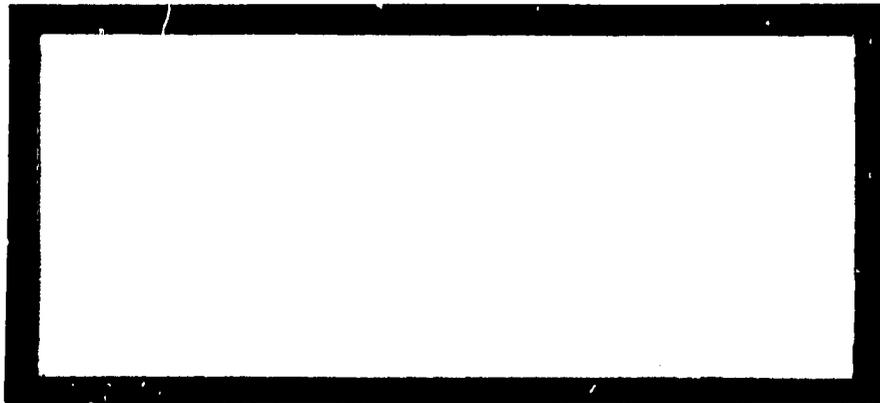


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**A Review of
Colloquium Summary
"U.S. Universities in International Development"**

**Sponsored by
MUCIA/Wingspread**

October, 1988

**Prepared by
Center for Research on Economic Development
In partial fulfillment of
Contract #PDC-0180-0-00-8121-00
Bureau of Program and Policy Coordination
U.S. Agency for International Development**

Colloquium Summary

U.S. Universities in International Development

Sponsored by
MUCIA/Wingspread

Report prepared by
John Lombardi

OVERVIEW

The seminar focused on distinct problems universities face when doing development work. Problems include private sector and interinstitutional competition, criticism from LDCs, defending goals to university officials, a lack of professional recognition among staff, and a general failure of the university itself to commit to an international outlook in its coursework.

The discussion included a historical look at the unattainable goals of development. An alternative approach was offered, given today's environment both domestically and internationally. Lastly, specific solutions were offered to the problems.

HIGHLIGHTS

Topic #1: What have the goals of development been historically and why have we not achieved them?

Issue #1: What have the goals been?

1. Eliminate poverty and hunger for security and political purposes.
2. Develop effective economies for market and investment opportunities and for raw material sources.
3. Create good institutions for self-sustaining stability. LDCs would then become reliable economic and political allies.

Issue #2: Why have we not been able to accomplish these goals?

1. Developing countries do not want to be created in the image of the U.S. oftentimes.
2. The costs are too high.
3. Development isn't fast enough.
4. LDC's often resent the aid if it attempts to make them clones of the U.S.
5. Partial successes are often equated with failure.

Topic #2: What are some alternative approaches and solutions given the limitations of today's environment?

Issue #1: What aspects of today's environment are pertinent to this discussion?

1. There are multiple suppliers of aid to the same client.
2. There are multiple donors of resources.
3. There are often multiple and conflicting objectives by participants in the aid process on both sides.
4. There are multiple modes of interaction between development project and client.

Issue #2: What are some possible solutions given the evolving relationship between organizations and countries?

- Recommendations:**
1. Development must be constantly modified to "reflect particular conditions in client states."
 2. Work should continue on projects where objectives may differ as long as objectives do not conflict with the domain of the project.
 3. An international perspective should be encouraged at U.S. universities, particularly in the field of nursing, agriculture, health, engineering and business.
 4. There should be a clear, coherent tactical approach to the politics of development.
 5. Recognize development includes things we already do well.
 6. Publish and disseminate development news through conferences with interested groups.
 7. Lobby for money for projects through a coordinated and collaborative effort.
 8. Keep talking among universities.

(DRAFT)

US UNIVERSITIES IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Summary Comment on the MUCIA/Wingspread Conference

(March 10-12, 1988)

The past decade has seen a growing sense of concern within the US international development community as the apparently orderly world of post war economic and social development has gradually lost its sharp focus and clear definition. Because the changes in the environment for international development, if not the tasks themselves, reflect dramatic cumulative changes in international commerce and diplomacy, these larger effects obscure the indirect but powerful influences on international development assistance, further increasing the sense of disquiet and concern.

The Development Assistance Malaise

In groups large and small, within academia and in larger forums, development professionals wonder aloud, "Why haven't the tremendous success of international development assistance projects produced more fundamental economic and social progress?" And "Why", we ask, "given the success of so many of these activities, are university providers of technical assistance so much on the defensive, fending off private contracting firms and resisting US government efforts to exclude universities from parts of this arena?"¹

All of us, as change agents ourselves, know that the world has changed significantly since the invention of the university-based technical assistance paradigm. We worry that the new order and the new rules may not be as good as the old. We worry that our skills might be out of sync with the needs of the 1990s or that our ability to compete as development assistance professionals may be compromised.

Growing for some time, this malaise and uncertainty feeds on such evidence as the declining support for foreign assistance from US and some multilateral sources, the failure of simple-minded development scenarios, the recognition of development's interminable and intractable complexity, and the loss of political consensus on the value of development work. We find the ideological underpinnings of technical assistance impoverished and we encounter hostility in countries that have benefitted most from technical assistance success.²

All of this takes place within a context in which most development projects succeed, when agricultural projects produce more, when social programs improve family life, and when infrastructural activities enhance the quality and effectiveness of developing societies. We have cooperated and collaborated with host countries, developing viable and effective institutions, particularly in higher education. And yet, we find ourselves defending the value of our work, justifying the purpose of our activities, and defending our goals and values.³

Challenges to the Internationalized University

In addition, at home in our universities, successful international development professionals encounter academic marginalization. Our administration tells younger colleagues to get tenure in a mainline disciplinary department before committing intellectual effort to development. The results of heroic and successful overseas work earn precious little academic honor and glory, those items being reserved for those who publish what our development colleagues regard as obscure, irrelevant, reductionist, and precious articles in snobby journals far removed from the problems and solutions of the real world.

We know that our society requires universities whose curricula reflect international issues and topics in a coherent and integrated way, but we must continually fight to internationalize our institutions. We have vigorously resisted and watched in dismay as the commitment of universities to foreign language instruction faded to a mere chimera in the sixties and early seventies and applauded its gradual restoration to at least a semi-substantial enterprise. We suffer as the national commitment to an international curricular agenda, represented in Title VI of the Higher Education Act and similar federal programs, appears to decline in vigor and focus.⁴

With the rise of the Pacific Rim as a commercial triumph, we thought that our academic colleagues would discover the fundamental importance of international expertise in meeting the challenge of societies whose cultures and economic systems differed from ours. While our business colleagues spoke often and eloquently about these topics, they found relatively limited need for internationally expert employees in their firms. Further, while we believe that international expertise contributes to a successful trading relationship, we also recognize that America's problems in international commerce came first from poor goods and high prices, and only secondly from a misunderstanding of the people and societies within which we hope to sell our products. We might argue that learning Japanese would help US industry, but until US industry produced price and quality competitive products, no command of a language could compensate for inferior goods.

Failure of US Government Foreign Policy

Our government contributed to the disarray on issues of international expertise and eroded the consensus about economic and social development by failing in one international political context after another. With Vietnam we lost our ability to believe, with Iran we discovered that a US collegiate education does not necessarily make foreign students share our values, and with Africa we face the possibility that technical assistance can not even address basic needs, let alone social and economic development broadly conceived.⁵

Given this environment it is no wonder we have been concerned about the future directions and purpose of university-based international

development work and the academic environment within which it takes place.

An Enterprise in Stress

So in response we have engaged in a variety of behaviors that indicate an enterprise in stress; we have indulged in self-evaluation and intense internecine competition without fully confronting the substantive issues of international development.

Self-evaluations almost always indicate a crisis of success and a fear of losing the initiative. When on an upswing, winning our battles and convinced of our legitimacy, we find self-evaluation a boring waste of time that takes energy from the task of doing and achieving. But in decline, our consensus fragmented, and our opportunities for action shrinking, we immediately turn to studies to help revive our flagging fortunes. A selection of these studies is included in the material with this collection of essays and others appear in the notes, but the most extravagant display of self criticism addresses our own university base of support for international studies.⁶

Recognizing that a failure of university commitment to international studies can only spread to a lack of national belief in the effectiveness of our international mission, we have accumulated an impressive list of jeremiads addressed to the university's failure to produce universal internationally aware education. From the Report of the President's Commission issued in 1979 to the more recent challenge issued under the auspices of the AAU as Beyond Growth (the Lambert Report), we have had to face a barrage of well-meaning, exhaustively researched, and often strident claims about the role of international studies in American higher education.⁷

Unfortunately, the flawed premises of some of these studies invalidated them as guides to action, as when they attempted to claim that America's uncompetitiveness in trade and commerce was directly related in some way to the failure of American universities to provide functional foreign language literacy. Further weakening the impact of these reports, each seemed to recommend solutions and programs that favored one or another sector of American higher education, now the large public state research universities, now the private research oriented, or sometimes the less research intensive state colleges and universities.⁸

In line with this self-interested introspection, we also encountered a simultaneous increase in interinstitutional competition over the shrinking resource base available to support American university development and international studies work. We pursued special legislation providing money for university programs outside of competitive channels, we joined with private belt-way bandits (whose academic credentials we often deprecated) in order to get access to government money earmarked for private enterprise, we banded together in aggressive consortia to compete more effectively for large projects.

We focused on the legislative details of Title XII, of Title VI, or we pursued intensive lobbying to influence the behavior of AID or BIFAD or USIA or the Department of Education to achieve our immediate agenda of maximizing the flow of resources to university projects related to development and international education.

All these characteristics and behaviors worry us at the same time we pursue them, for we recognize them, better than anyone else, as the symptoms of an industry in crisis.

Defining Development

Where, then, must we look for guidance out of this situation in which we find ourselves? As the papers and discussion at the conference highlight, we need to revisit the basic, underlying concept that has informed our understanding of our task for this past generation or so. We must redefine our understanding of the concept of development.

However, the record is absolutely clear on one point: there is no need for a good, operational definition of development to achieve real development success. Good university based work overseas takes place on a continuous basis without the benefit of a clear understanding of the general concept of development.

So without an answer we can have good work but we can not rebuild a national and international consensus around support for that good work. Without this consensus we will find it increasingly difficult to identify the resources needed for good work, and without the resources there will be few opportunities for development professionals to pursue their careers and contribute their skills. Consequently we must confront the meaning of the term as our colleagues have done in the Wingspread conference and discussions.

In our enlightened enthusiasm after the second world war we began this development adventure with a very simple and understandable notion: The purpose of development was to make everyone just like us. This simple vision fit the American fundamental belief in the invincibility of the American way, the benign manifestation of mid twentieth century manifest destiny. It also apparently enjoyed wide acceptance by most of our client states at the same time it had the full support of the American government as one of the consensus underpinnings of post-war diplomacy.

By making everyone like us we meant that we would achieve some rather pragmatic and apparently simple objectives:

- Eliminate poverty and hunger: That would engender security and stability in our client states, the prerequisites for democracy and economic prosperity (the twin engines of the American dream).

- Develop effective economies: These economies in our client states would not only bring prosperity to them but offer markets, investment opportunities, and raw materials sources to our own economic enterprises.
- Create good institutions: With democracies, elections, congresses, courts, impartial police, good non-political universities, and extensive primary and secondary schooling, our client states would be stable and peaceful. With these institutions they could sustain their own growth and remain reliable political and economic allies of the American hegemony.

With this paradigm for development, admittedly a short-hand oversimplification, we then moved to implement a sequence of social scientific myths, each of which were designed to convince ourselves and our clients that the objectives of development could be met in finite time with finite resources. Although the number of and variations on these myths are legion, and their complexity and sophistication reflect well on their academic progenitors, the mere mention of their key words will trigger instant recognition amongst those of us who have been interested in this topic for any appreciable period of the recent past:

- Economic take off
- Middle class
- Import substitution
- Brazilian miracle
- Raw materials cartel
- Export-led growth
- Comparative advantage
- Basic needs

Each of these can serve as an icon for a development myth proposed as the explanation for hope that the main objectives of development could be achieved and that our clients could be made to be like us in our and their lifetimes.

Unachievable Goals. Impossible Objectives

But over the time since the end of the second world war, and especially since the experience of the three decades 1960-1980, we have gradually come to recognize that the simple development goals can not be achieved. We found that making other people just like us costs too much, our clients often don't want to be just like us, or they and we can't afford to pay the price to get them just like us fast enough. Worse, when we have partial success, of which there are many examples, we often find that our clients prove ungrateful for the success achieved.⁹

From the experience of these traumatic decades we have allowed development to disappear as a coherent concept but without replacing it

with an consensus understanding, preferring instead to decline into a reductionist and highly politicized debate about dependency and self-determination. Yet even in this environment, our development successes continue unabated. It turns out that we do it very well and what we do works even without a coherent underlying theory.

Given the failure of the old rationale for development and the continued success of pragmatic projects, we have decided to try to define development from the bottom up by talking about what works in what situations with the hope of eliciting or deriving the general definition of development from an empirical examination of a large number of particular successful projects. This approach is, of course, quintessentially American, very pragmatic, produces inelegant theory, but probably works.¹⁰

An Alternative Approach to Development Issues

From the papers and the conversations at Wingspread we can identify some common elements that will form a part of our new perspective on development. We apparently agree, with normal variation for the nuance of academic sophistication, on the following propositions:

Development is:

- A good thing
- Produces or helps produce economic progress
- Can improve the quality of life for clients
- Can solve a wide variety of specific problems for clients
- Can build successful, competitive institutions
- Can help make countries more like us
- Leads to a better world order for us
- Improves conditions for trade and commerce, especially for us
- Is essential for a successful US foreign policy

Key to our new understanding of development, we recognize that the world has become very messy and unpredictable. Consequently simpleminded and rigid concepts about development in general and about the modes of conducting development projects in particular no longer serve us well. We know that general development prescriptions must constantly be modified to reflect particular conditions in client states, rendering generic formulae for success ineffective.

Where once we could operate in a bipolar world where the large forces of international affairs could be expressed in terms of the contest between American and Soviet spheres of influence and of the rhetorical language of the cold war, our new world has become significantly more complicated. Not only have the clear rigidities of US-Soviet conflict been significantly blurred but the emergence of internationally significant client states has inserted a host of new independent actors. These states, weak and erratic though they may be, often drive the foreign policy and development objectives of the larger powers. International agencies, once an additional action arm of US development

policy, now speak with many voices and pursue policies and development objectives that can diverge from US interests. Multinational firms show no interest in sustaining particular national development tasks that fail to contribute to improved conditions for corporate advancement.¹¹

Within this environment, where intricate ideology serves as a poor guide to consistent national behavior, and where unstable arrangements of force and interest have become the rule, our university based development operations will also become sophisticated, flexible, and non-ideological.

The Contemporary Environment for Development

Successful university development projects must be flexible and adaptable to handle complex environments characterized by:

- Multiple providers of development to the same client and project goal
- Multiple donors of resources to the development task and donors who are themselves recipients of the development task so funded
- Multiple and conflicting objectives held by the various participants in a development project: democracy, equality, progress, stability, profit, health, security
- Multiple modes of interaction between development project and client group or state: directive, cooperative, collaborative, or participatory¹²

Within this context ideology and values take a secondary place to the pragmatic concerns of the project. For development to succeed, the development professionals may have to avoid confronting the subtle consequences of their projects. Rather than clear relationships between project outcomes and ideological values, development professionals and their universities will need to use threshold values to determine the appropriateness of participation. We might agree to stay out of South Africa but maintain projects in Haiti without bothering much with sophisticated comparative analysis of ideological values, simply because South Africa is beyond the pale and Haiti is not.

Similarly, we will continue to work on projects where our objectives and those of our client states may differ. We may improve educational abilities to further access to technology and expertise that improves a standard of living while the client state may sponsor educational abilities to further the interests of one or another political or religious faction within the country. As long as the objectives do not conflict within the domain of the project, we will probably continue to do the project.

Such pragmatism, which reflects the current behavior of most university based development projects, leaves us open to charges of opportunistic

Even within our institutions, we must rethink our own approaches to international study and the support of development work inside American universities. It is generally the case that while most of us have very healthy international studies curricula, the international perspective is still not integrated into the general life of the university. Especially this is so in the professional fields of business, agriculture, nursing, health, engineering, and other areas. Further, the continuing special identification of international as a separate activity symbolizes the distance between mainstream academic life and the international skills essential to development work.

Our reward systems and our definitions of prestige research often do not include development work, in spite of impressive presidential and decanal symbolism and programmatic emphasis. Until international is a title of no particular significance because it is everywhere, we will not have succeeded.¹⁵

Unfortunately, many of our expectations for rapid institutional change appear unrealistic. Progress since the 1970s has been quite slow and the punch of the international competitiveness argument has proved weak. The United States, one might claim, declines in international competitiveness because we don't know what our international competitors are doing. They, we say, teach all their children functional literacy in English while we don't teach functional literacy in any foreign language.

While the argument is fun to make because we can always find amusing examples of clumsy US business people or diplomats making egregious errors for lack of cultural literacy or sensitivity. Unfortunately, carried to an extreme this argument falls of its own weight. As mentioned before, competitiveness begins with competitive products, and without those all the cultural sensitivity in the world won't sell malfunctioning widgets.

Further, the competitiveness argument leads to the production of technically competent internationalists who have no depth or it may in extreme cases lead to a deemphasizing of the Arts and Sciences in favor of narrow professional skills focused on international trade and commerce.

Influencing the US Political Process in Support of Development

Whatever our success in changing ourselves, we still must address the immediate need to influence our legislators and political leaders to have an enlightened and comprehensive understanding of international development issues. A strategy for approaching this task of education takes on special significance in anticipation of a new administration in Washington after 1988. To make progress here we must have a reasonable strategy with these elements:

- Identify the target audience: State government, Congress, White House, Public opinion, International Agencies.

- Develop a coherent message that is practical, pragmatic, effective, and focuses on instrumental action not ideological interpretation
- Articulate a clear goal based on a positive sum game that US development work plays in the complex international environment
- Develop a tactical approach that identifies clear spokespeople who can talk without ideology, promote successful projects and achievements, speak to new goals but claim no more than can be delivered and promise only what can be done
- Responsibility for this strategy rests with all of us in the field orchestrated by our experts in NASULGC, AAU, and other associations¹⁶

Clearly, from the conversation and papers presented at Wingspread, and from what all of us know about international development, no correct approach to development exists, and can not ever be developed. What we can do, however, is exchange models that have worked in one place and adapt them to others, invent new solutions for alternative situations, and in every case search for what works, not for what ought to work.

The future agenda might include the following prescriptions and suggestions:

- Recognition that development and its new dimensions involve things that we already do very well
- Develop rhetoric to match the behavior of university projects in the field
- Invent the new rhetoric that tells the story of what has worked and what we've demonstrated we can do
- Publish and disseminate our new story through conferences with interested groups, key public opinion leaders, and overseas collaborators
- Improve pieces of the infrastructure as opportunities present themselves:
 - If AID is ineffective, focus on AID
 - If BIFAD doesn't represent us well, address BIFAD
 - If Title VI needs revision, lobby to fix Title VI
- Avoid arguments about a new global design for international development work because it requires too much money, and too many actors to succeed; because we'll never get agreement; and because such global designs don't produce results
- Lobby for money for projects and legislation that will provide money for projects; try to coordinate the lobbying at a minimum, and collaborate on the legislative efforts if possible
- Keep talking among ourselves about key items in the action agenda such as how to do exchanges, how to build cooperative international graduate programs, how to organize multidimensional collaborative work

The Pragmatic University and Development in the 1990s

If the message for the 1990s is pragmatic practicality, we have every reason to be optimistic about the continued vitality of university based international development work. We have demonstrated exceptional ability to do coordinated and collaborative international research, we can help people make a difference in their own societies on specific projects with finite goals and clear objectives, we can help establish new institutions, and we can work in a wide range of circumstances and modes.

American university development work has done wonders with the impossible and we will continue to do so. We should take great pride in that accomplishment and in the continuing expansion of our skills for international achievements.

* * *

John V. Lombardi
The Johns Hopkins University
March 1988

Materials Provided Conference Participants

Ahmed, Muzaffar. "Some Thoughts on the Role of U.S. Universities in the Development Task: a Third World View"

DiBiaggio, John A. "The Relationship of Development Assistance to Academic Programs" (Plenary Address)

Fahs, Margaret. "The Role of U.S. Universities in Influencing Foreign Aid"

Jennings, Edward H. "Importance of the Development Task: Comments from a University President's Perspective" (Plenary Address)

Lipman-Blumen, Jean. "Looking Backward and Looking Forward: Reassessing the Third World Role for U.S. Universities in the 1990s"

Morss, Elliott R. "What is the Development Task?"

MUCIA. "Development Strategies and Institution Building: Future Development Challenges: Selected Bibliography"

Schuh, G. Edward. "Development Assistance Modes Appropriate for U.S. Universities"

Smuckler, Ralph H. "Introductory Speech to MUCIA/Wingspread Conference, March 17, 1988"

NOTES

1. Ralph H. Smuckler, "Introductory Speech to MUCIA/Wingspread Conference." The problem set that underlies the discussion is neatly articulated in Dean Smuckler's theme-setting remarks.
2. Elliott R. Morss and Muzaffar Ahmed offer different perspectives on the successes and failures of US development activities in their papers: Morss, "What is the Development Task?", and Ahmed, "Some Thoughts on the Role of U.S. Universities in the Development Task: A Third World View."
3. Jean Lipmann-Blumen and Morss offer contrasting views of the accomplishments and achievements in international development. See in addition to the Morss paper cited above Lipmann-Blumen, "Looking Backward and Looking Forward: Reassessing the Third World Role for U.S. Universities in the 1990s."
4. Although no specific papers at this conference addressed the question of American university curricular support for international education, several presenters made significant references to this theme and the three university presidents spoke to the subject: Charles Ping (Ohio University), Edward H. Jennings (The Ohio State University), John A. DiBiaggio (Michigan State University).
5. In this conference see particularly the paper by Muzaffar Ahmed in which he discusses the development of development ideologies in relation to the process of decolonization and the redefinition of the third world.
6. Included with the materials from this conference is a short selected bibliography "Development Strategies and Institution Building: Future Development Challenges" prepared by MUCIA for the conference. These represent but a quick gloss of a very much larger literature on this theme.
7. Lambert, Richard D., with Elinor G. Barber et al. Beyond Growth: The Next Stage in Language and Area Studies (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Universities, 1984) and President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1979).
8. In addition to the fundamental pieces in the debate over the proper support and organization of international studies in American universities cited in note 7 above, see the review of university programs collected in Earl L. Backman, ed., Approaches to International Education (New York: ACE-Macmillan, 1984).

9. The papers by Morss, Lipman-Blumen, and to a lesser extent, Ahmed and Schuh all touch on this situation. The literature on the nature and dynamics of development and underdevelopment is, of course, extensive and beyond the scope of this conference report. However, it is important to recognize that most of the debate at this meeting took place within the intellectual traditions reflected in that literature whether of the dependentista or developmentalist varieties.

10. A comparison of the Lipman-Blumen and Morss papers, highlighted by much of Ahmed's paper, indicates the wide disagreement among experts about the mechanism of development and underdevelopment as well as considerable divergence even on the meaning of the data presented to illustrate the condition of development. This inability to discuss the topic within a common framework helps illustrate the difficulty of agreeing on policy objectives within such an uncertain context.

11. Particularly interesting in this regard are Lipman-Blumen's considerations of the impact of US-USSR convergence on development objectives within a complex world order. Similarly, Ahmed's discussion of the impact of decolonization and the emergence of autonomous third-world economies on the delivery and design of foreign aid programs helps clarify the issue of development assistance in a multilateral world.

12. A major item in this conference, the discussion of multiple means of conducting development assistance drew as much on the practical development assistance experience of the conference participants as on the discussions in the papers cited above.

13. In an excellent review, Margaret Fahs outlined the interaction of universities with government in relation to foreign aid. Margaret Fahs, "The Role of U.S. Universities in Influencing Foreign Aid."

14. Most of the key concepts outlined here came from the discussions at the Wingspread conference, inspired by Introductory message from Ralph Smuckler and informed by Margaret Fahs' review.

15. Because many of the conference participants have responsibility for university programs for international studies or for the advancement and reward of internationally active faculty, the contributions to this theme in the conference drew heavily on the experience of the participants in a wide range of institutional and disciplinary contexts. Much of the supporting information related to curriculum and university structure can be found in the Backman volume and in Beyond Growth.

16. See particularly the comments in the Fahs paper.