



## The Nature Institute

Dear Friends,

The Nature Institute is dedicated to research and education. Research, we always say, is our highest priority; we never intended simply to become another school. Craig's dream, while still a high school science teacher, was to found an organization that would support scientific research of a phenomenological sort—which, incidentally, would provide content for educators.

Or not so incidentally. As this issue of *In Context* illustrates so well, research activities can hardly be separated from educational ones, just as educational activities presuppose research. In his feature article, Craig shows to what an extraordinary degree the effective teacher must be growing and learning—doing a kind of science—in the very act of teaching. Every student represents a great unknown, and it is the teacher's job to come to understand the student's capacities as fully as possible, and to encourage their unfolding. And because there is an element of freedom in every student, the teacher, like a good scientist, must be receptive to yet-unrecognized possibilities, must be open to many points of view, and must exhibit in his or her interaction with the student the kind of potential for change, growth and ever-deepening insight that is the deepest lesson and inspiration for the student.

The article, "Toward a Biology Worthy of Life," describes a major research project Steve has been engaged in during the past few years. The research has been fruitful, and yet we have been fully aware that this is not enough. Research is not of much use if it cannot be made widely available to those who would find it of interest. This has been partly achieved through publication in various venues, including the influential journal, *The New Atlantis*, and a chapter in a book published by Harvard University Press (see page 8). But more is needed. Therefore we have launched a web-based project—now in its initial but still fairly ambitious phase—to put the results of this research into a form accessible to readers with different interests and different levels of technical expertise, from scientists to laypeople. This kind of educational outreach also facilitates exchange with other researchers, which in turn furthers the investigative work itself.

And, of course, there is the matter of "physical plant." Our new building annex, with a large classroom and research/workspaces, is also described in this issue of *In Context*. (There are pictures on page 11.) The new structure will enable us to expand both our educational and research activities.

But perhaps we should have begun by saying "The Nature Institute is dedicated to research, education, and collaboration with a community of friends." For none of our work would have been possible without your collaboration in all its various forms, for which we are deeply grateful.

Craig Holdrege

Steve Talbott

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Copies of *In Context* are free while the supply lasts. Past issues are posted on the Institute website. Our *NetFuture* newsletter is available at: <http://netfuture.org>.

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