

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors  
Council –Online Archive

National Collegiate Honors Council

---

Spring 2002

## The “Little House” That Can

John Nichols

*Saint Josephs College*, nichols@saintjoe.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nhcjournal>



Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

---

Nichols, John, "The “Little House” That Can" (2002). *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council – Online Archive*. 78.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nhcjournal/78>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the National Collegiate Honors Council at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council –Online Archive by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

# The “Little House” That Can

JOHN NICHOLS

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES  
NEH DISTINGUISHED TEACHING PROFESSOR OF SAINT JOSEPH’S COLLEGE

Thanks to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, I have recently been given the wonderful opportunity to direct a project that brings together both regional and specialized accreditors to reflect on some of the challenges to American higher education as they busy themselves with revising their standards and processes. It seems to me that we have some grounds for being optimistic about the “little house,” as we’re calling undergraduate colleges, but there will be two or three intermediate steps in reaching that conclusion.

The first challenge, I think I’ve learned, is to be very clear about the difference between earning a degree and getting credentialed in something or other. The major difference between these two, as very well explained by Judith Eaton at CHEA, is general education. So, secondly, degree programs will be more what they ought to be and thus perhaps more successful the more they emphasize general education and a major together, rather than the major alone. That will require (third step) a highly integrated approach to student outcomes, curriculum design, and faculty responsibility. Finally, there will result a deeper and wider appreciation for those institutions that can do this best. And I think—to mix the metaphors shamelessly—that undergraduate colleges definitely have a leg up on this approach to higher education.

\* \* \* \* \*

The author may be contacted at:

Box 895  
Saint Joseph’s College  
Rensselaer IN 47978-0895

nichols@saintjoe.edu  
219 866-6133

