

Maverick Colleges

Fourteen Notable Experiments in American Undergraduate Education

2nd ed., revised and expanded

Editors

L. Jackson Newell
Katherine C. Reynolds
L. Scott Marsh

Associate Editors

Katrina Green
Keith Wilson

Contributing Editors

E. Ann Adams
Clifford Crelly
Linda R. Fife
Katrina Green
L. Scott Marsh
Kerrie Naylor
L. Jackson Newell
Zandile Nkabinde
Michael M. Packard
Katherine Reynolds
Richard Sperry
Ryo Takahashi
Barbra Wardle
Keith Wilson

Published by the Utah Education Policy Center
Graduate School of Education
The University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah
1996

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Chapter 1

Preface

“In the specific is the universal.”

—*William Faulkner*

This book is a product of two University of Utah graduate seminars conducted in the spring of 1991 and 1994: “Notable Experiments in American Higher Education” (Educational Administration 728). The contributing authors are professor of educational administration L. Jackson Newell¹ and seminar students, each of whom selected an innovative, or “experimental,” college for research and reporting.

By investigating the fourteen innovative colleges individually and then coming together weekly to discuss emerging themes and ongoing distinctions, seminar participants together forged the frameworks that guided much of the written presentation about each college. In fact, the seminar processes of participation and collaboration—from early discussions of research methods through in-class reviews of papers in draft—reflected the same progressive orientation toward education that undergirded many of the experimental colleges being investigated. Seminar participants, like many participants in innovative college experiments, tested in practice John Dewey’s familiar call for each classroom to become “a task oriented learning community.”

Following the seminars, the participant manuscripts were edited for this volume by graduate assistants Katherine Reynolds, Keith Wilson, L. Scott Marsh, and Administrative Secretary France Rimli-Shortridge. During this time, Jackson Newell was asked to coauthor a book entitled Creating Distinctiveness: Lessons From Uncommon Colleges and Universities, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports (No. 6), 1992. He adapted his chapter, “Origins and Character of Distinctive Colleges,” from that volume to serve as the conclusion to this study.

¹My co-editors have gone on to distinguished careers of their own. Katherine Reynolds (now Katherine Chaddock) is currently Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of South Carolina, and Scott Marsh has served as chair of the department of Modern Dance at both the University of Utah and the Ohio State University. I served as president of Deep Springs College from 1995 to 2004.

Chapter 2

Introduction

L. Jackson Newell and Katherine Reynolds

To select the colleges represented in this book, the authors/seminar participants began by reviewing what is known about many colleges considered to be innovative, distinct or experimental. (See Appendix for a partial list of experimental colleges not included in this volume.) Each examined two or three colleges briefly and brought the results of that investigation back to the seminar group.

In making the final selection of fourteen colleges, group members sought a range of founding dates, longevity and geographic locations. They also sought colleges that could be considered not only outside the mainstream of higher education at the time of their founding, but also exemplary of various means to tackle perceived problems and/or needs in higher education. Finally, pragmatic considerations of access to documents and availability of interviewees surfaced as additional criteria for selecting the fourteen colleges appearing in this volume.

Common Themes

As seminar participants exchanged findings about the fourteen selected colleges, several prominent themes emerged that had not been predetermined by selection criteria but appeared to indicate common postures among experimental colleges. These include:

- **Ideals spawning ideas.** In most cases, the fourteen colleges appeared to start with the ideals of visionary founders. For some, the ideal concerned the citizens who would emerge from the learning experience—from Berea, for example, learned and socially conscious Appalachians who could help enlighten their communities; from Prescott, individuals with keen understanding of important human connections with the natural environment. For others, the ideal concerned the learning experience itself—from the highly structured study of ideas and information from classic texts at St. John's to the interdisciplinary, discussion-focused exploration of contemporary issues at Evergreen. Whatever the source or aim of the ideal, it is noteworthy that the beginnings of each college described in this volume (with the possible exception of College of the Atlantic) owed much to personal visions of social justice activated by uncommon energy and determination.
- **Emphasis on teaching; retreat from research.** The vast majority of experimental colleges are liberal education colleges where the art of teaching and the development of students are values of high esteem. In most of those reported in this volume, founders and faculty questioned the academic research emphasis that had been imported from German universities in the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth centuries, had gained a foothold at Johns Hopkins and Harvard and would eventually

(with hefty motivation from Federal funds for academic research) represent the preferred strategy of the majority of universities.

Instead, the founders of experimental colleges committed to educate the whole person and refine the intellect in preparation for life in a democratic society. Many may have agreed with Black Mountain's founder, John Andrew Rice, when he insisted, "Research is a report of what one has found out, rather than what one knows" (Rice, 1937). Teaching, therefore, took precedence over research as the primary occupation of faculty at these colleges. Typical of the fourteen colleges studied are small classes, highly interactive learning and frequent student and teacher contact outside the classroom.

- **Organization without specialization.** Not unexpectedly, these experimental colleges also tended to turn away from the disciplinary organization of scholarship that had sprung from the German research university model. Faculty members of the colleges depicted in this volume typically taught in areas of expertise, but worked to broaden that expertise (through attending classes taught by their colleagues and teaching in other areas), rather than narrow it through research into subspecialties. At Evergreen, for example, where the "course" faded in favor of the issue-oriented learning group and the multi-disciplinary seminar, faculty have been hired with the understanding that they would rotate through a variety of different teaching areas in a coordinated studies program.
- **Administrative innovations.** Freedom from traditional higher education bureaucracy and hierarchy have been common pursuits of the colleges studied—possibly as a way of emphasizing the centrality of educational functions or possibly as a way of assuring "elbow room" for further experimentation. Some of the fourteen colleges did away with boards of trustees and deans in favor of "self-governance," and some did away with rank and tenure in favor of accountability and broad-based faculty equality. Collaborative governance at some of the smaller colleges, such as Deep Springs and Antioch, has included the entire student body and has been implemented in meetings of the full community. Even where such community-wide participation is more cumbersome, however, involvement of students and faculty in governing and policy-making appears far more extensive at experimental than at traditional colleges and universities.

Divergent Approaches

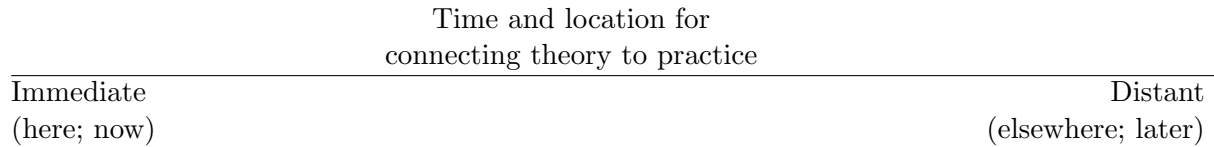
Just as common themes instruct us about the aims and aspirations of various experimental colleges, so too do their divergent approaches. Two notable areas of difference among the colleges focus on who should attend and how their learning might best be organized during the college years.

The "who" question presumes another, seemingly more complex, quandary about how education can best contribute to social betterment. All fourteen colleges have at least some distant objective concerning education for the benefit of society. However, they differ over means that range from educating the masses (to promote widespread direct, as well as indirect, individual benefits) to educating intellectually gifted "elites" (to prepare exceptional individuals for leadership in achieving social, economic and political betterment for all). On a simple continuum, this range unfolds as:

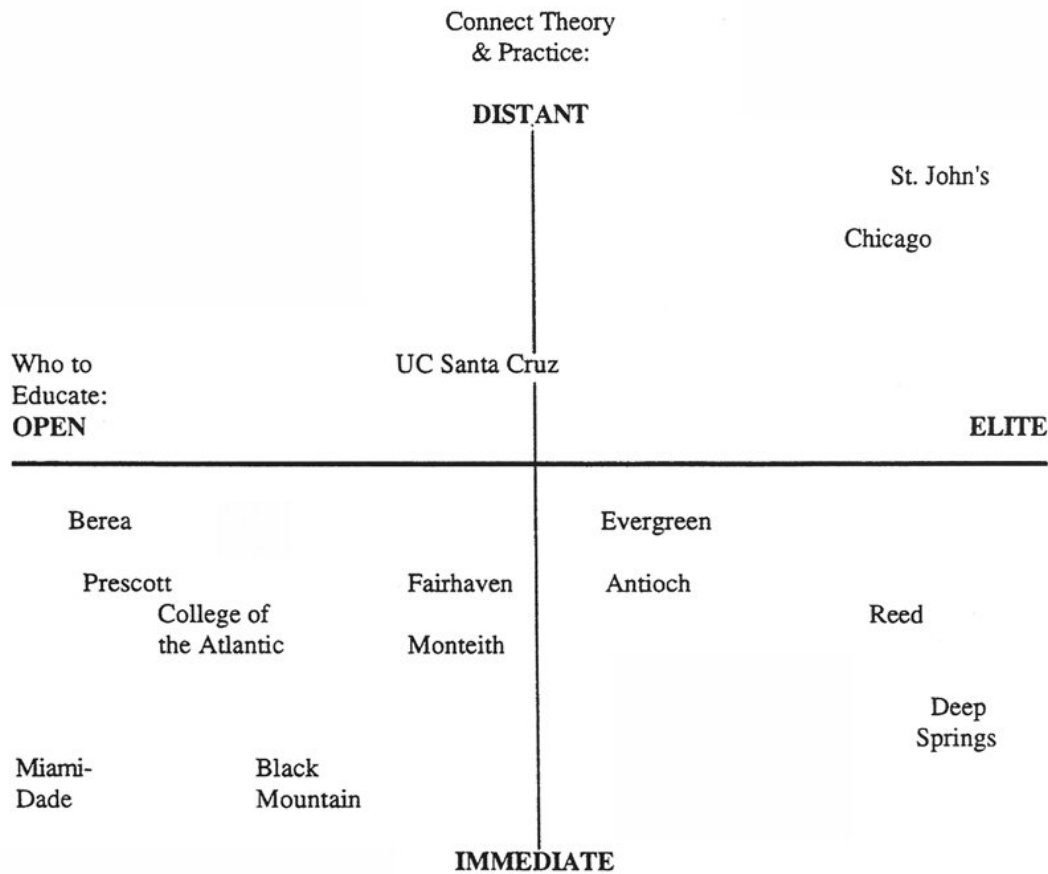
Methods for accomplishing social betterment:	
Educate all who desire (open)	Educate elite leaders

The question of "how" to best organize learning can be broadly applied to any type of learning—from learning a vocation to learning to be a fully functioning citizen. Along the spectrum of things to be

learned, and reasons to learn, there is a common need to connect theory to practice. The “how” question then becomes one of how to integrate theory and practice—with experimental colleges taking up a variety of positions between the extremes. At one end are those colleges determined to wed theory to practice at the most immediate time and location: in the classroom. Others opt for experiential practice elsewhere on the campus or in the nearby community. And, at a distant extreme, are those that prefer to keep college learning completely separate from application—which is to come later. This continuum or axis takes shape as:



When the two axes are overlaid, the quadrants that emerge create a framework for categorizing the fourteen experimental colleges examined in this volume and others. For example:



While other schemes for categorizing experimental colleges take different cuts at framing the issues (Clark, 1970; Grant and Riesman, 1978), the above model is selected as a way of clarifying two significant areas in which such colleges typically distinguish themselves: student selection and educational methods. The placement of colleges in the framework is an inexact exercise, owing to obvious difficulties in comparing selection policies and classroom practices; however, each quadrant does form a general bin for organizing our understanding of the colleges on some important dimensions. Since nearly all the colleges have changed

some from their original direction, the placements depicted here are based on practices and philosophies for which each college is best known—usually what was adhered to longest in its evolution.

Other axes we considered in developing this scheme seemed less informative in terms of philosophies that might underlie practices. However, they provide some interesting conceptual bases for viewing and separating the schools. For example, our options included:

What to learn:	
Disciplinary topics	Interdisciplinary issues

Why to learn:	
Social/economic utility	Personal growth

How to learn:	
Expert pronouncement	Individual interpretation

When to learn:	
Prescribed stages	Lifelong

In addition, we considered several continua that included experimental colleges as “types” of institutions of higher education. We determined that two elements seemed particularly relevant in devising such an umbrella framework: the extent to which learning experiences are planned and prescribed by the institution and the extent of disciplinary specialization. For example, at a research university, disciplinary specialization is extensive, but students have some freedom in selecting their own areas of study. For different reasons, the two elements presented similarities in the final (1950’s) years of Black Mountain, when students were left with one discipline—writing—and much choice about how to pursue it. The framework incorporating these thoughts is depicted as:

Institutional Type	Learning Bureaucracy	Learning System	Learning Community	Learning Environment
Example	Research University	Chicago	Deep Springs	Black Mt. (late)
Extent of planned/prescribed learning activities	-	----	---	-
Extent of disciplinary specialization	++++	+	+	++++

It is our hope that while the colleges we have studied, as well as others, separate on various dimensions and in various contexts, together they offer an integrated view of important and uncommon initiatives in higher education.

Chapter 3

Antioch: Vision and Revision

Kerrie Naylor ²

Horace Mann, the great abolitionist and champion of universal education, told Antioch students at the 1859 commencement exercises, “Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity” (Morgan, 1938:389). Similarly, Arthur Morgan, Antioch’s president in 1920, desired to transform American life by accelerating the process of social evolution through the education of the whole person (Henderson and Hall, 1946). Thus, the tradition of social-mindedness became the heart of Antioch College.

Both Horace Mann and Arthur Morgan believed that education should be concerned with promoting democratic principles for the improvement of society. “Education for life,” the empowering of students to make a worthwhile difference, was and remains the paramount tradition at Antioch College.

How did this heritage begin at experimental Antioch College? Some contend that the college’s current legacy is attributable to the ideals and foresight of Arthur Morgan who saved Antioch in 1920 from bankruptcy and, with new vision, transformed it into what it is today (Clark, 1970). Others would say that Antioch’s heritage is but a continuous progression of vision and beliefs inspired by the leadership of not one man, but many. Furthermore, those who succeeded Mann and Morgan were driven by the dreams of their forerunners.

Whatever conclusion one draws, it is indisputable that the institution known as Antioch College has survived and that it has influenced other institutions of higher learning for nearly 140 years.

What has been the impetus for such survival? What has Antioch contributed to the catalogues of other higher education institutions that has made it distinct and worthy of imitation? These questions will be explored in the following pages. Antioch’s history, philosophy, and evolution will be examined to identify distinguishing characteristics that will enable us to understand why the Antioch of today continues to survive as a distinctive liberal arts college.

History of Antioch

Since its founding in 1852, Antioch’s history represents a continuing commitment to the development of individuals who are motivated to seek out truth and knowledge and have an impact on society.

Horace Mann, the first president of Antioch, arrived in Yellow Springs, Ohio in 1853 to dedicate the new college and address over three thousand spectators, many of whom had come the day before and had slept in carriages overnight (Morgan, 1938). Mann was, after all, a man of great notoriety; he had served 4 years in the United States Congress fighting for the abolition of slavery. And he was the principle architect

²Kerrie Naylor, Clinical Faculty, Department of Educational Administration, University of Utah.

of the American public school system. His inaugural address, tuned to the grand key of “God, Duty, and Humanity,” dedicated the buildings to the “glory of God and the service of man” (Morgan 1938:187). It was a tremendous event. The hope of building a “little Harvard of the West” loomed large in the minds of those in attendance (Henderson and Hall, 1946).

The location of the college was of great importance to Mann. He saw the growth and expansion of the west as a challenge and opportunity to do new things for education in new ways; the growth in the Mississippi Valley, sometimes called the valley of democracy (Morgan, 1938), was seen by Mann as the appropriate place to start a college dedicated to the principles of democracy.

For Mann, the founding of the college represented a dream of exalting education as the foundation of democracy and the support of beneficent religion. The new college was to admit students without discrimination as to race, sex, religion, or wealth, and it was to set the highest standard of scholarship and character.

The distinctiveness of the liberal Antioch of 1853 even exceeded Oberlin College, a northerly neighbor in Ohio, that opened its doors to both male and female students and placed women faculty and students on an equal basis with men (Morgan, 1938). True to his ideals, Mann believed that the education of young people was vital to the well-being of a democratic society, and he designed the Antioch curriculum to develop individual potential in a noncompetitive environment. He introduced coeducation, nonsectarianism, and nonsegregation in order to educate “minds free from prejudice and yearning for truth” (Antioch College Catalog, 1990-91). Mann’s dream for Antioch was that it would provide a new direction for higher education, concerned with the education of all people in all things that make for good living. He emphasized a progressive approach to teaching science which featured class discussion in contrast to the then current recitation method. He saw higher education as the foundation for the “good life itself,” and believed in the integration of moral, civic, and cultural values: implying that college should educate “higher and broader” (Morgan, 1938).

But Mann’s dream was to be short lived. Almost immediately after his arrival at Antioch, financial troubles began (Clark, 1970). In 1859, Mann and his friends barely saved the college from the auction block by putting up \$40,000 of their own money (Morgan, 1938). Following Mann’s death, the college experienced turbulent times; over the next 67 years, graduating classes were small (between 1860 and 1910 most graduating classes had fewer than five students) and there were over 10 college presidents and seven acting presidents (Clark, 1970). Unfortunately, Mann’s innovations did not long survive him and the time between Mann and Arthur Morgan has been characterized as undistinguished (Antioch College Catalog, 1990-91).

With this background in mind, let us now turn to what Antioch’s Catalog terms “the beginnings of modern day Antioch.” Sixty-one years after Horace Mann’s death, Antioch was once again teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Arthur Morgan, an academic visionary as well as a self-taught engineer, was appointed to the Antioch Board of Trustees in 1920. Rumor had it that Antioch was about to be sold and he was to protect the interests of the Unitarians. Seizing the opportunity to present a plan to the Board of Trustees, Morgan revolutionized education at the small liberal arts college.

Morgan’s plan, entitled a “Plan of Practical Industrial Education” (Clark, 1970), was immediately accepted. At the age of 42 he was appointed president of the college. His plan represented a severe break with traditional higher education. He introduced a work-study program into the liberal arts curriculum, setting the Antioch of the 1920s apart from most other colleges of the time (Henderson and Hall, 1946). Briefly, Morgan’s ideas were these: to mold individuals who would become imaginative proprietors in a small community; to have students offer political and economic leadership in the evolution toward a more perfect society; to provide a “well-proportioned education”; to mold the “entire personality of the student”; and, to have “education in life as well as in books” (Clark 1970:22). Although Morgan’s beliefs were rather utopian, they did have many common threads with Mann’s founding ideologies.

Arthur Morgan was not just an engineer who had decided to become an educator. He had been thinking

about education and its purposes since his high school days and had already searched possible sites where he might set up his ideal college. He saw the Antioch campus as possessing several virtues that a new college would take years to develop: the legacy of the ideals of Horace Mann, the physical plant (three 1853 buildings still in minimal working condition), and the adjacent 1000 acre wild-life area known as Glen Helen (a gift to the college presented by Hugh Taylor Birch, a friend of Horace Mann's son and later president of Antioch) (Clark 1970:19). It was the perfect time and perfect place for Arthur Morgan to turn a near defunct college into the institution that would fulfill his dreams and beliefs.

Morgan's 1920 "statement of plans" included the concept of dividing student time between work and study. He felt that the securing of a more rounded development through the alternation of study and work experience, would provide self-support for the college and assistance to students in paying their tuition. His ideas included the merger of work with cultural education (liberal education), as well as the building of physical fitness, and the development of community service (Clark, 1970). All of this was to occur within the Antioch enclave.

Antioch's history from 1920 to the present has been somewhat metamorphic. Certainly the history of Antioch has not been without challenge. The means to accomplish Morgan's dreams and ideals have been adjusted and amended through the years to arrive at the Antioch of today. But even through the revisions, what has remained constant is Morgan's philosophy of work experience integrated with liberal education, the development of community through democratic participation, and the college's commitment to social concerns. Both Mann and Morgan set the stage within which the historical dramas have played. Remaining true to the continuing heritage, the current philosophy of Antioch operates within these parameters established years ago.

Current Demographics

Antioch College is located 20 miles from Dayton, Ohio in the small southwestern Ohio village of Yellow Springs, population 4,600. Approximately 585 full-time undergraduates are enrolled at the present time; 56 percent are women and 44 percent are men; 9 percent are blacks; 1 percent are Native Americans; 2 percent are Hispanics; 1 percent are Asian Americans; and 3 percent are international students.

Antioch is one of the oldest experimental and innovative liberal arts colleges in the country with a campus of approximately 100 acres and an adjoining 1000 acre nature preserve nearby. The college is part of Antioch University, established in 1978.

Modern-day Antioch University enrolls 3,400 students, has 130 full-time faculty, and 7 operating units or centers: Antioch College (which includes Antioch Education Abroad and a small center in London) and adult learning centers in New England, Philadelphia, Seattle, San Francisco, and Southern California (Los Angeles and a satellite in Santa Barbara). A new unit, titled the School for Adult and Experiential Learning, is being organized in Yellow Springs and will include the existing Center for Adult Learning, external degree programs and Summer programs (NCAR, 1988). Sixty-eight percent of all Antioch students in the University are women, 15 percent are black. In the 1987-88 fiscal year, the operating budget for the University was \$22.9 million and during the last 2 years, the budget has yielded surpluses of around one-half million dollars.

The three original buildings still form the core of the Antioch College campus. Admission to Antioch College is only moderately difficult; about 79 percent of the applicants are accepted. In 1989, 390 students applied for fall admission; 40 percent of the 79 percent accepted enrolled. Eighty-five percent of fall 1988 freshman returned for fall 1989 term. Admission requirements include an essay, interview, high school transcript, and recommendations; SAT and ACT scores are optional and used for counseling and placement purposes (Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges, 1991).

Currently there are 74 faculty members at the College; 42 full-time, 32 part-time; 64 percent of the

full-time faculty have doctoral degrees. The College operates under a traditional tenure system.

Graduation requirements at the College include a minimum of 160 quarter credits in the core program and 6 work terms; one math course and 2 science courses are required; a computer course is also required for all students, as well as physical education requirements for 3 years. Satisfaction of basic skills and general education requirements must also be met.

Tuition for the 1990-91 academic year was \$12,700. Total expenses, including tuition, room and board, facilities fees and community government fees, were \$16,450.

Housing is available and nearly all students are required to live on campus (waivers may be granted). About 95 percent of the students live in coed dormitories; sexes are segregated in dormitories by floor or room.

Campus life and student services include a student-run newspaper, volunteer fire department, student radio station, emergency squad, health clinic, counseling center, and women's center. Antioch College sponsors no intercollegiate sports, fraternities, or sororities. However, intramural activities are planned by the community government.

Financial aid and scholarships are available and about four-fifths of the students receive financial aid. In fall 1989, 83 percent of the students applied for aid, 75 percent of those were judged to have need, and 100 percent of those were assisted. All freshmen who received aid had 100 percent of their needs covered. College administered aid for all 1989-90 undergraduates included 304 need-based, 113 non-need scholarships, some low interest long-term loans, and some aid from external sources.

Religious orientation at the College remains nonsectarian. Religious services and activities are arranged by interested faculty and students. Rockford Chapel is available for contemplation, worship, small meetings, and weddings.

Antioch is accredited by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Current financial health and stability is good, although on several occasions the institution has been nearly bankrupt. Most recently, because of rapid overexpansion during the 1970s, the finances and administration were nearly overwhelmed by a loose "network." At its peak in 1977-78, Antioch consisted of some 33 units in several countries, enrolling approximately 8,574 students, supported principally by the College in Yellow Springs. But changes that were introduced in 1985, under new president, Alan Guskin, have elevated Antioch College to the top priority of the University. Strict fiscal policies to control spending were introduced under Guskin's administration, and unit budget cuts were implemented to assure a balanced budget and adequate cash flow. Collection of student tuition at the centers (an often neglected priority), fund raising activities, a change in the Board of Trustees, and the creation of a "living endowment" (a policy in which the University centers would underwrite the rebuilding of the College for 6 years), all represented policy changes which have helped make Antioch financially stable once again (NCAR 1988:16).

Current Philosophy of Antioch College

Antioch's Honor Code reveals the prevailing philosophy of the College:

Antioch College is a community dedicated to the search for truth, the development of individual potential, and the pursuit of social justice. In order to fulfill our objectives, freedom must be matched by responsibility. As a member of the Antioch Community, I affirm that I will be honest and respectful in all my relationships, and I will advance these standards of behavior in others. (Officially adopted, March 14, 1985)

This code reflects the behavior that students at Antioch are expected to uphold. Such behavior runs concomitantly with the educational philosophy and purpose of the College:

We believe in the power of ideas and in the value of examining ideas seriously. We believe that ideas come alive when they are tested and refined through experience. We believe that to prepare students to take responsibility for their own lives, students should have a significant voice in their own educational community. We believe that the role of education is to help students create meaning and purpose in their lives. (Antioch College Brochure, 1990-91:1)

At Antioch, as at many colleges, the heart of the educational problem is to determine clearly the purpose for which the institution exists, and then to formulate a program through which that purpose may be realized. The programs at Antioch are the means to the realization of the College's purpose. Antioch provides: first, a rigorous liberal arts curriculum as the academic foundation of each student's educational program; second, the curriculum revolves around one of the most extensive programs of cooperative education in the world; and third, student participation in shaping campus issues is expected and encouraged. Education at Antioch is both idealistic and purposeful, value-driven and practical. Students are expected to reach beyond conventional learning—to become intelligent experimenters, informed risk-takers, creative thinkers, and courageous practitioners (Antioch College Catalog, 1990-91).

The ideals of these programs are based on a set of enduring beliefs. Such beliefs extend back into Antioch's history to the general purpose of Antioch College stated by Horace Mann in 1853. In his inaugural address, Mann declared unequivocally that a college should concern itself with three things: the bodily health, the mental enlightenment, and the moral education of its students. To achieve this purpose, Antioch's first program included courses in health and compulsory exercise, the elective system of studies (this was a highly controversial issue at the time), and a strong curricular slant in favor of the sciences (Morgan 1938:19-150).

Further support of Antioch's historical heritage embedded in its educational philosophy and program can be found in Arthur Morgan's 1920 statement of Antioch's purpose: "Antioch will seek the development, in proportion, of every element of personality" (Morgan 1938:150). To realize this purpose, the following programs were established: the cooperative plan of work and study, the required course program in the arts and sciences, the honor system, the faculty adviser plan, the health examinations, the intramural sports program, and the policy of student responsibility for student conduct and activities. Through these programs Morgan tried to motivate students toward fine social purposes and to formulate a philosophy of life (Morgan, 1938).

Considering these statements of purpose and the programs for education from Antioch's past, it is clear that the current Antioch continues this heritage of "education for life." An extensive examination of the three basic programs—the co-op work program, the academic program, and the community governance program—will illustrate more closely the philosophy guiding the institution today and how it relates to the philosophy and programs of the past.

The Work Program

Integration of work and study has been a primary force in shaping the character of Antioch since the introduction of the Cooperative Education Program in 1921. The program is well suited for students who seek a high degree of freedom and responsibility, innovation, academic excellence, and a chance to explore a variety of career options (Antioch College Brochure, 1990-91). One-third of the student-body is on co-op while the remaining students study on campus. The college maintains a network of 300 employers who hire students on a regular basis. A full-time staff of co-op faculty assists students in selecting a co-op assignment, dealing with problems that may arise during the course of the experience, and in assessing lessons learned when the experience is completed.

Opportunities in Antioch's co-op program are extensive, both in job responsibility and geographic location. Students are employed nationwide in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Wash-

ington, D.C., and other locations. They work for such organizations as the Associated Press, the Library of Congress, Chicago's Field Museum, Camarillo State Hospital, Horace Mann School, IBM, Boston University Medical School, and Staten Island Advance newspaper. Students are employed in hospitals, national parks, radio agencies, and theaters.

All students must complete at least six quarters of co-op assignments. The assignments may be different or the same. Students are hired as regular employees and must make their own travel and living arrangements. Employers pay students directly. Students must then pay the college tuition while on co-op assignment; they receive credit pending appropriate evaluations.

The benefits of co-ops relate directly to the philosophy of the college. The co-ops provide life experience to help students come to terms with who they are, where they fit in and what they will do in life (Antioch College Brochure, 1990-91). Co-ops and classroom learning are linked in significant ways. Perspectives and skills learned in the classroom are tested and refined on the job. Practical insights from the co-op experience are brought back to the classroom to enrich further study. Students rely on their own resources as they participate in co-op. Plus, students develop multiple contacts and are in an excellent position to acquire a meaningful job at the end of their schooling.

The Academic Program

Consideration of Antioch's academic program and its relation to liberal education is important in assessing its success as a distinctive college. The academic curriculum provides students with a broad liberal education that challenges their values and perspectives as well as increases their knowledge, ability to question, and general intellectual consciousness about themselves and the society in which they live (Antioch College Catalog, 1990-91). Within the context of the curriculum, students plan their own education with the help of faculty advisors and counselors. Students and faculty work from a "general education grid" which presents the requirements and options within the curriculum (NCAR 1988:29). The emphasis is on different ways of knowing and the preparation of generalists. Antioch College offers the Bachelor of Arts degree and the Bachelor of Science degree. Academic disciplines are categorized by various "Institutes": Institute of Arts, Institute of Communications and Media Arts, Institute of Human Development, Institute of Humanities, Institute of Public and Private Management, and Institute of Science and Technology. Concentrations in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs are available in the Institutes. Disciplinary majors (such as Biology, History, or Music) or Interdisciplinary majors (such as African and African-American Studies, Educational Studies, or International Studies) make up the curriculum at Antioch College. The general education program emphasizes mastery of knowledge and skill areas and students must complete 12 five-credit courses. Knowledge areas include, but are not limited to: Western Intellectual Tradition, Non-western and Cross-cultural Studies, Social Environment, Living Environment, and Individual Development. Skill areas include: Aesthetic-creative, Analytical-integrative, Experimental, Intercultural, and Inquiry (Antioch College Catalog, 1990-91). Academic classes are small with a nine to one ratio, which encourages close contact with faculty. Vigorous exchanges take place in the classroom, and diverse viewpoints are welcome. Students do not receive grades. Professors write narrative evaluations of the work of each student in every course. Consistent with both Mann and Morgan's philosophy of being against any system of rewards or prizes which coax students to learn, "Antioch students are motivated to learn for the right reasons without artificial incentives" (Al Denman, Professor of Philosophy of Law and Religion, Antioch College Brochure, 1990-91). Teaching students to love learning for the sake of learning is the objective of Antioch educators, if not the common experience of Antioch students.

Community Governance Program

Education at Antioch is not confined to the classroom or to the co-op jobs. For more than 6 years, the College's philosophy has encouraged students to be active in campus life. Antioch leaders believe the college should be a single cohesive community based on principles of democracy and citizenship (Antioch College Brochure, 1990-91). Community government offers significant responsibility for the social, cultural, financial, and policy issues that govern college affairs. The tradition of faculty and student participation in the governance of the college stretches back to Arthur Morgan. Two major councils, both implemented in 1926 under Morgan's administration, constitute the decision-making bodies of the campus. The first, the Administrative Council (AdCil), is composed of six faculty, three students, two administrators, and the Community Manager. Currently, the College President, Alan Guskin, chairs AdCil. (This was one of the changes implemented in 1985 in hopes of reinstating fiscal solvency.) The council's chief purpose is to advise the president. But in practice, the opinion of AdCil on significant matters of college-wide policy is decisive. According to the Antioch College Catalog, the president seldom acts contrary to AdCil's advice, especially on such matters as curriculum, faculty hiring and renewals, tenure, academic reviews, and new programs (1990-91:17). The strength of influence that this council achieved was solidified under Algo Henderson, Morgan's successor to the presidency. By the 1950s, this council had become the operational heart of the College and directly represented the philosophy of democratic participation (Clark, 1970).

The second body representing the community governance program is called the Community Council (ComCil). ComCil is the legislative body of the community government. All members pay fees to the community government. Community government directly addresses the quality of life on campus through such avenues as the campus newspaper, movies, cultural events, dances, and other activities (Antioch College Brochure, 1990-91).

ComCil is composed of seven students, four non-students, the Community Manager, and the Dean of Students. Dormitory standards, publication standards, social activities, and other matters relating to campus life are under ComCil's purview. The Community Manager, usually a student, has the managerial responsibilities of community life and acts as chief administrator in carrying out the policies of ComCil.

Antioch's commitment to democratic processes is a clear demonstration of its priorities. The College considers participation in governance—by voting, serving on committees, and keeping informed—important not only in teaching the responsibilities attendant upon freedom, but also in keeping college life vibrant. Morgan's philosophy that "if students learn by doing, they ought to learn democracy by participating in campus forms of it" (Clark 1970:55), is exemplified in the community governance structure. As an expression of the social consciousness of the college, the community governance program is the hallmark of Antioch.

Evolution of the College

Antioch College has consolidated the philosophy of education for the whole person into a combination of three distinct, yet interrelated and integrated programs. Each of these program discussions had its roots firmly planted in Antioch's past: the rigorous academic curriculum, the co-op experiences, the participation in community governance. Further, the attention to values and the emphasis on discovering a personal world view are all factors which unite to make Antioch a college of continuing distinction (NCAR 1988:28). An examination of what makes Antioch different from most other colleges follows. In particular Morgan's savvy in personnel matters, his charismatic recruitment of bright students, his creation of a progressive image for the college, and how that image has evolved during the last three decades, will complete the story.

The Antioch of Mann's time created the beginning of the story. Unfortunately, with Mann's death,

the College almost died. When Arthur Morgan emerged on the scene in the 1920s he was wise enough to recognize the potential of Antioch. He recognized the legacy of Horace Mann's ideals. Morgan was able to seize the initiative and take command of the situation with new force and vigor. His actions helped perpetuate the college and, with a new vision, recreate Antioch's identity.

The first thing Morgan did as the new College president was to change the college board of trustees. Traveling around the country and visiting old friends and colleagues outside of Ohio, Morgan selected trustees who not only shared his vision of education, but had reputations and fortunes to match.

The next thing Morgan did was transform the faculty. He carefully sought out professors who would suit him, faculty with experience and commitment. The ideal person was one who, forceful in personality, broad in interest, matured by practical experience and reflection, would also commit to the adventure of working out a new education and a new life for Antioch (Clark, 1970).

Following the selection of a faculty, Morgan concentrated on attracting and selecting students. Adding to the already existing admission standards of high school certificates and entrance exams, Morgan incorporated high school grades, intelligence tests, letters of recommendation, and even student autobiographies. By enhancing the admission standards, Morgan promulgated the belief that Antioch was indeed a school with a vision which had something to offer. By 1921-22, the student body numbered 203, five times greater than the year before. By 1930, the enrollment rate reached 650 (Clark, 1970).

Next, Morgan focused on finances. At first, he financed the College year by year on the strength of what he could solicit during his travels. Gifts and grants constituted 50 percent of the budget; student fees and tuition made up the other 50 percent (Clark, 1970). Certainly the work-study program helped finance the College since one-third to one-half of the student population was off campus and still paying tuition.

Finally, Morgan focused on public relations to make the College a success. It is no exaggeration to say that Arthur Morgan had a keen sense for public relations and an eye for building a positive image of the College. He worked diligently projecting the image of the College he wanted Antioch to be, never losing sight of his ideals nor of Mann's. Morgan spread the word to a large audience simultaneously conveying his vision of education. Ingeniously, Morgan offered interviews to national magazines; he wrote articles for scientific journals, and he encouraged his contacts in New York to print articles and editorials in the New York Times. Antioch was constantly in the news and a topic of conversation in influential circles.

In addition to these public relation strategies, Morgan established the "Friends of Antioch" in different cities, trying to remove the impression that Antioch was just a local college. He also began his own personal forum entitled Antioch Notes. His circulation list consisted of 20,000 readers ranging from high school principals to Supreme Court justices (Clark, 1970). With all of this attention, the College soon won national respect and recognition.

By the early 1930s, Antioch was clearly a successful liberal arts college. It had an original program, good students, and good faculty. The College, transformed under Morgan's leadership, had not only survived but had prospered and earned a respectable reputation. Even though minor changes in Mann's original dream had occurred (he had originally hoped for a utopian sense of community to develop in which the College would be almost entirely self-supporting, dedicated to the social changes necessary for the ideal democracy), the revision had been essential in the survival of the College. Morgan had generated allegiance on the part of faculty, students, alumni, trustees, and community. The only thing left was to see if the evolution could withstand the departure of Arthur Morgan.

Through the 1930s and 1940s, after Morgan left Antioch, new leaders met the challenges and made changes where they were necessary. Even through the massaging of minor changes, Antioch's reputation was cemented in the College's existence and persona. Between 1940 and 1960 Antioch College was considered to be one of the most distinctive, academically competitive colleges in the country, noted for its innovative education as well as for high standards (Clark, 1970). Antioch had an uncommon educational program built upon work, grounded in liberal education, and centered on campus participation. The distinctive character was institutionalized, and Morgan's successors attempted to be sensitive to that distinction.

By the mid-1960s, however, Antioch had grown to be a series of “networks” containing some 33 centers in the United States and abroad. The College was the sole support for most of these centers and was being financially drained as time passed.

Ironically, it was Antioch’s own historical heritage that caused the College financial problems and instability through the 1960s and 1970s. Given a history of educational experiments and progressive values, as well as the spirit of the late 60s, it is not surprising that Antioch College wanted to be a leader. The focus of the College centered in extending educational access to individuals from groups who traditionally were not well represented in American colleges—adults, minorities, and the poor (NCAR 1988:8). An institution created and recreated by two insightful reformers, Mann and Morgan, Antioch wanted to extend its education to members of the under-attended population, and organize educational centers in readily available places.

There also was a practical factor in the decision to establish the centers. During this time, the College was projecting enrollment declines. By organizing adult learning centers, the leadership at that time sought to remain financially secure by diversifying its financial base and attracting new students.

Thus, out of social commitment to an under-served population and a desire to protect the future of the College, the first centers were developed as outreach programs of Antioch College. Unfortunately, after 1972, the centers became more and more distanced from the College and the network seemed to be less and less accountable to the purposes and ideals that the College represented. Even when President Birenbaum in 1978 tried to bring the “network” under control, by changing the name to Antioch University, the financial problems, lack of accountability, and divisive conflict between the centers and the College continued.

The overexpansion of the University from the College’s marginal financial base continued until the early 1980s. During the 1960s and 1970s, Antioch also experienced conflicts over professionalization and specialization of the curriculum, tension over student freedom versus responsibility, and negative repercussions from campus social activism and liberal (radical) political positions. These turbulent times caused the college to reexamine its policies and procedures. The grim picture had only improved slightly by the time the North Central Association made two focused visits in 1981 and 1983. Fortunately, by the early 1980s, long-range planning and quality controls were beginning to improve, and a competent University administration with a comprehensive vision was emerging. The University closed more than twenty centers in 10 years, made plans to close the law school at George Washington University, and rededicated itself to the restitution of the College.

After 1985 and the appointment of Alan Guskin, symbolic as well as practical changes took place. The president moved the offices of the University back to Yellow Spring. Policies were implemented to secure funds to rebuild the College. Fiscal policies to control spending were introduced, University centers were held accountable to collect student tuition, and effective long-range planning began in May of 1986 (NCAR, 1988).

Perhaps the most critical factor during this last restoration period of Antioch College was the way in which symbols were used. A formal inauguration was held on the College campus in October, 1986, replete with robes, pomp, and circumstance. The ceremony was attended by 1,200 alumni, friends, and colleagues representing over two hundred institutions. It was the first of its kind in 40 years. The inauguration symbolically began the process of moving forward into the future. Also symbolic in the restoration of the College was the reestablishment of the alumni magazine, the *Antiochian*. The magazine was redesigned and once again made into a College publication. Another symbolic, yet rational aspect of reinstating the College was the articulation of a vision. A clear vision was needed at the Antioch of the 1980s to give people a sense of direction. Using the ideals of Mann and Morgan, the leaders at Antioch created a new motivation for the institution. The major vision, championed everywhere on Antioch University campuses, was to make the College a national institution once again. Consistent with Antioch’s vision, nine commitments were framed within Antioch’s present mission:

1. to the College, because of its historic role as the institution from which all of the other units developed, and as the center of the University;
2. to the College's integration of liberal arts and work experience;
3. to the integration of theory and practice throughout the curriculum;
4. to participatory forms of governance and a strong sense of community;
5. to equality for all individuals and peoples;
6. to an education that addresses the life-long needs of students;
7. to striving for high quality in educational programs and personnel;
8. to educating students who will have a sense of potency, a sense of competence, and a willingness to act on their values; and,
9. to taking reasonable risks in order to accomplish these commitments. (Approved by the Board of Trustees, 1986 and 1987)

In order to deal with the tumultuous incidents of the 1960s and 1970s, some necessary modifications in administrative procedures, accountability structures, and fiscal policies have occurred. Slight revisions of programs have also taken place. But through this evolution, the ideals that Mann and Morgan instituted remained intact and the core principles around which Antioch's curriculum program have been organized have remained consistent. Two facts are noteworthy in Antioch's long history: first, the institution has endured in spite of periods of questionable funding and management; second, the mission has remained reasonably constant since the early 1920s (NCAR 1988:10). The philosophy of the whole person and education for life expressed in the combination of programs and values which the College advocated has become embedded deeply into Antioch's character.

It has been said that once a vision has taken firm root, and the course has been determined, then compromise can occur without harming the heritage. This seems to be the case at Antioch. Horace Mann and Arthur Morgan had visions for Antioch. They set the course and the philosophy behind their visions fueled the needed programs. Implicit in the interplay of the three driving components of the Antioch program—the academic program, the work experience program, and the community governance program—are strong commitments to social justice, a striving for clear values, and responsible social action. These principles have shaped a history which is undaunted idealistic. They have attracted and challenged generations of students and faculty who have given the several communities of Antioch a special ethos. The College became legendary and although it has suffered financial chaos at times, dreamed new visions, and evolved over time, Antioch has remained remarkably true to its noble heritage.

Conclusion

These mission reviews have led to several conclusions. First, the fundamental principles of Antioch remain powerful and binding. Second, there is a need to continually review these principles so that new faculty and students become familiar with Antiochian values and develop a complete understanding of its mission. Third, good progress is being made toward a better understanding of the integration of work and study in the curriculum and its three programs: academics, work, and community.

Most recently, discussions have focused on the need for a new emphasis on global understanding, and the need for all students in all programs to be better acquainted with other cultures and the interdependency of nations. In addition, a new curriculum for the 21st century is currently under study. The new design

will feature an in-depth work experience of three 12-month time periods in a cross-cultural environment either in another country or in the United States (Antioch College Catalog, 1990-91). A new language proficiency requirement is being proposed, specially designed courses in non-Western/global studies are in the making, and new majors are being added to the program. Students are also requesting that they be allowed to “self-design” a major. Continually evaluating and assessing where Antioch has been, where it is now, and what the future might bring, will be essential if Antioch is to revitalize itself for the third time and continue its heritage. Facing low enrollment problems, financial challenges, and diversified University network communities will be the ordeal of the 1990s. The test will be to see if the College can remain true to its heritage of social goals while at the same time being able to attract the conservative populace that currently dominates college enrollments. If joining the mainstream of liberal arts colleges means being less political in order to enhance enrollments and survive, will the commitment to its purposes and vision be strong enough to endure, or will its long and unique heritage succumb to the pressures of this environment? Considering Antioch’s longevity for survival, it seems likely that the College will keep what has worked and change what doesn’t work by exploring new alternatives and options. Remaining true to the values and beliefs that have served it well for almost a century and a half will hopefully ensure Antioch’s success in the future.

W.S. Harwood, a friend of Horace Mann and an early president of Antioch, expressed the vision when he stated:

The new Antioch was not a city, but a college, a college destined to a storm-tossed history, where noble men and women have been educated, where bitter feuds have been fought, where truth has triumphed. (Morgan 1938:59)

Chapter 4

Berea: The Persistent Ideal

Clifford Crelly ³

Berea College was founded in 1855 for the purpose of providing an education to all students regardless of creed, gender, or color. Students from families with impoverished financial resources and those who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend college became the strongest commitment to Berea's academic structure. Students from the Appalachian region were sought with the hope that, upon graduation, they would return to the mountains from which they came to educate others. Student labor was required as a major component of learning and used as a mechanism to offset the cost of their education. Adherence to these principles has not changed from Berea's inception to the present day.

This paper discusses the development of Berea in five sections. These sections address critical elements related to the following: founding of the College; importance of the work ethic; commitment to Christian belief; absence of discrimination, and importance of quality education. Each section is presented chronologically and the importance of each element to the College from its beginning to the present day is explained.

Founding of the College

In 1855, Reverend John G. Fee and Cassius M. Clay began a school on Berea Ridge in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky. Fee was a graduate of Lane Seminary outside Cincinnati, Ohio, and a proponent of abolition. A native Kentuckian, he came to an area southeast of Lexington on the request of Clay. Clay was a landowner who owned no slaves. He had read an article authored by Fee about the sins of slavery and invited the young minister to establish a church and a grammar school in the mountainous area of the state. Clay wanted to demonstrate the political advantages of life without slavery and chose Fee to help him start a free community in which agriculture could flourish. The political beliefs of Clay and the religious beliefs of Fee provided the cornerstone for the future development of Berea College.

During the next 3 years, a Board of Trustees was formed and Fee became the board's first president. Two teachers, Reverend John A. R. Rogers and John G. Hanson, joined the school and Rogers was appointed principal. Rogers brought with him the desire to begin a school that offered advanced study and Hanson the expertise in trades related to milling wood, surveying, and inventing. With Fee, these men drew up a constitution for Berea College in July of 1859. The fundamental principles of this constitution were: (a) to promote the cause of Christ; (b) to provide education for those of moral character at the least possible

³Clifford Crelly, Graduate, Department of Special Education, University of Utah.

expense; and (c) to offer all opportunities for worthwhile labor (Hutchins, 1963). No restrictions concerning race, gender, or religious denomination were stated and the motto, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men" was included. During the antebellum days of Fee and Clay, blacks and women were considered second-class citizens. This idea of education for all was truly revolutionary.

From the first day their school opened in 1855, both black and white, male and female students were admitted on an equal basis. At this time, protest was minimal and the residents of the area accepted the integrated system. However, in 1859, John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry caused unrest in the community. The abolitionist beliefs of Fee, Rogers and Hanson came under attack from local slaveholders and pernicious rumors that Fee was organizing a similar raid spread. Numerous meetings were held to determine the best method of disposing of Fee and his teachers. The situation remained tense and at Christmas armed citizens demanded that they leave within 10 days. They departed and were housed by families in the Cincinnati area. Although they made sporadic trips back to Berea to preach, they did not relocate in Berea until April 1864 and did not reopen Berea until the conclusion of the Civil War.

In March 1866, the school reopened as an institution of higher education. One hundred eighty-seven students, 96 black and 91 white were admitted. Immediately 27 white students withdrew and threats to the lives of Fee, Hanson and Rogers began and continued for several years. Despite these threats, these men drew up and signed articles of incorporation in April of 1866. The articles set forth the same principles as the constitution and a provision was made to include a president of the College. In 1869, the first official president of Berea, E. Henry Fairchild, was appointed.

Fairchild was 54 when he arrived at Berea and brought with him experience as a teacher, financial agent and pastor. From 1869 to 1889, he used these skills to improve public services to the community of the Appalachian region. Successive presidents, William B. Stewart (1890-1892), William G. Frost (1892-1920), William J. Hutchins (1920-1939), Francis S. Hutchins (1939-1967), Willis D. Weatherford (1967-1984) and John B. Stephenson (1984-present) have continued this tradition.

Work Ethic

Work ethic developed early in the history of Berea. Fairchild was a graduate of Oberlin College, an Ohio school that had pioneered coeducation in 1837 and experimented with student work programs. Fee and Rogers had been involved in such programs while attending Augusta and Oberlin. These labor programs had not been successful due to poor management and the perception of students. However, Fairchild believed that labor programs could be successful if managed properly and required as a foundation of holistic education. Although the date that student labor programs were first initiated at Berea is not recorded, training began early on in unskilled jobs such as road building. Within 20 years, jobs had progressed to skilled and technical endeavors. As early as 1904, students were operating printing presses, building permanent structures, manufacturing textiles in home industries, operating woodworking shops and growing crops. As time went on, students began to operate bakeries, laundries and the local fire department. With the advent of electricity, they built dams and operated a hydroelectric power plant. An emphasis in nursing also began about this time.

Regardless of the jobs pursued, student labor always has been an integral part of the educational curriculum at Berea. Students receive instruction from lectures and demonstrations, then apply their knowledge to practical situations. Presently, all students must work a minimum of 10 hours per week and carry a full class load. Freshmen must work at an assigned job and receive \$1.30 per hour. Upperclassmen may select their own work assignment and are paid up to \$3.20 per hour. Students who work full time during the summer quarter earn minimum wage. The difference between earnings and minimum wage up to \$2,500 per year is credited toward the cost of the student's education.

Berea offers work in over 1,600 jobs from which students may choose. The vast majority of the jobs

involve work on campus and fall into six categories: (a) academic and related areas; (b) student personnel, offices and services; (c) auxiliary enterprises; (d) student projects and industry; and (e) community service. Academic and related areas include: audio-visual services, counseling, library, testing and tutorial services, preschool teaching, and Upward Bound. Jobs in student personnel areas focus on on-campus housing operations, publication of the student newspaper and yearbook, and campus activities associated with student life. Offices and services provide employment in areas that are integral to the operation of the College (e.g., accounting, public safety, post office, institutional research, health, dental, financial aid and campus ministry). In this category students also assist faculty, deans, and the president of the College. Students also work in auxiliary enterprises such as the Appalachian Museum, food service, and the electric and water utilities. Student projects and industry include working in the Boone Tavern Giftshop and Hotel, on the College farm, in the ceramics department, on the poultry farm, and at the Log House sales room. Community services are available in the child-care center, hospital, radio station, summer recreation programs, Save the Children Federation, Students for Appalachia, and the Mountain Maternal Health League. Carpentry and woodworking products are among Berea's most acclaimed work-programs.

Because of the work ethic at Berea, the College has enjoyed a positive relationship with the people and the leaders of the town except during the Civil War era. Between 1925 and 1950, Berea operated several Opportunity Schools for adult members of the town and surrounding area. Farmers, carpenters, housewives, lumberjacks, miners, and rural ministers and teachers took advantage of this program. To this day, the town and College collaborate in the operation of the fire department, water, sewer services, and the community hospital. The labor programs of the College contract with many local businesses and industries from the town for student employment.

Christian Belief

Berea always has been firmly rooted in the beliefs of Christianity, even though it has been operated as a nonsectarian institution. The name of the College, Berea, was a biblical town described in the book of Acts in the Testament. People of Berea were purported to be accepting of the word of Christ and spent hours each day in study of the scriptures. By choosing this name, the founders of the College indicated their commitment to the integration of Christianity and education.

Berea does not require participation in organized religious activities, but does expect students to respect and incorporate Christian values. This commitment is expressed in academic programs, extracurricular activities, and worship. Two campus ministers counsel students, teach, lead groups, and conduct conferences in addition to holding weekly worship services in both of the campus chapels. Students, guest pastors, religious leaders, and theologians preach at campus religious activities. Students participate in service organizations that focus on literacy, Bible study, recreation, religious dramas, and counseling. They visit nursing homes, hospitals, and correctional institutions. Courses in historical perspectives on religion and the Christian faith in the modern world are required of students in their sophomore and senior years. A major in philosophy and religion is included in the academic program for students seeking to become Christian ministers or missionaries.

The Christian ethic and nondenominational focus was institutionalized in the founding of Berea College. John Fee was an ordained Presbyterian minister removed from his pulpit for his views on abolition. When he affiliated with the American Missionary Association (A.M.A), he adopted their nonsectarian beliefs. Rogers was also a member of this organization and brought with him the missionary spirit.

Throughout Berea's history, events have occurred that exemplify the commitment to the Christian ethic. The first building constructed by students through the Student Labor Program was a chapel, built in 1902 after fire had destroyed the existing chapel. The first graduate of Berea to obtain a B.A. degree was a black sergeant from the Union Army who went on to become a missionary in the Appalachian region.

Endowments and gifts from religious societies and individuals such as Julia Ward Howe and Woodrow Wilson have contributed to the financial stability of the College.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of the Christian philosophy that undergirds Berea lies in its recruitment and fundraising procedures. Initially students were recruited from Northern states to receive a free education at Berea if they would teach and recruit students from the Appalachian mountains. After these students graduated from Berea, it was expected that they too would teach and recruit students. In addition, it was hoped that students who had received their education at Berea would contribute financially to Berea for the support of Christian education of future students. Although these expectations are informal and assumed, these principles are understood by all graduates and reflected in the missionary-like zeal of their recruiters and fundraisers.

Absence of Discrimination

Berea was founded by Fee, Rogers and Hanson with a commitment to nondiscrimination and the principles of abolitionism. After the Civil War, Berea's first president, Henry Fairchild tackled the work of race relations and community involvement. Through his efforts hundreds of black students were welcomed into the white society and hundreds of white students from the Appalachian area were educated about the problems of blacks. To further this effort, one black man and one black woman were hired to teach Latin, mathematics and instrumental music.

Berea's racial problems were managed until 1904 when the Kentucky legislature passed the Day Law introduced by Democratic representative Carl Day. This law prohibited associations, corporations, Colleges, institutions, and schools from educating whites and black students together. On behalf of Berea, President Frost contested the constitutionality of this law in the Commonwealth's Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court on the basis of the 14th Amendment. Neither court supported Berea's appeal, and to remain open, Berea barred black students from seeking an education at the College.

Despite the law, Berea continued to support a policy of non-discrimination among races in the only ways open to it. Mrs. Rogers taught black children in her home and students of College age were sent, free of charge, to black institutions throughout the South. In 1949, when the University of Kentucky was ordered to admit black students into their graduate programs, the Day Law was amended and Berea, under the presidency of Francis S. Hutchins, began to admit blacks once again. Because all colleges in the Commonwealth now admitted blacks and because the black population around Berea was limited, the College never has regained its previous percentage of black students.

Today, under the leadership of President John B. Stephenson, Berea holds fast to its founding principles of student equality. Forty-four percent of the student body are males and 56 percent are females. Currently 86 percent of the students are white, 9 percent are black, and 5 percent are foreign nationals.

Quality Education

When Berea opened as a one-room school in 1855, Rogers and his wife taught geography, astronomy, chemistry, physics, music, and drama to 50 students from the Berea area. In the second year, Hanson was added as a teacher and taught subjects related to carpentry, gardening, and mathematics. At the onset of the Civil War, threats to the teachers and fear for their lives caused closure of the school until 1866. When it reopened in that year with 188 students, teacher education and agriculture were added to the curriculum.

The number of students attending Berea grew steadily. By 1892, 354 students were studying the arts and sciences. By 1913, 1,423 students were enrolled and a cap on enrollment was established for 1,500 students. Although some minor modifications in enrollment were made during the depression, World War I,

and World War II, today 1,500 full-time and 50 part-time students attend Berea. These students major in 25 programs that offer the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science Degree. Fifteen percent of the students major in business and management; 10 percent in education; 8 percent in social sciences; 7 percent in trade and industry; and 7 percent in life sciences. The remainder major in the other disciplines.

In 1893, under the leadership of president William G. Frost, Berea began to realize the necessity of tailoring education to the needs of students from the Appalachian region. By 1915, the Board of Trustees had amended the Berea Constitution to deny enrollment to students from outside the mountain region except in special circumstances. Since that time a quota system has been adopted for students outside the region and has varied between 10 and 25 percent with 20 percent being the norm. Today, students attend Berea not only from the mountainous areas of Kentucky and Tennessee, but also throughout the United States and some 22 other foreign countries.

When Berea reopened its doors to students after the Civil War, no admission requirements were imposed. Neither grades in school nor financial considerations were specified. In 1892, the Trustees decided that student tuition was to be free. As the College grew and more students applied for entrance than could be accommodated, standards were imposed. In keeping with the original intent of the founders to educate bright students from economically deprived areas, Berea decided to bar all students from upper and middle income families. In a bold departure Berea turned to endowments and gifts for support. When entrance tests became available this College initiated scholastic requirements. Today, tuition is still free; parental income must fall below \$27,000 for a family of three; and scores in the upper 60th percentile on the ACT or SAT are preferred.

A major reason for Berea's success in providing a quality education for its students lies in its commitment to fiscal solvency. Berea's annual income currently is derived in the following manner: 70 percent endowments, 20 percent donations, 7.5 percent rentals and student industries, and 2.5 percent laboratory and student fees. It began with a real estate donation from Clay for a schoolhouse and a cash donation of \$50 from a New York philanthropist. After the Civil War Berea received support from the Freedmen's Bureau as well as wealthy individuals. After World War II, presidents Francis S. Hutchins and Willis D. Weatherford and the current president, John B. Stephenson have accepted funds from government agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Science Foundation, and the U.S. Office of Education. Funds also have been obtained from associations such as the National Association of Rural Schools, Conference of Southern Mountain Workers, the Red Cross, and private foundations such as Danforth, Ford, and Carnegie. Support from these organizations and alumni have ensured the College a stable financial base for the future. In 1988, U.S. News & World Report ranked Berea's resources as number one in the nation among small comprehensive colleges.

The faculty and administrative staff of Berea College historically have supported the principles on which it was founded. Since its founding, Berea has had only seven presidents. Many faculty members have devoted their careers to Berea. Although some faculty and staff have left temporarily for assignments in state and federal services, most have eventually returned. According to Shannon Wilson, College Archivist (personal interview, April 24, 1991) the 57 percent of the current faculty who have returned to Berea appreciate the education they received there and want to offer these benefits to other students. They also realize that, as a College graduate, their earnings are too high to allow their children to attend.

Currently Berea has 117 full-time faculty. This translates into a 13:1 student faculty ratio. Seventy-six percent of the faculty hold doctorate degrees from universities throughout the United States and 70 percent have received tenure at the Associate or full Professor rank after a 5 year probationary period. (Gail Wolford, Assistant to the President, personal interview, April 3, 1991) Students vote with faculty on College committees and participate fully in policy decisions. Berea is accredited by the Southern Association of Schools, N.C.A.T.E., and the National League for Nursing.

Conclusion

In 1982, Elizabeth S. Peck published a record of the first 125 year history of Berea College. Her assessment of the status of Berea at that time was:

Berea College works in a large perimeter. In its 125th year, it is not the same island institution that it was in its older decades when it welcomed the majority of its students from a culture that was generally not in the American mainstream itself, an Appalachian culture, often familial, parental in authority, and frequently religious in emphasis. The purposes of the College today, the basic philosophy [sic] are the same, but the times and the tempo of American living are different. Many students from Appalachia come now to Berea with ideas and attitudes shaped considerably by changes. . . Today, one of the major functions of Berea College is to help its students sort out conflicting values and personal choices. (p. 236)

Chapter 5

Reed: A Middle Course

Ryo Takahashi ⁴

The idea of Reed College was conceived October 17, 1887, when Thomas Lamb Eliot wrote to Simeon Gannett Reed and his wife Amanda:

There is always something to busy to us, always something to develop. I want you to celebrate some of these birthdays by founding a Reed Institute of lectures and art and music and museum. It will need a mind to run it. (Ritz, 1990:7)

After a few months, Eliot wrote another letter to the Reeds suggesting they provide for, “Some noble and wise philanthropies or services for your time and country, especially for the city and people among whom you live” (Ritz, 1990:7).

Thomas Lamb Eliot, pastor of the Portland, OR, First Unitarian Church, had moved West in 1867 from St. Louis, MO. His father had founded Washington University in St. Louis, where Thomas Lamb was a member of the first graduating class. He then attended Harvard, where he earned a graduate degree from the Divinity School in 1865. After arriving in Oregon, Eliot’s interest soon turned to the cultural and educational needs of fledgling Portland, and he determined that a fine college with stable financial backing would best support those needs.

Simeon Gannett Reed, originally from Abington, MA, amassed a fortune by moving up from proprietorship of a small merchandise store to investments in mining, farmlands and steel concerns throughout the West. On his death, he bequeathed almost all his property to his wife, Amanda. His will, taking advice from Eliot, stated:

Feeling as I do a deep interest in the future welfare and prosperity of the city of Portland, Oregon, where I have spent my business life and accumulated the property I possess, I would suggest to my wife that she devote some portion of my estate to benevolent objects, or to cultivation, illustration or development of the fine arts of said City of Portland, or to some other suitable purpose, which shall be of permanent value and contribute to the beauty of the city and to the intelligence, prosperity and happiness of its inhabitants. (Ritz, 1990:8)

Amanda Reed decided an institution of learning would benefit Portland and donated \$1,821,560 (current value, approximately \$50 million) for the establishment of Reed Institute in 1895.

⁴Ryo Takahashi, Educational Leader, Republic of Korea.

A Preference for Teaching

As an experimental college Reed is first and foremost a teaching institution. A strong commitment to excellence in teaching and a traditional liberal arts curriculum have supported Reed's consistent rankings among the very top colleges in the United States. The first college catalog in 1911 established the philosophy as follows: "Only those who want to work, and to work hard, and to gain the greatest possible benefit from their studies are welcomed" (Reed Catalog, 1911).

The 1990-91 Reed College catalog states that all faculty are expected to commit themselves primarily to teaching, with scholarly and scientific research aimed at furthering this primary goal.

Reed's instructional format is built on small and interactive classes, the cornerstone of its liberal arts program. Learning how to think, not what to think is fundamental to all classes. Students are not routinely given their grades, although they can see them on request, but are encouraged to work toward personal intellectual growth rather than letter ratings.

Demographic Profile

Reed's total enrollment just over 1,200 with a faculty of approximately 120 (about 70 percent full-time). Eighty percent of the full-time faculty have doctoral degrees. About 52 percent of all applicants are accepted, and a typical Reed freshman class is largely (83 percent) students from the top fifth of their high school graduating class. About 24 percent of these students come from private schools; 9 percent from parochial schools.

The 100-acre Reed campus is located in a residential area of Portland, five miles from the center of the city.

Reed has gained a particularly favorable reputation for assuring broad access to computer facilities for all members of the Reed community. An accreditation committee which visited Reed noted that campus computerization and access to computer use for students and faculty achieved a level rare in American higher education technology—networked and available to students 24-hours-a-day. (Osgood, 1985)

Financial Base

Tuition at Reed is high—approximately \$15,000 annually at this writing. Room and board add nearly another \$5,000. Reed's own funds are the primary source of student assistance, with individual student awards ranging from \$4,500 to \$14,000. About 45 percent of the students receive financial aid from the College, the average grant totalling more than \$6,000. Reed maintains its determination to extend its educational opportunities to all qualified students, regardless of family financial circumstances.

The board of trustees has a fundamental responsibility for the financial health and the ongoing success of the institution. A small group, including the College president, make major financial and planning decisions. In practice, many decisions are influenced by the students. This occurs through consultation with faculty and governmental bodies as well as with individual members of the community.

Student Involvement

The centerpiece of teaching is the seminar of 10 to 20 students, with an emphasis on personal initiative. Lauro Martines wrote about his teaching experience at Reed from 1958 to 1962:

In those years the College had about seven hundred students and a faculty of seventy. Class sizes ranged, in my experience, from six to fifteen students. My job was to teach first-year humanities, a team endeavor, which turned out to be, I now realize upon looking back, the most exciting course I have ever taught. . . It took half of their weekly class time: three hours of lectures and four more in conference. The lectures were given by twelve instructors from a variety of disciplines: literature, classics, philosophy, anthropology, history, and art history. All of instructors were expected to attend each other's lectures, and in term time, on any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday morning, we all, save for that day's lecture, could be found sitting at the back of the College chapel, the entire freshman class stretched out before us, all the way up to the front row of seats just under the podium. (Martines, 1985:194-95)

Reed students are assisted in finding summer jobs related to their academic focus through the Office of Career Advising and Job Placement. Most students also participate in a "community service project." These projects connect students with local volunteer projects such as the Student Mentoring Program (matching a college student with an eight-grade student who is at risk of dropping out of school), the Community Energy Project (students winterizing homes for low-income citizens), the Oregon Food Bank, and local high school tutoring in math, science, and English. Every community program is on a volunteer basis.

There are relatively few rules at Reed. The belief of this college is that an "Honor Principle" will invigorate and inspire academic and social life. The preamble of the Reed Community Constitution, framed in 1988-90, emphasizes a commitment to mutual respect and support:

We declare our commitment to responsible and honorable conduct in academic and community affairs, and we reaffirm one another's rights to freedom in inquiry and expression in coursework, scholarship, and day-to-day life of the Reed Community. Since such freedom requires an atmosphere of trust and mutual confidence, we further declare that dishonesty, intimidation, harassment, exploitation, and the use or threat or force are incompatible with the preservation of this freedom.

The Honor Principle rests basically on individual judgement and conscience, with minimal formal enforcement.

Reed students also have many opportunities to work closely with faculty members. Christopher Fast explained his student experience at Reed as follows:

Since my sophomore year I have had the opportunity to work together with a Reed professor, a well-known South Asia scholar, who edits an oriental studies journal. It has given me the opportunity to build a relationship with a professor based not only on academics but also on friendship too. (To Choose Reed, p. 8)

Reed requires a senior thesis for graduation, with thesis work stemming from the student's research experience in the major field and developed in consultation with faculty advisers.

Curriculum

Even though the curriculum has evolved for years, Reed has never compromised its central educational philosophy. All students must master a core of studies to ensure the growth of intellectual skills and to lay a cultural foundation for a broad education, including: a humanities program, devoted to a systematic interdisciplinary study of the basic texts of the Western intellectual tradition; an interdisciplinary survey to ensure breadth and integration of education; and a substantial project to synthesize the knowledge and skills learned in the major field.

One of the fundamental goals of Reed's program is that all students master certain intellectual skills which underpin a liberal education. Therefore, Reed requires that all freshmen enroll in a year-long interdisciplinary course on the classical and Judeo-Christian foundations of Western civilization. Some of the specific topics include specific social, religious and philosophical systems. Subsequently, the students begin to narrow to their major areas of study.

With the vision of pioneers, Simeon and Amanda Reed felt that the classic liberal curriculum spoke to the core of human knowledge and understanding. Therefore, the curriculum is designed as an honors program.

Teaching/Learning Approaches

Reed tries to have as many small classes, taught by Socratic methods, as possible. In fact, 90 percent of the classes have fewer than 25 students and one-third have fewer than ten. Students and professors have an opportunity to know each other as colleagues. The college believes that academic life takes precedence over social life. Prospective applicants are cautioned in by the College prospectus to anticipate limited extracurricular socializing and free time. Only on occasion do students go to Seattle or San Francisco for a well-deserved weekend break.

The College believes that students and professors are partners. They interact with one another through classes, labs, individual conferences and informal meetings. Students work hard for their own reasons, not to "come out ahead of" their classmates. Therefore, every activity focuses on learning outcomes. Many students find their greatest learning through their work in their major fields. Students are often invited to participate in faculty research.

Reed students have designed their majors in a wide variety of fields in traditional departments or in interdisciplinary combinations. The senior year at Reed typically provides the most meaningful learning experience. Each senior is encouraged to explore in depth a specific topic. To assist each student an individual work station in the library, laboratory or studio is provided during the thesis project.

Reed is noted for having committed instructors who bring their research into the classroom setting. The college mission suggests that a good education is the basis for a lifetime of learning and achievement. The Reed College Catalog (1990) states that faculty members possess not only fine minds and scholarly expertise but also strong commitments to teaching.

Chapter 6

Deep Springs: Loyalty to a Fault? ⁵

L. Jackson Newell ⁶

The desert has a deep personality; it has a voice; and God speaks through its personality and voice. Great leaders in all ages... have sought the desert and heard its voice. You can hear it if you listen, but you cannot hear it while in the midst of uproar and strife for material things. Gentlemen, "For what came ye into the wilderness?" Not for conventional scholastic training; not for ranch life; not to become proficient in commercial or professional pursuits for personal gain. You came to prepare for a life of service, with the understanding that superior ability and generous purpose would be expected of you. . .

—Letter from L. L. Nunn to the student body, February 17, 1923

Deep Springs College in remote Inyo County in eastern California is nearly 80 years old. It has six faculty members, 24 students, 350 cows, and ranks second among the nation's institutions of higher learning with respect to the aptitude of the students it admits.

The Utopian dream and final effort of a highly successful 19th century inventor and developer, Deep Springs numbers among its alumni U.S. ambassadors, heads of corporations, presidents of universities, members of Congress, distinguished scholars, and prominent news analysts. More than half its students have gone on to acquire doctoral degrees, most of them in academic disciplines. Yet Deep Springs is only a 2-year college—one that requires its students to invest 20 hours a week in labor to sustain the community, and operate the 32,000-acre ranch on which the institution is situated. Why did such a unique college come into being, and what has sustained its unusual program through more than seven turbulent decades?

Lucien L. Nunn, born in Medina, Ohio, in 1853, was an attorney, industrialist and romantic. Diminutive in stature, moralistic in temperament and a bachelor by choice, Nunn's insatiable curiosity and tireless quest for achievement drove him to professional and personal success. His years as a mine owner and hydroelectric power developer in the Rocky Mountains led to the construction of the Ontario Power Works, which still generates electricity at Niagara Falls. After the turn of the century, however, Nunn became increasingly interested in education and pursued a new dream with the same energy that had characterized his business endeavors.

A self-made man, but one who had benefited from excellent teachers, Nunn was inspired by the notion of meritocracy. He was also an elitist who believed that society would be led and improved by "the few." But the few should arise not on the basis of privilege; they should emerge through talent, and they should be guided by the ideal of service to humanity.

⁵This chapter is adapted from an article by the author published in the Journal of General Education, Vol. 34 (Summer, 1982) 120-134.

⁶L. Jackson Newell, President, Deep Springs College, Professor of Higher Education, University of Utah.

Nunn's educational ideas evolved over a period of three decades. He began by pioneering on-site industrial education at his power plants in Utah, Idaho and Montana in the 1890s. He hired youthful workers of unusual promise and provided them with instruction in technical subjects related to electric-power generation and transmission. In 1904 he built a library and classroom building as part of the facilities at his Olmsted plant near Provo, Utah. Gradually he shifted his focus from training to education and in 1911 formed the Telluride Institute to recognize formally the educational dimension of his company. But this novel approach soon proved inadequate for his growing educational interests, particularly when his business partners objected to the resources devoted to his educational diversions. Nunn forfeited his interest in Olmsted and, in 1916, bought a farm near Claremont, Virginia, where he invited about a dozen able young men to pursue classical studies in a pastoral setting. The fledgling school fell stillborn, however, when an enterprising army recruiter enlisted the students en masse for the war in Europe.

Undeterred, Nunn bought a cattle ranch in Deep Springs Valley, which lay east of the Sierra Nevada, 28 miles from Big Pine, California. With the assistance of the engineer and masons who had constructed the Ontario power plant, he built a cluster of sturdy academic buildings. He acquired a respectable library of classic works, hired several professors to join his experiment, and invited about 20 students to come to Deep Springs. The students were expected to run the extensive cattle operation and to "taste the fatigue of hard labor and so earn the rest for mental pursuits" (Bailey, 1933:26). Faculty members were expected to offer traditional instruction in the liberal arts based especially on the biographies of great leaders.

Off to a stormy beginning in the autumn of 1917, Deep Springs is virtually unchanged eight decades later. Although its founder died of tuberculosis in 1925, just one day after California statute legally safeguarded the trust fund he had established to sustain the institution, his dreams have lived on.

In his later years, when he was creating Deep Springs, Nunn's overriding concern was with the development of courageous leadership in American society. He saw in the traditional American colleges and universities deplorable academic standards, lopsided curricula and frivolous activities. Why, Nunn asked, should colleges concentrate almost exclusively on intellectual development? What about character? Responsibility? Physical and spiritual growth? The education of the "whole man" was not to be left to chance; it required a total environment. Character would be strengthened not only by reading great literature, but also by real struggles with ethical issues and economic necessities. Students would acquire a sense of duty only if they were granted responsibility. Intellectual toughness might be nurtured by severe physical challenge. And the "inner man," the spirit, might grow where solitude can foster introspection.

What did Nunn expect of the students (all male) who would receive such an education? He expected commitment not only to a strenuous life, but also to an idea. While providing unusual opportunity, he also demanded unusual sacrifice. The physical location of Deep Springs provided natural insulation from the clamor of the world, but it did not assure freedom from what he considered to be personal distractions. A spartan code of ethics, known informally as the "isolation policy," required students to eschew alcohol and tobacco and visits to the nearby towns. There were to be no social connections with local girls. But Nunn did not intend to enforce such rules himself—a condition which would have run counter to developing self control. These simple but significant, prohibitions, written into the Deed of Trust, were assigned to the student government for enforcement.

To give his young charges further responsibility, Nunn provided for three major student offices: (1) a student trustee with full voting rights of the Board; (2) a labor commissioner with responsibility for assigning and directing the labor of students in the work program; and (3) a student president with duties as student-body administrator and official liaison with the dean or college president. The office of student president was traditional, but the other two offices were revolutionary concepts in 1917.

For several years, Nunn lived at Deep Springs and considered himself a member of the student body. He entrusted the administration of the school to a long-time friend and educator, Dean E. A. Thornhill. In 1920, nearing 70 and in failing health, Nunn withdrew to his home in Los Angeles. He rarely visited the school thereafter, but stayed in close touch with Dean Thornhill and the students by correspondence,

leaving a rich record of his expectations and ideals. Before his death in 1925, he turned Deep Springs over to a Board of Trustees composed primarily of his business partners and associates. Many of them, including the chairman, continued to serve on the board into the early 1970s.

The Deep Springs community now numbers about 24 students, 6 or 7 full-time faculty members and a small staff that includes a professional ranch manager, a farmer and a cook. Students come from all parts of the United States and occasionally from abroad. They span a wide socioeconomic range. Frequently, visiting faculty members come for the summer or for short periods during the regular academic year. To a surprising extent, Deep Springs is a self-sustaining economic community. In addition to providing all the labor, some of it skilled, for the ranch operation, students run a small dairy operation (where they milk the cows by hand and churn the butter), operate a slaughterhouse, feed the chickens, cultivate a generous vegetable garden and keep the machinery, vehicles and physical plant in good repair. The labor commissioner manages the work operation, which includes doing much of the office work for the college; students aid in the bookkeeping and operate the bookstore, post office and library. The labor commissioner rotates students from one job to another three or four times a year.

The curriculum is devoted entirely to the liberal arts. It has no relationship to agriculture or business, although courses in economics, psychology, political science and ethics, for example, do use the community as a natural laboratory for observation, experimentation and analysis. Cooperative arrangements with major libraries in California put the printed resources of those institutions at the disposal of Deep Springs, supplementing the school's own 30,000-volume library.

The Socratic method of teaching is common, although the founder's dream of liberating the academic program from the usual concern with credit hours has not been fully achieved. The necessity of transferring credits from Deep Springs to other institutions has acted as a constraint in this regard, although students typically transfer to those few major universities with whom close cooperative relationships exist. Many students transfer to Cornell University (where the Telluride Association operates a house that is, for many students, a second step in Nunnian education), to Ivy League schools and to the University of California, Berkeley.

Nunn hoped to foster articulate leadership; if students were to make use of the unusual education he afforded them, he believed they must be able speakers and writers. Even today every student is required to take public speaking each term he is in residence. The requirement benefits the college in ways that Nunn may not have anticipated. Monday evenings have become major events in the community as faculty, staff and their families gather to hear students speak on topics ranging from international affairs to institutional concerns. Always lively, these sessions provide a natural setting for the exchange of ideas and the unification of the community.

Avoiding intellectual inbreeding has always been of concern to Deep Springs. Partly because of this concern, the danger has generally been kept at bay. Faculty members are expected not only to teach, but also to nurture their contacts with colleagues across the country and around the world and to host distinguished guest lecturers to enliven the environment. Visiting lecturers and notable figures from a variety of fields usually give a formal lecture to the entire community, followed by several days of informal discussion at the boardinghouse or in the classroom. Some guests also try their hands at milking or other work in the labor program, or join the perpetual after-lunch volleyball or soccer game. The academic calendar offers a respite from isolation, too. Occasional field trips throughout the Great Basin give geographical perspective, while month-long holidays at Christmas and between terms provide students an opportunity to get away.

Consistent with the founder's intent to nurture talent irrespective of family wealth or position, the students who are invited to attend Deep Springs receive complete scholarships. There are no fees or tuition, nor is there any charge for board and room. This policy may not seem significant since students invest a great deal of effort in the work program, but the ranch exists in an agricultural region noted for its attractiveness to wealthy landowners in need of tax shelters. In a typical year, the ranch operation turns

only a small profit, but it is a deadly serious business because mistakes in management, or lethargy on the part of students, can mean a disastrous loss. A small endowment helps keep the institution afloat, together with contributions from alumni and friends. Because of the small number of students who have benefited from Deep Springs, the college has had difficulty attracting external support. Aside from government-surplus equipment and a few small grants from foundations, Deep Springs has always operated almost entirely on its own resources.

Any educational institution founded on a set of ideas as distinctive as those of L. L. Nunn would be a topic for study. Certainly Deep Springs' geographical isolation and diminutive scale arouse the curiosity of those who learn of the College. Authorities on the history and nature of higher education both here and abroad are showing increased interest in Nunn's educational experiment on the high desert of eastern California. Its alumni, faculty, and students also have an unusual curiosity about Deep Springs—curiosity about the influence the school has had on them and about the differences it has made in the lives of others who have been educated there. Are the alumni in fact more involved in work of benefit to mankind than they otherwise would have been? Do they indeed possess leadership qualities and exercise them in greater measure than others of similar ability and education?

As a Deep Springs student (1956-59) and faculty member (1965-67), trustee (1987-94), and currently as president (1995-present), I have pondered these questions; and as a professor concerned with the history of colleges and universities, I have long wished to pursue them. Fortunately, my interests converged with those of Edwin Cronk, then dean and director of Deep Springs, and Frederic Laise, a trustee and chairman of the institution's fund-raising effort. With the support of both men, the Board authorized me to study the College; and one of its members offered to bear the direct costs. I proceeded with the effort. Three hundred and thirty-four (slightly over two-thirds) of the known alumni responded to a survey I distributed in the winter of 1980. I sought information concerning their experiences at Deep Springs, their subsequent personal and career development and their assessment of the influence of L. L. Nunn's educational legacy. I have used their replies, along with other sources, in the evaluation that follows.

Many other colleges combine work and study. Other institutions, too, have tried to reduce the scale of the learning environment to a small group of committed students. And many schools are highly selective on the basis of aptitude, offer rigorous instruction, maintain high standards and grant full scholarships. Deep Springs is unique only because it combines all these elements. In my analysis, the results are distinctive in several respects.

Deep Springs shares with other educational institutions, such as Prescott College (AZ) and Warren Wilson College (NC), a belief that manual labor and physical challenge can serve as effective catalysts for developing teamwork, self-confidence and leadership. But it differs from them in the authenticity of the environment. The ranch is there to be operated as a genuine business. A lapse in judgment can provoke a crisis for the institution. A failure of the students to respond, individually or collectively, to the demands of the work program would jeopardize the College's tenuous financial base. The tangible nature of the responsibility given to the students removes any hint that the work is contrived, and lends the Deep Springs experience an unmistakable gravity and reality.

A second mark that characterizes education at Deep Springs is the intensity of interpersonal relations. College-going students, like other human beings, tend to choose as companions those people who have values and backgrounds similar to their own. As a result, they often fail to come to grips with the ideas and values of those who are different from themselves. Because Deep Springs seeks a heterogeneous student body, and because the pool of possible friends or associates available to a student is so limited, friendships and working relationships with people quite different from oneself are the rule. All Deep Springs students labor, study, eat and live in close proximity to one other. Of necessity, they become close associates, if not close friends. The inability to avoid people or issues has far-ranging consequences: when conflicts cannot be escaped, they must be confronted. When new students gather each year, ferocious verbal exchanges are not uncommon, and sometimes exchanges are physical. The kind of friendships that emerge from

the process, however, often last a lifetime. The ability to deal with and respect people of contrasting persuasions is a notable characteristic of alumni. Deep Springs is a community often in the best sense of the word, sometimes in the worst.

In a highly industrialized society, it is common for us to be removed from the natural sources of things. Work is specialized, too, and we may little appreciate the contributions and skills of others. This problem of distance or isolation may be most acute among the best educated. The direct experience with many kinds of skilled and unskilled work at Deep Springs provides an important understanding of natural phenomena and a sense of connection with the processes that underpin our technology-rich way of life. A breakfast table looks different to someone who has milked cows, churned butter, slaughtered hogs, candled eggs and dug potatoes. Shoeing horses, manning a weather station, rebuilding an engine or repairing a water main illuminate processes normally hidden from students in this generation. Not only do the nature and origins of objects that surround us become clear, but one is inspired with a healthy respect for the skills of the artisan—the cowboy, the mechanic, the welder, the accountant.

Students at Deep Springs come to assume they can make a difference. The flexibility and small scale of the school mean that any reasonable idea will get a decent hearing and that any good idea is likely to be given a trial. Decades of observing and exchanging ideas with alumni suggest to me that Deep Springs graduates are likely to believe that they can change and improve their environment.

It is my thesis that the personal qualities and characteristics nurtured in the Deep Springs environment are central to some of the important purposes of liberal education: a preparation for humane leadership, a liberation from cultural biases, a willingness to confront new ideas, a motivation to learn from others, and a sensitivity to our human and natural environment. These qualities are reinforced by a rare congruence of means and ends. Unlike a large university, where several hundred students may sit in auditorium seats to hear a tightly organized lecture on Socrates' approach to teaching, Deep Springs is in the enviable position of enabling students to experience what they learn. A classic philosophical work and a morning's manual labor may join in the student's mind toward a single understanding. If Arthur Chickering and other authorities on college-student psychology are correct in concluding that learning increases as the link between theory and experience becomes closer, then Deep Springs is an important experiment and model.

The alumni survey I undertook was designed to determine whether Deep Springs College made a significant difference in the lives of its students. It also seemed important to identify institutional trends that might have manifested themselves over the seven decades of Deep Springs' history. With data in hand from alumni who span the first six or seven decades of Deep Springs' existence, it is easier to respond to the second concern than the first. It is clear, for instance, that Deep Springs has been reasonably true to Nunn's ideal of an "open elite." While the students may not have been uniformly able in every era, they have always been a particularly gifted and independent breed. They have come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds (about 15 percent from blue collar families) and geographical origins (28 percent from the eastern states, 35 percent from the Midwest, and 27 percent from the West). Only rarely, however, have they come from the American minority groups or from foreign countries.

Although Deep Springs graduates generally remember experiences that contributed to their personal growth (community projects, for example, and the work program) with more favor and more prominence than they remember their academic work, nearly two-thirds of them went on to complete their undergraduate degrees either at Ivy League schools or at schools ranked by Astin and Solmon (1979) as the 32 most selective in the nation. Further, more than half the alumni have earned doctoral degrees, and many others hold advanced degrees of other types. Among the alumni who are at a career stage where it is likely that they have completed their formal education, 57 percent hold doctorates. (Only 6 percent of alumni have not completed a bachelor's degree.) Only one Deep Springs student in ten was not able to transfer to the college or university of his choice, and full credit for the academic work taken at Deep Springs was almost always granted. Deep Springs students have most frequently pursued their terminal degrees and careers in the sciences (38 percent) and the humanities (36 percent), with the social sciences (16 percent) and the

fine arts (7 percent) running far behind.

While some alumni have rendered a great deal of unremunerated public service (27 percent of them being engaged in four or more public service projects at the time of the survey), nearly a third of the alumni reported little or no philanthropic activity. Nunn's ideal that Deep Springs graduates should dispatch their debt to him by "lives of service" seems to have expressed itself more in the selection of a career and in dedication to professional excellence than in voluntary humanitarian causes. Ten percent are in public service (many of them in the foreign service), 18 percent are in law or medicine, and 28 percent are educators (nearly all as professors).

We now move to another kind of data, based on personal impressions, memory, and individual judgment. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of alumni believe that the influence of Deep Springs on their lives was "very significant," while only 1 student in 50 regards Deep Springs as having been of little or no importance to his present beliefs, attitudes and situations. While Deep Springs attracts very able students, and they often continue with distinguished academic achievements, the vast majority of alumni consider the major benefit of the Deep Springs experience to have been personal rather than academic.

Alumni also were asked to assess how lasting or permanent Deep Springs' influence was on them. An especially high proportion of students from the early years and from the 1950s perceived Deep Springs to have had a permanent, positive effect on their lives. In the early years the founder's presence was undoubtedly felt by the students. In the 1950s major internal threats to the school's character seem to have had a strangely positive effect. A McCarthyite president precipitated a united effort by students to preserve the school's historic respect for intellectual freedom. In the process, the students' sense of ownership of and loyalty to the institution may have exceeded Nunn's fondest hope.

It is common for people to look back upon the first few years away from home as exciting, seminal and creative, and for many young people this experience coincides with going to college. Certainly the dramatic geographical location of Deep Springs, the small and intense nature of its community and the physical isolation would heighten this typical response. Therefore, we must look for the reasons why alumni have found Deep Springs to be so significant in their lives to understand the meaning of these findings. Deep Springs is many things to many people; it varies substantially from year to year, owing to the small size of the community and the short tenure of students and many faculty members. Reflecting these conditions, and the fact that we all bring a distinctive set of assumptions and experiences to each new opportunity, the alumni perceive Deep Springs variously as (1) a profoundly intellectual experience, (2) a cultural awakening, (3) a laboratory for community life and (4) an experiment in human understanding. The peacefulness of the desert is the primary catalyst for some, while others are stimulated by the rigors of the academic program or the demands of hard physical labor.

Regardless of what the Deep Springs reality was for them, former students are profoundly concerned about the school's future and grateful for its contributions to their lives. Alumni are generous in offering their time, talents and resources to help strengthen the program and assure Deep Springs' continuation. It is worth noting, however, that the high proportion of alumni who have chosen academic careers, especially since the 1940s, also have a limited ability to make large financial contributions, though many contribute "in kind" both intellectually and materially.

Useful as the data are that illuminate the past accomplishments and present activities of Deep Springs alumni, one of the most crucial questions goes largely unanswered: How do the values and accomplishments of these men compare with what they might have been without a Deep Springs education? Since no control group is available, and no comparable studies have been done at other institutions, the answer is not clear. On the basis of this study, however, we conclude that as a group Deep Springs alumni have (1) an awareness of the importance and dignity of physical labor, (2) an appreciation for wilderness and the solitude it affords, (3) a sense of the duty to invest their talents toward humane or public ends, (4) an awareness of society as a social organism dependent on the quality and good will of individuals and (5) a lively cultural and intellectual life. It is probably safe to say that the development of these characteristics

is more likely to happen at Deep Springs, and to happen with more intensity, than is generally the case at other colleges or universities. Character development, though impossible to measure, does seem to occur at a faster-than-normal pace.

Beyond the information that illuminated alumni careers and values, the study revealed several paradoxes that are inherent in Deep Springs as an institution.

1. **Continuity vs. Discontinuity.** There is great continuity at Deep Springs, and there is also great discontinuity. There is a continuity of things—the dinner bell, the farm machinery and the timeless desert on which Deep Springs rests. There is also a continuity of ferment, of energy and of intensity. Yet in terms of people, and even programs, Deep Springs changes very rapidly. It is not uncommon for a student to return for a visit after being away just 2 or 3 years and find himself a complete stranger to nearly everyone in the community. Given this rate of turnover, the survival of customs, traditions and values is most remarkable.

The continuities and discontinuities at Deep Springs are each, in themselves, assets and liabilities. The continuities of tradition and custom sometimes stifle creativity and limit experimentation. Discontinuities in the student body and staff, and in academic programs sometimes cause a disjointed experience for students and a loss of momentum and efficiency of operation for the institution. Deep Springs might benefit from more year-to-year planning, while lightening the overburden of some traditions that are only peripheral to its central purposes.

2. **Individualism vs. Community.** Deep Springs enjoys success in developing self-reliant students, yet the College is based on the idea of community and the ideal of service to others. Leadership is enhanced by thoughtful self-awareness and a good measure of intellectual independence, but it also requires an inspired vision of the common welfare—and a cooperative instinct. Because of its program and physical isolation, Deep Springs attracts individualists, almost by definition. Top students who are willing to risk their education and future with an institution remote and distinctive as Deep Springs are unusual. Thus, we have the inescapable dilemma of an educational institution dedicated to building community life and developing humanitarian values, yet attracting students and faculty who are largely self-selected on the basis of sturdy individualism. This fact injects into the community both vitality and strife, and, judging by the survey, produces qualified results.
3. **Intellectual Freedom vs. Social Conformity.** Deep Springs offers opportunity for virtually unfettered inquiry, given the high quality of the students and faculty and the high degree of freedom afforded by the modest need for structure and the low faculty-to-student ratio. On the other hand, the small size and closed nature of the community leave it vulnerable to intellectual fads among students and ideological preoccupations among the staff. Deep Springs can swing to one or the other pole of this dichotomy very rapidly because the community, and even the student body itself, is largely self-perpetuating. Deep Springs flirted almost mortally with ideological rigidity during the 1950s, and has not been free of such dangers at other times.
4. **The Two Horns of Isolation.** The geographical isolation of the College can lend perspective to world events and to individual lives, but it can also nurture a myopic vision of the world and a preoccupation with the self. For some alumni, the years spent at Deep Springs provided time and space to take stock of one's self and to measure the pressing, immediate problems of society against the backdrop of history. For others, the mountains surrounding the valley seemed to close out the larger world and narrow their consciousness of, and sensitivity to, questions of social justice and human connectedness.

Does life on the desert provide time to think and develop one's unique thoughts and characteristics, or does the small size and isolation of the community produce an overwhelming "togetherness"? The

interdependence of each member of the community is one of the chief benefits of Deep Springs, yet a student must step beyond the fences that encircle the alfalfa fields if the introspection afforded by solitude is to yield its benefits. The desert speaks with a soft voice.

5. **Egalitarianism Among an Elite.** Deep Springs can make a man or break a man. Usually it makes him. For most students, coming to Deep Springs is something of a shock, not just because of the arid terrain but, more importantly, because of the jolt of moving from the top of one's class in high school to the midst of one's peers at Deep Springs. Many alumni remarked on the self-awareness "that came with suddenly being just one of the pack." For most, this healthy discovery of one's limits and one's relationship to others eventually produces a new self-confidence, which is reinforced by the diversity of personal rewards provided by Deep Springs' total environment. One recent alumnus remarked that after surviving a couple of years at Deep Springs slaughtering cattle in sub-zero weather, doing emergency repairs on broken water mains in predawn darkness and participating in spirited student body and trustee meetings, life is likely to produce few challenges that he'll be unwilling to tackle. But even as Deep Springs calls forth new self confidence and self discipline in most students, in others the competition, the independent work situations and the comparative lack of structure erodes these qualities. Everyone tastes failure at Deep Springs, which is one of its virtues, but some taste too much failure and lose confidence as a result.

Each of these five paradoxes seems to be indigenous to Deep Springs. The survey data provided by the alumni amply document their existence. If Deep Springs is "many things to people," it is usually along the lines of these five polarities that it is viewed differently. They create challenges, release energy and provide a rich context for student growth and a challenging environment for the faculty. But these paradoxes also harbor certain dangers, both to individuals and to the institution. Eliminating them, however, would dissipate the forces that give the institution its character.

Looking To The Future

What we know about alumni careers, and about alumni perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of Deep Springs during their time at the College, provides a backdrop for considering its future.

Fundamental issues arise from the fact that times change, but Deep Springs doesn't. At least not very much. Given the revolutionary societal and technological changes of the last 60 years, can a college so remote that it doesn't receive television signals or take a daily newspaper, and still has a hand crank toll-station telephone, adequately prepare students for living in the 21st century? Most alumni believe it can. In a society rendered passive by spectator sports, media hype and electronic games, students at Deep Springs discover and appreciate the rewards of deep contemplation and quiet introspection. Books and conversation are the chief stimuli of intellectual activity, and rigorous, purposeful physical labor obviates the need for Nautilus machines and commercially contrived recreation. Because of the depth and authenticity of the experience, Deep Springs is more salient than ever before. The professional careers and personal characteristics of its alumni lend credence to this view.

Many who are or have been associated with the college, however, believe that Deep Springs should consider changes that would prepare its students to deal more directly with social and technological issues that have emerged in the larger society. For instance, while the benefits of geographic isolation remain quite evident, some disadvantages now loom larger than in the past. Some alumni fear that for students to spend 2 or 3 years away from the mainstream of American society may produce disassociation, rather than perspective.

A school that educates predominantly Caucasian Americans, despite a serious commitment to affirmative action, and seals them off by themselves, may not prepare its students adequately for a world in which

contacts with other cultures and other languages have become the rule. Reflecting his own times, Nunn sought to prepare able men for leadership in a masculine world, but in today's society, not to speak of the one in which contemporary students will live and work, men and women labor side by side in practically all walks of life and all roles of leadership. The all-male policy, therefore, has become the subject of serious, often heated debate. Nunn's meritocratic philosophy and the demands of contemporary leadership suggest a change, but the Deed of Trust and considerations pertinent to the size and isolation of the school impose constraints.

Whichever way these issues are resolved, the depth and gravity of the debate augurs well for the future. Regardless of their differences, those who have shared the Deep Springs experience have a profound commitment to its character and purposes. Entering its eighth decade, Deep Springs is alive and well. Owing to its unusual history and geography, the College may appear to many educators more as a curious experiment than as a serious model. On the other hand, much of what it stands for is at the heart of American higher education, and much of what it has done has proved effective. Academic leaders at other institutions might well find in the Deep Springs experiment ideas that can enrich their own programs.

Chapter 7

Chicago: Young Hutchins' Dream

Richard J. Sperry ⁷

“The College” at the University of Chicago became a great experiment in American higher education during the tenure of Robert M. Hutchins, the University’s fifth president. The Chicago College Plan was designed to combat a perceived decline in integration and rational content of the undergraduate curriculum. Although Robert Hutchins was not the only one to shape the Chicago Plan, he was pivotal. Quite simply, his energy and his vision made the plan work. In this sense, the Chicago Plan really was Hutchins’ dream. He was necessary to hold the plan together. When Hutchins left the University of Chicago, the plan lost its strength and momentum; it became vulnerable to attack by the forces which had been suppressed so that the plan could be implemented.

Some of the boldest educational reforms of the 20th century were undertaken by Robert M. Hutchins during his tenure at the University of Chicago. His chief criticisms of modern education were aimed at academic overspecialization and the extraordinary emphasis on careers while in school. His aim was to introduce students to the intellectual traditions of Western civilization before they turned their attention to making a living.

Origins and Evolution

Robert Maynard Hutchins was born in Brooklyn, New York, on January 17, 1899. His father, a Presbyterian clergyman, later became president of Berea College in Kentucky. In fact, a book by Hutchins, titled No Friendly Voice, published in 1936, was dedicated “To the President of Berea College.” Hutchins attended Oberlin College in Ohio before serving in the military during World War I. After the war he attended Yale University, graduating in 1921. He subsequently received his law degree from Yale in 1925. He remained at the Yale Law School as a teacher until 1929 (as dean from 1927 to 1929), when at the age of 30 he was elected president of the University of Chicago. He remained at the University of Chicago until 1951, the last 6 years as chancellor. Hutchins left the University to become director of the Ford Foundation and later became president of the Foundation’s Fund for the Republic. He also served as chairman of the board of editors of Encyclopedia Britannica and was editor in chief of that company’s Great Books of the Western World. He died on May 14, 1977.

Frederick Rudolph, writing in The American College and University: A History, says of Hutchins:

The tendencies of [the] progressive and popular movements in higher education brought into the arena Robert Maynard Hutchins, young chancellor of the University of Chicago, a trenchant

⁷Richard J. Sperry, Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, University of Utah.

critic of modern society, a kind of strange and wonderful throwback to Jeremiah Day and the Yale report of 1828. In a series of lectures published in 1936, lectures that were sarcastic, bitter, and sometimes funny, he looked at American higher education and found it characterized by disorder, by surrender to an acquisitive society, defined by its trade school, finishing school qualities. Hutchins was at war with promoting adjustment as an ideal, and substituting vocationalism for thought as the focus of the university. Down with vocationalism cried Hutchins. Down with empiricism. Down with the whole fabric of anti-intellectualism masquerading as experience, adjustment, and preparation for life. (Rudolph 1990:479-480)

Clark Kerr, former president of the University of California, the Carnegie Commission, and the Carnegie Council on Higher education, said, “Hutchins was the last of the giants in the sense that he was the last of the university presidents who really tried to change his institution and higher education in any fundamental way” (Kerr 1982:33). To understand this giant’s work, we must understand the environment in which he worked.

As suggested by Rudolph, Hutchins’ idea of a university reaches back at least as far as the early 1800s when attempts to reform the traditional classical curriculum at some American colleges prompted the famous Yale Report of 1828. Jeremiah Day was the president of Yale and made the report on behalf of the Yale faculty. The report said that the two most important points to be gained from an education are the disciplining and the furnishing of the mind; expanding its powers, and storing it with knowledge. The appropriate college curriculum was a classical curriculum of ancient languages and literature, philosophy and theology, and, perhaps, natural science and mathematics. These subjects were viewed as the subjects most likely to discipline and most worthy to furnish the mind. The Yale faculty saw their curriculum as the one with content which ought to be understood by everyone who aimed to be educated. Education was to be liberal in nature and not vocational or professional.

The trend of world events, however, constantly undermined the Yale concept of education. Science was on the rise and would not be ignored. Professorships in scientific subjects were established at many universities. Large financial endowments established the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1824, the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard in 1847, and the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale in 1860.

The science movement was, however, not readily accepted at most colleges. According to Rudolph:

At both Yale and Harvard admissions standards for candidates for the [scientific] degrees were lower than for the B.A. degree; the length of the course of study was three rather than the normal 4 [years]; and in both institutions the scientific students were considered second class citizens, too benighted to aspire the only worthy degree and therefore to be treated with condescension. At Yale, for instance, Sheffield students were not permitted to sit with regular academic students in chapel. (Rudolph 1990:232)

Science was an important instrument in college reform but its importance was perhaps eclipsed by the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862. As early as 1848 Congressman Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont had suggested that American colleges might well “lop off a portion of the studies established centuries ago as the mark of European scholarship and replace the vacancy—if it is a vacancy—by those of a less antique and more practical value” (Rudolph 1990:249). His bill established a significant educational movement. The college curriculum was changed forever. Courses were offered in veterinary medicine, plant pathology, and agricultural chemistry. The 1884 commencement addresses at the Connecticut Agricultural College included, “‘Irrigation and Drainage’ and ‘The Feet of the Horse and Ox, and their Diseases’” (Rudolph 1990:262-263).

The demise of Jeremiah Day’s classical college was encouraged by two other significant developments of the 1800s. A central issue in American higher education during the 19th century was that of the elective system. For 200 years the American college had had a fairly rigid curriculum. However, in the early 1800s

some leaders in higher education began to encourage variety in the subjects that students were allowed to study. These reformers included Thomas Jefferson of the University of Virginia and George Ticknor of Harvard. It was this reform that prompted the previously cited Yale Report of 1828.

The Yale Report quieted the reformers for a period of time. However, agitation for change soon surfaced again. Electives found their way into the curriculum of Harvard and many other universities. The most dramatic development of the elective system is associated with president Charles William Eliot of Harvard. Eliot had been an assistant professor of mathematics and chemistry in the Lawrence Scientific School and became the president of Harvard in 1869. Under Eliot's leadership, Harvard gradually reduced the number of required courses to one by 1897. The elective idea spread to other American colleges. It was later charged, "Mr. Eliot, more than any other man, is responsible for the greatest educational crime of the century against American youth—depriving him of his classical heritage" (Rudolph 1990:295).

The last development of the 1800s to spell demise for the classical curriculum was the rise of the German style university in America. The new American university attached itself to the idea of a body of scholars pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge. In 1861, Yale awarded three Ph.Ds. and in 1876 the Johns Hopkins University was opened and dedicated itself to scholarship and the training of scholars. Thus conceived, graduate work was very specialized and compartmentalized.

It is in this American setting that the University of Chicago was founded. John D. Rockefeller decided in 1888 that he would like to endow a new college in Chicago. A young, 34 year old William Rainey Harper was chosen as the first president in September, 1890. Harper was a Hebrew scholar and held three professorships at Yale.

Between 1890 and 1892 when the University finally opened its doors, Harper refined his plan and recruited his faculty. Rockefeller had wanted to establish a college, but Harper's plan was to open a full-fledged university, one which would teach both undergraduate and graduate students. Research and graduate study were, however, to be the more important of the two. Undergraduate instruction was to be secondary. Harper said in his first annual report, "Promotion of younger men in the department will depend more largely upon the results of their work as investigators than upon the efficiency of their teaching, although the latter will by no means be overlooked" (Ward 1950:27). It is clear from the early annual reports that there was never enough money to employ both a great research faculty and a great teaching faculty and that when both qualities were found in the same individual, teaching tended to yield under the pressure for research (Murphy and Bruckner 1976).

The University of Chicago opened its doors in October 1892. The original student body came from 33 states and 15 foreign countries. There were 328 undergraduates, 210 graduates, and 204 divinity students. The four traditional collegiate years were divided into two parts. The first 2 years were called the junior college. Study in the junior college was preparatory. The second two years were called the senior college or university college. Study in the senior college was more advanced and scholarly. The university program allowed the student to study a major subject in depth while choosing a secondary, minor subject area.

The individual departments controlled the junior college by determining the courses of study which they either offered or required in the freshman and sophomore years. Because each department saw itself as the most important and desired to groom students for advanced study in its area, battles between departments were common. Harper, however, felt that the junior college years should be of a general nature, leaving specialization for the senior college. He said, "the purpose of the [junior] college is to develop in the man systematic habits; to give him control of his intellectual powers. Special training looking toward a particular profession or line of work is not the province of the college" (Ward 1950:38).

Despite Harper's wishes, the junior college curriculum was progressively altered to fit the programs of the senior college, the graduate, and the professional schools. By 1906, the year that Harper died, the junior college was almost strictly devoted to these ends.

Harper had a dream of combining the general study of the freshman and sophomore years with the last 2 years of high school. He believed that these four years should be devoted to traditional liberal studies

and that specialized studies should begin later. He died without realizing his dream. That would await the work of Robert Maynard Hutchins, a quarter-century later.

During the 17-year tenure of Harry Pratt Judson, the university's second president, there was an almost complete subversion of the college under the dictates of the graduate schools. Undergraduate education was progressively neglected. Chauncey Samuel Boucher and Brumbaugh wrote in The Chicago College Plan, "Undergraduate work was grossly neglected; even worse, the College came to be regarded by some members of the faculty as an unwanted, ill-begotten brat that should be disinherited" (Boucher and Brumbaugh 1940:1). In fact, the formal position of the University Senate in 1922 was: "The time has come to base our policy more definitely upon the obvious truth that this University can perform its most distinctive service to education through its graduate and professional schools. The limitation of undergraduate instruction appears to be complementary to this" (Ward 1950:39).

During this period when undergraduate education was slipping, the University of Chicago was a nearly unified community of scholars. Harper's Chicago has been described as being dominated by the "religion of science." Mortimer Adler writes in Reforming Education, "Only at Chicago was there a homogeneous body of men who worked together with apparent understanding of a common doctrine" (Adler 1988:26). That doctrine was the pragmatism of Dewey and James. Adler writes further:

Whether it was an extraordinary accident, or whether Harper's feeling for the zeitgeist was so strong that he intuitively picked men in every field who uniformly reflected the same spirit, the remarkable fact remains that the University of Chicago had a central point of view which dominated most of its departments and united its faculty in a common enterprise. With few exceptions. . . the Chicago faculty consisted of men who saw eye to eye on fundamentals, whether they were professors of geology or economics, of physiology or religion, of education or sociology. (Adler 1988:27)

Significant interest in undergraduate education among the administration of the University of Chicago began again with Ernest DeWitt Burton, Chicago's third president. In his first annual report he emphasized the importance of undergraduate education by proposing that the faculty of the junior college be independent of the rest of the University and that undergraduate classes be physically separated from the rest of the University. These ideas started some talk of reform but the talk was accompanied by little action.

Leadership Meets Reform-Mindedness

Such was the state of affairs when Robert Maynard Hutchins assumed the presidency of the University of Chicago on April 17, 1929. Reform had been in the air for more than 6 years but strong leadership was needed to orchestrate the movement. President Hutchins began the orchestration in his inaugural address on November 19, 1929:

The emphasis on productive scholarship that has characterized the University from the beginning and must characterize it to the end has naturally led to repeated question as to the place and future of our colleges. They could not be regarded as training grounds for the graduate schools, for less than 20 percent of their graduates went on. . . Nor did the argument that we should contribute good citizens make much impression on distinguished scholars anxious to get ahead with their own researches. They were glad to have somebody make this contribution, but saw little reason why they should be elected for the task. At times, therefore, members of the faculty have urged that we withdraw from undergraduate work, or at least from the first 2 years of it. But we do not propose to abandon or dismember the colleges. If the University's function is to attempt solutions of different educational problems it cannot retreat from the

field of undergraduate work. The whole question of the relation of the first 2 years of college to the high school on the one hand and the Senior College on the other is one of the most baffling before us. (Ward 1950:48)

Hutchins' idea of a university could only be realized after a radical reorganization of its structure. The college, he said:

must resolutely face the question of what is important and what is not. It cannot teach everything that any student thinks he would like to hear about or that any teacher thinks he would like to talk about. It cannot pile course on course. It must set up clear and comprehensible goals for its students to reach. It must articulate its courses, squeezing out waste, water, and duplication. It cannot tolerate education by the adding machine, that system by which we mark the intellectual progress of the young by the arithmetical averages they have achieved on a medley of miscellaneous courses. More than all, [the college] that wishes to solve the problem of how to develop and administer a liberal education must have a faculty devoted to this task. (Ward 1950:39)

Hutchins' philosophy of higher education depended heavily upon a metaphysics that drew its absolutes about man, truth, and values from Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. His ideas were alternately called "Aristotelianism on the Midway," and "Chicago Thomism."

Adler has characterized Hutchins' work in this manner:

What Hutchins attempted to establish at Chicago was not a new school of thought, just as exclusive in its own way as its predecessor. The faculty misinterpreted him in terms of their own extremism. They charged him with wanting 'nothing but Thomism,' 'nothing but principles,' or 'nothing but the past' where before there had been 'nothing but pragmatism,' 'nothing but facts,' or 'nothing but the present.' On the contrary, Hutchins aim was synthesis—to relate science, philosophy, and theology harmoniously without sacrificing the autonomy of each, to be contemporary and American in education without promoting militant modernism or cultural isolationism. It was not merely the university that Hutchins sought to reform. He wished to free American education and culture from the negations and provincialism which Chicago typified. (Adler 1988:31)

Even with Hutchins' clear vision and enthusiasm, the College at the University of Chicago was not established overnight. Reforms were introduced gradually and always with the approval of the University Senate. On October 22, 1930 President Hutchins proposed that the major emphasis of the Junior College (the freshman and sophomore years) be general education with a reasonable provision for the pursuit of special interests. Upon completion of the College, the student could begin specialized study in one of the four major divisions: the Division of Biological Sciences, the Division of Physical Sciences, the Division of Social Sciences, and the Division of Humanities.

The organizational scheme of divisions was established by Hutchins to reduce the number of officers reporting to him. The College and each division was administered by a dean. Departments were assigned to the divisions by the president, but the responsibility of remaking the senior college curriculum was given to the division.

Provision was made for a College faculty and a College budget. The budget of the College consisted of that portion of the salaries of the members of the faculty that represented the share of their time and attention that was devoted to College work. Although the College had no departments, each member of the College faculty was also a member of a divisional faculty. Thus the faculty of the College was not yet independent of departmental control.

The College immediately developed a new curriculum which was composed primarily of general introductory or survey courses. The courses were designed to convey the essential factual information and to introduce the method of thought of a given discipline. Completion of the College requirements was stated solely in terms of educational attainment as measured by a series of comprehensive exams, and not in terms of accumulated course credits. This new College program was adopted in March, 1931.

The survey course was developed by the Chicago faculty to combat the specialization and lack of integration found in the elective curriculum. John Dewey had suggested in 1902 that the cause for our curricular overload was our expanded knowledge. What was needed, he said, was “a survey, at least, of the universe in its manifold phases from which a student can get an orientation to the larger world” (Brubacher and Rudy 1968:276). Alexander Meiklejohn implemented this approach in a course at Brown University titled “social and economic institutions.” The concept of integration was also the basis of the senior symposia at Reed College (another notable experiment in higher education) and the 2-year curriculum of Alexander Meiklejohn’s experimental college at the University of Wisconsin.

The concept of integration of knowledge and the survey course influenced the development of the Chicago Plan. Three other features of the Plan are also important in the development of the College. The College curriculum committee stated that:

- 1) Experimentation with methods of instruction shall be encouraged; 2) Placement tests to determine a student’s competence for enrollment in a course shall be encouraged; and 3) For each of the courses a syllabus with appropriate bibliographical material, and sample examinations, shall be published. (Ward 1950:52)

Members of the faculty trained in the various disciplines met to agree on what a course should contain, worked together on the syllabi and other instructional materials, and reached agreement about what the examinations should expect of the students. The individual instructors then went into the classrooms to conduct their courses with a great degree of freedom as to techniques and approaches. Likewise, students were free to attend the lectures or not as they desired.

The quality of teaching improved markedly under the new Plan. Three \$1,000 awards were made annually for the most effective college teaching. The administration encouraged the annual revision of the published syllabi for the various courses, and made provision for a separate College library which circulated approximately 125,000 books each academic year.

In November, 1932 Hutchins convinced the University Senate to abrogate the requirement that all members of the College faculty be members of departmental faculties in the four upper divisions of the University. The Dean of the College was now empowered to recommend to the President appointments to the College faculty without departmental status. This action began to solidify a degree of independence for the College.

At the end of the first year of operation of the New Plan, President Hutchins decided that it was time to do something about the relationship between the first 2 years of college and the last 2 years of high school. Between November, 1932 and January, 1933, jurisdiction over the last 2 years of the University High School (an experimental high school established by John Dewey and operated for the benefit of the Department of Education) was transferred to the College. Although the transfer of supervision took place, the integration of the curriculum did not take place until a later date.

Fighting Words

Despite the new gains for the College, Hutchins’ attack on the Chicago status quo continued. It became readily apparent that he had a notion that education should be more than a survey of information. In 1933 President Hutchins delivered a convocation address titled “The Issue in the Higher Learning.” He criticized

the aimless collecting of scientific information for its own sake and urged that research be illuminated by ideas:

We have confused science with information, ideas with facts, and knowledge with miscellaneous data. I am far from denying the accomplishments of modern empirical science. Its record has been a grand one. But as the Renaissance could accuse the Middle Ages of being rich in principles and poor in facts, we are now entitled to inquire whether we are not rich in facts and poor in principles. Our bewilderment has resulted from our notion that salvation depends on information. The remedy may be a return to the process of rational thought. (Adler 1988:34)

These became fighting words. Hutchins had a basic conflict with the Chicago doctrine of pragmatism. Not only would his administration at the University of Chicago be characterized by educational reform, but he would also have to continually battle with the Old Guard on the Chicago faculty.

Writing in The International Journal of Ethics in 1934, Hutchins furthered his attack on Chicago pragmatism:

We do not know where we are going, or why; and we have almost given up the attempt to find out. . . If, as Descartes led us to believe, the soul's good is the domination of the physical universe, our souls have achieved a very high degree of good indeed. . . Every citizen is equipped with information, useful and useless, sufficient to deck out a Cartesian paradise. And yet we are bewildered. . . We are in despair because the keys which were to open the gates of heaven have let us into a larger but more oppressive prison house. We think those keys were science. . . They have failed us. (Hutchins 1934:175-176)

Hutchins' philosophy of education was developed in significant detail in a 1936 book titled The Higher Learning in America. He begins by stating:

The most striking fact about the higher learning in America is the confusion that besets it. This confusion begins in the high school and continues to the loftiest levels of the university. The high school cannot make up its mind whether it is preparing students for life or for college. (Hutchins 1936:1)

This emphasis on preparation for life continues into the college years where we continue to deny that cultivation of the intellect is the ideal of education. Our curriculum, Hutchins continues, consists of

surveys, more or less detailed, of the modern industrial, technological, financial, political, and social situation so that [the student] can fit into it with a minimum of discomfort to himself and to his fellow men. Thus the modern temper produces that strangest of modern phenomena, an anti-intellectual university. (Hutchins 1936:27)

Hutchins proposed to solve the confusion in American education by incorporating the last 2 years of high school and the first 2 years of traditional college. This 4-year block would follow a strict liberal arts curriculum—a curriculum which was viewed by Hutchins as indispensable for preparing for life. He viewed discipline in the liberal arts as an essential aspect of education for everyone. Teaching everyone to think, and to think well, was viewed by Hutchins as the ultimate in democratic education.

Hutchins made it clear that he expected more development in the College curriculum—development along the lines of the traditional liberal arts. In 1936 he stated that the optimum college curriculum would be: “A course of study consisting of the great books of the Western world and the arts of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking, together with mathematics, the best exemplar of the process of human reason” (Ward 1950:57).

Hutchins' interest in the "great books" goes back to his days at Yale. As a new professor of law, Hutchins found himself in charge of teaching the law of evidence. This bothered him very much because his qualifications were that "[he] had never studied the subject in or out of law school" (Hutchins 1944: 10). As such he contacted an expert on evidence at Columbia by the name of Mortimer Adler. Friendship and mutual admiration between these two later grew at the University of Chicago where Hutchins was President and Adler a member of the faculty. Adler became an intellectual mentor to Hutchins. Hutchins reports that Adler,

looked on me, my work, my education and found us not good. He intimated that unless I did something drastic I would close my educational career a wholly uneducated man. He broadly hinted that the president of an educational institution ought to have some education. (Hutchins 1944:12-13)

Adler's remedy for Hutchins' lack of education was to begin to study the great books of the western world. Adler was qualified to guide Hutchins in such a course because he, Adler, had taught in the great books program at Columbia University. The "Great Books" program was the conception of John Erskine, a professor on the faculty of Columbia. He and other faculty members, including Mortimer Adler, conducted a seminar in which the faculty and the students read a "classic" a week and then came together for intense discussion of the ideas presented in the classic. The program was a large success. Even the faculty felt that they learned a great deal in the seminars. Adler considered this program his first real education.

With Hutchins' conversion to the program, he set out to implement it at Chicago. As such, Stringfellow Barr, a historian, and Scott Buchanan, a philosopher, both from the University of Virginia, were made visiting professors, and a committee of their choosing set to work to frame a Chicago curriculum based on a study of the great books of western civilization.

The presence of this committee caused a tremendous furor at the University of Chicago. Scott Buchanan said of these times:

The University of Chicago saw red, and they almost burned our books so that we couldn't read. Our presence made... [the] Dean of the Humanities a great deal of trouble. It was a great relief for everybody but the donors of the money for this project when St. John's [College in Annapolis, Maryland] called the members of the Liberal Arts Committee to put its program into operation. (Ward 1950:58)

Although the great books program was not instituted in the required Chicago curriculum, great books seminars were available to those so inclined.

The Emerging Curriculum

In March, 1937 the College finally adopted a curriculum for a 4-year College which would begin after 2 years of the traditional high school. The College would, thus, have both a 2-year and a 4-year curriculum. All students in the 4 year College were to follow the same basic program: a 3-year course in the humanities; a 3-year course in the natural sciences; a 3-year course in the social sciences; a 3-year course in reading, writing, and criticism; a 1-year course in philosophy; two departmental electives; and competence in mathematics and a foreign language. Graduation from the College was granted after passing 15 comprehensive examinations covering this 4-year course. The comprehensive exams were just that—they lasted 6 hours each! The 2-year College continued to function as a separate entity.

The next important development in the College came in January, 1942 when the University Senate by a vote of 63 to 48 approved that the Bachelor's degree be awarded for the completion of general education

as defined by the College faculty. The College was thus established as an independent entity—free from departmental control.

The College next set out to merge the 2-year and 4-year programs. However, it took several years for the faculty to put into operation the courses and examinations designed to realize this objective. By the end of the academic year 1945-1946 the College had become a 4-year program in which students were placed on the basis of their performance on placement examinations. A 22 year-old could be placed in the same class as the 16 year-old who had just finished his second year of high school. Placement depended upon the need for a certain course of study. At the other end of the program, students who, as a result of independent work, had mastered a given area of subject matter deemed a part of general education, were not held back from taking the comprehensive examination merely because they lacked course credits.

The final shaping of the mature Hutchins College came in 1945 when the graduate foreign language faculty joined with the scientists in trying to reinsert a large number of electives in the College curriculum. They argued that the student who wanted to take extended work in language or devote himself to a scientific education could do so at the earliest possible time—with the partial exclusion of work in certain other areas of knowledge. On the grounds that they knew better than the student what was the best curriculum in general education, the College faculty decided upon a required program. Elective courses could be taken in any field, along with the required general courses—but not as substitutes for them.

The basic four year curriculum was fairly simple:

First Year	Second Year
Social Sciences 1	Social Sciences 2
Humanities 1	Humanities 2
Natural Sciences 1	Natural Sciences 2
English	Mathematics
Third Year	Fourth Year
Social Sciences 3	History
Humanities 3	Observation, Interpretation
Natural Sciences 3	and Integration
Foreign Language	

Thus the mature College during Hutchins' tenure at the University of Chicago was one marked by educational reform. The College within the University was free of departmental control, it offered a program beginning at any time after the second year in high school, placement within the curriculum was determined solely by examination, and graduation with the Bachelor's degree was determined solely by mastery of the general education subject matter as determined by comprehensive examinations. The content of the course work was interdisciplinary and grouped along divisional lines. Pedagogy was determined by the individual instructor.

The College at the University of Chicago was a school for the intellectual elite. The freshman class consisted of 750 students and the College 1500. Between 1931 and 1938, 40 percent of the College were women. Of the entering freshmen between 1936 and 1938, 9 percent were high school valedictorians, 50 percent of the men and 54 percent of the women were in the first decile of their high school graduating class, and 78 percent of the men and 84 percent of the women were in the upper third (Boucher and Brumbaugh 1940:392). Graduates of the Chicago College during this period were viewed as "exciting and creative persons" (Henderson 1970:80).

Although 20 percent of the students withdrew after the first year of study, most were quite happy with their educational experience. Between 60 and 90 percent of the students were satisfied with what they received in the courses and between 82 percent and 95 percent of the students stated that the required

courses should be required. Ninety percent were happy with the amount of required work overall (Boucher and Brumbaugh 1940:404-406).

It is not fair to say that the College at the University of Chicago was all that Hutchins wanted it to be, nor is it fair to say that it is only what he wanted it to be. Hutchins worked within an organizational academic framework which was highly democratic. When his ideas did not carry the vote, they were not implemented. The great books of the western world is only one illustration of this fact.

The Chicago College Plan was a carefully designed total curriculum that unified knowledge. It was not a hodgepodge of elective courses and unrelated required courses. Integration and synthesis was its goal. Unfortunately for its longevity, the Plan also incorporated a revision of the last 2 years of high school. In this it did not succeed. Perhaps the attempt to reform too much too quickly was responsible for the eventual collapse of young Hutchins' dream. The College was continually attacked by the faculty of the graduate divisions who felt that students should have more specialized courses in a single field during their undergraduate years. Eventually these faculty won.

The Chicago College did not last more than a few years. Mortimer Adler states:

It took Mr. Hutchins from 1930 to 1943 to create what I would say is a general college at the University of Chicago, a college devoted entirely to liberal learning. . . That was so radical that it almost brought on a faculty revolt. Indeed it was so radical that within twelve months of Mr. Hutchins leaving the university to join the Ford Foundation, members of the graduate school undid the whole thing. Our colleges and universities are under control of the graduate schools which are specialist's schools. They are not interested in general education at all. They are interested in research in their specialties. (Adler 1988:288)

A year after Robert Hutchins left the University of Chicago the College was dismantled. His presence seems to have been essential to keep the hungry graduate school from consuming the College. When he left, electives were restored to the curriculum and the general survey courses were compressed. Chicago was still a distinctive institution, but not in the Hutchins way. Undergraduate study at the University of Chicago came to resemble other universities: specialized study complemented by general study. The distinctive Hutchins curriculum became a historical footnote. Perhaps if he had remained a little longer and given the newness time to settle his dream would have been more enduring.

Chapter 8

Black Mountain: Meteor Among Mavericks

Katherine Reynolds ⁸

Black Mountain College was founded in 1933 because that is the year John Andrew Rice was ousted from his faculty post at Rollins College (Winter Park, Fla.) and decided, with a few fellow mavericks, to start something that better satisfied his ideas about education. In fact, 1933 turned out to be a banner year for endings and beginnings of much greater note than Rice's termination at Rollins or reincarnation as an experimental college guru. It was the year Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany and Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States.

Black Mountain College, as it turned out, would be as influenced by the time and timing of its founding as it would by its isolated location in North Carolina's Blue Ridge foothills. Its curriculum—a collection of classes free of disciplinary grouping—revealed a European influence, in sync with the many refugee intellectuals who left Germany, Holland, Austria and gravitated to Black Mountain. Its tenacity—evidenced by its 23-year survival on a pitiful shoestring of financial and material resources—was no doubt influenced by firsthand experience with economic depression. Its educational commitment—to democratic underpinnings for learning that comes from “human contact, through a fusion of mind and emotion” (Du Plessix-Gray 1952:10)—was reflective of a larger liberal environment that managed a brief appearance before the 1950s ushered in fear of Communism and love of television. Of course, John Andrew Rice couldn't have foreseen all the happy coincidences of timing when he was fired from Rollins for being “disruptive of peace and harmony” (Duberman 1972:19). Charges leveled at the charismatic but often arrogant and outspoken professor ranged from the personal (he was seen in a jock strap on the beach) to the professional (he conducted discussions on sex and religion when he was supposed to be teaching Latin and Greek). Given the affection he garnered among students, these charges were probably true. Still, his keen intellect was rarely softened by humility; nor was his quick sense of humor blunted by humane sensitivity. He polarized colleagues into camps of fierce supporters and determined enemies. He cinched the request for his resignation when he became the most outspoken critic of the new “eight hour day” curriculum plan installed by Rollins' president Hamilton Holt. Although Rice was later vindicated by an AAUP appeals investigation headed by Johns Hopkins philosopher Arthur Lovejoy, the incident sparked the dismissal of two other Rollins faculty members and the resignation in protest of another five.

While Rice pondered his future, dissident Rollins faculty and students encouraged him to experiment with some of his ideas about education in a new setting. Even his brother-in-law, Swarthmore president Frank Aydelotte, urged him to start an experimental college. But the idea didn't gain Rice's commitment

⁸Katherine Reynolds, Assistant Professor of Higher Education, University of South Carolina.

until Bob Wunsch, fellow Rollins dissident and drama teacher, showed him a potential site near the town of Black Mountain, N.C. The collection of buildings, tucked into the Blue Ridge foothills and overlooking an expansive valley, was used as a summer conference setting by the Blue Ridge Assembly of the Protestant Church. Dominated by the white-columned, plantation-styled Robert E. Lee Hall, the cluster of meeting areas and living quarters were vacant 9 months of the year.

Over the summer, Rice and three other former Rollins faculty members launched a road trip and letter writing campaign to raise funds for rent at the Black Mountain site and recruit a first group of students and faculty. With \$10,000 from J. Malcolm Forbes (a former Rollins faculty member who had left several years before Rice), rent was secured and the college opened its doors with 22 students, and 12 faculty. Available courses included physics, chemistry, economics, German, French, classics, English, psychology, drama, music and art.

Philosophy on a Mountain

Rice and his colleagues had stronger convictions about how a college should operate than about how and what students might learn. Democracy would be paramount in the administration of the college, and structure would be loose. Students and faculty joined in marathon, long-winded decision-making meetings with decisions ranging from a faculty termination to a library acquisition.

Particularly prominent, and vital to the democratic underpinnings envisioned by Rice, was the absence of any outside governing body. Rice had determined that control exerted by boards of trustees and college presidents rendered faculty participation meaningless, limiting faculty to debate, “with pitiable passion, the questions of hours, credits, cuts. . . They bring the full force of their manhood to bear on trivialities. They know within themselves that they can roam at will only among minutiae of no importance” (Adamic, 1938:624). The faculty did establish a three-member “Board of Fellows,” elected from among them and charged with running the business affairs of the College. Within a year, a student member was added to the Board. The office of rector, also elected by the faculty, called for a 1-year term (although succession by the incumbent was allowed) by a faculty member who was largely responsible for calling meetings and setting agendas. This assignment did not fall to John Andrew Rice until Black Mountain’s second year, since faculty members agreed that in 1933 he might still be tainted by the widely-publicized events at Rollins. A more pure form of democracy developed in the realm of faculty economic status. The first year, all were equally unpaid and received only room and board in return for their services. When minimal salaries were granted in later years, they varied only by small extra amounts for those who had families (except for Josef Albers who doubled his salary amount by bringing a grant with him).

The ideal of administrative democracy led handily to the idea of community, although Rice initially was skeptical of the notion. He predicted possible tyranny in the guise of “community spirit” and admonished, “If someone likes to work with his hands, fine, let him. But if someone else would rather walk around the woods, or sit and listen to a record, or read a book, or talk to somebody, that’s the thing to do, not something somebody else thinks you ought to do” (Duberman 1972:43).

Although a strong norm of communal interaction was perhaps the inevitable result of 34 people living and learning together at an isolated summer camp, it was furthered when the students themselves began a farm to help the community. They were encouraged by faculty member Ted Dreier; but Rice, while vaguely supportive of the idea, warned that working the soil should be neither deified or codified. Later he would recall, “Ted had this notion, having been born in Brooklyn Heights and never having seen more than a few blades of grass, that there was some kind of mystical experience in touching the soil” (Duberman 1972:42).

Throughout the years, farming at Black Mountain vacillated from casual group effort to serious contribution to community self-sufficiency. For a while, a work scholarship program allowed farm work in exchange for tuition, with students tending beef and dairy herds and growing okra, tobacco, potatoes,

soy beans and rye. However, this prompted a dark specter of class distinction that proved detrimental to fundamental college ideals. Students and faculty pitched in willingly when faced with an unstructured farming program, but with only limited competence. The most successful years were those which included direction from a resident farmer. In the mid-1940s, with the addition of hundreds of chickens, the College nearly reached self-sufficiency and had enough vegetables left over to market in nearby towns.

At first glance the curriculum at Black Mountain appeared to reflect nothing more than the interests of those who came to teach, rather than any particular educational focus. Behind the diverse topics of instruction, however, was a strong conviction that education should be interdisciplinary and should tap into what can be learned by emotion and experience as well as by mental exercise. In this regard, Rice differed substantially from his contemporary, University of Chicago president Robert M. Hutchins whose neoclassical approach to higher education rested with an emphasis on literature that provided a common stock of learning. And, in every publication that would print his opinions, Rice let Hutchins know it. “Why,” he asked, “exclude from general education all but one means of getting experience? Why include what can be printed and leave out what must be seen or heard? To read a play is good, to see a play is better, but to act in a play, however awkwardly, is to realize a subtle relationship between sound and movement” (Rice 1937:588).

Rice saw too much predictability and doctrine in most of what was then labeled “progressive education” and felt that it required a contrived conclusion—such as Hutchins’ “educated man.” This, he determined, perverted the ideas of an acquaintance he most admired, John Dewey. Dewey visited Black Mountain several times during its first 5 years and Rice was particularly impressed with what he described as Dewey’s understanding that “to arrive at a conclusion was not to arrive at a conclusion, it was to arrive at a pause. And you would look at the pause, you would look at the plateau, and then you would see another thing to climb” (Duberman 1972:40).

As one former student put it, “The stated philosophy was that we were to achieve emotional maturity; as students, we often made fun of the notion, and I’m not sure that’s what we got. But at least we learned and we grew” (Bliss, 1991). Rice would agree, insisting that to stop at training the intellect stops a student short of learning to deal with what he/she knows—“a way of doing things, a method of dealing with ideas or anything else” (Rice 1937:595). Classes at Black Mountain, which might take place anywhere from the sloped lawns to the porches of Robert E. Lee Hall, were highly active, participative and experiential. Students were engaged in everything from assisting Buckminster Fuller in building a demonstration dome to advising Merce Cunningham on blocking for a Shakespeare play. They worked long hours and did their share of reading (current and classical) but when they came together it was in a spirit of analysis that would give the reading meaning. Interdisciplinary seminars met at eight in the evening and were taught by at least three faculty members, with many other faculty in attendance.

If his academic arguments didn’t convince fellow educators of the folly of the neoclassic approach to education, Rice volleyed with vivid current example:

We ought to begin to consider education as a thing concerned at least in part with how people feel. If we do not, somebody else will, and all our structure of thought will disappear as quickly as it has in Nazi Germany. There was a country where the universities were concerned with pure thought, where the keenest thinking of the modern world was being done. And yet not a word was heard from the seats of learning when the house painter appeared and roused the Germans to feeling. While intellection was being sharpened and polished, savagery was going its way, waiting for a chance. (Rice 1937:590)

The students who chose to try out Rice’s philosophy first hand were, according to Lucian Marquis who was a Black Mountain student in the early 1940s:

... an odd bunch. Most were individuals in secondary school—writing poetry or doing science experiments on their own—not ‘mainstream.’ And, I think because of the experience with the

depression, people were more willing than ever to take risks, do something different. (Marquis, 1991)

Marquis spent a year first at University of California, Los Angeles, and found it to be “a factory.” He recalls that many of his fellow students also came to Black Mountain after unsatisfactory experiences at larger, more traditional universities. His wife, Jane Slater, for example, arrived at Black Mountain after an uncomfortable year at Brigham Young University. Although the largest portion of students was from the Northeast, a good number came from the South and Midwest, and some from the West.

In the early years, annual tuition was \$350, and it eventually crept up to \$1,200, but an informal sliding scale existed for promising students who couldn’t afford full tuition. Although the student population topped out at about 90 (in the post-war years), and numbers of applicants never exceeded the number that could be accommodated, Black Mountain steered well away from “open admissions.” Although not always successful, the first objective of admissions meetings, attended by student and faculty representatives, was to weed out “problem” youngsters whose parents wanted to ship them off to anywhere that would take them. However, the school did favor admission of unconventional students over those found to be “sound but dull” (Duberman 1972:266). Grades were far from the determining factor in admissions. Applicants were asked to submit sample work (poetry, research reports, etc.), to provide a personal letter from their high school principal, and to answer essay questions such as, “If your secondary school grades are poor, how do you account for it?” and “If you do not expect to graduate, what is your plan?” (Duberman 1972:77).

Evolution at the Lake

The 23-year history of Black Mountain College was one of few constants and much conflict. Three forceful leaders marked three distinct periods during the 23 years: the John Rice years, the Josef Albers decade, and the Charles Olson era.

During the first 5 years of the College, a solidarity of philosophy and community gradually took shape. It revolved largely around John Rice’s outgoing personality (much intelligence and much laughter mark most reports from colleagues and students) and forceful opinions about education. He was determined, for example, that every student should have some experience in the arts. This translated as at least an elementary course in music, dramatics and/or drawing, because:

There is something of the artist in everyone, and the development of this talent, however small, carrying with it a severe discipline of its own, results in the student’s becoming more and more sensitive to order in the world and within himself than he can ever possibly become through intellectual effort alone. (Adamic 1938:626)

Although he cautioned against the possible tyranny of the community, Rice eventually decided that some group activity would,

...help the individual be complete, aware of his relation to others. Wood chopping, road-mending, rolling the tennis courts, serving tea in the afternoon, and other tasks around the place help rub off individualistic corners and give people training in assuming responsibility. (Ibid, 1938:627)

Privacy was held in as high regard as community at Black Mountain, and while students slept two or more to a room, each student had his or her own private study.

As it neared the end of its first decade, Black Mountain included over 50 students and 18 faculty. All courses were elective, and students tended to steer by their own stars, but with readily available faculty advice and support. There were no grades (except on request for transfer purposes), but the close

interaction among fellow students and faculty seemed to promote a great deal of motivation to study, prepare and learn. As former student Fielding Dawson would later report:

Classes, particularly the language classes, moved fast, and though Flola (the French instructor) didn't care if somebody didn't show up on Tuesday, when they came in on Wednesday, they wouldn't know what anybody was talking about. . . It was free of academic rules and regulations, but that made it worse, the whole burden was on us, and the faculty maybe getting plastered with us the night before no matter, we had to produce. To show up at Fiore's weekly painting seminars empty handed was embarrassing, in fact humiliating. (Dawson 1970:77)

Lucian Marquis recalled the classroom sessions as a relatively small part of the whole: "Class was only the beginning. There you started a conversation that continued through lunch and after dinner. Teaching was a continuous endeavor." Although his studies were primarily in the social sciences, Marquis notes that "at Black Mountain I played poker, wrote poetry and started painting" (Marquis, 1991).

At the end of each year, student and faculty representatives met to decide which students should be allowed back. Emotional maturity was as important as academic ability in the decisions. Students had "lower" and "upper" division benchmarks toward completing their studies at Black Mountain. After about 2 years, a student would gather together some faculty who administered comprehensive examinations. With these successfully completed, the student passed to the upper division. After another 2 years, the student could stand for graduation, which required passing examinations administered by an outside examiner invited to the College, often one of the top scholars in the relevant field. Upper division students designed for themselves 2-year plans of "specialized study." Of those graduating in 1937, one specialized in writing, one in 19th century history, one in art and three in English literature.

The arts at Black Mountain grew in prominence throughout the early years, beginning with the arrival of Josef Albers less than a year after the doors opened. As Nazi fascism tightened its grip, Albers' friend Philip Johnson at the Museum of Modern Art decided to help him get out of Germany with a job offer elsewhere. Albers' reputation, however, was not international at that time, and he spoke not one word of English. Neither of these elements seemed particularly problematic to Rice, however, when he consulted Johnson about Black Mountain's need for a resident artist. He quickly invited Albers to teach painting and his wife, Anni, to teach weaving.

Rice soon discovered what he would later call the "three Alberses"—the teacher, the social being and the Prussian. The Prussian Albers decried the seeming lack of real leadership at the College and the free-wheeling, agenda-less, community-wide meetings. Rice noted later, "You can't talk to a German about liberty. You just waste your breath. They don't know what the hell you mean" (Duberman 1972:69).

Happily, Teutonic compulsiveness proved no barrier to creativity. Albers' classes, like his canvases, were steeped in insight and intuition. He recognized that not everyone in the class would become a competent, much less talented, artist; and when asked what he hoped to achieve at Black Mountain, he replied "to open eyes" (Harris 1987:17). He taught "principles and procedures applicable to a wide variety of activities such as: the need to be aware of everyday objects and their individual properties, the essence of primary experience, of direct seeing and feeling, of problem-solving out of one's own experience; the importance of economy, leanness and discipline. . ." (Duberman 1972:73).

Albers was frequently credited with instilling in students a commitment to "correctness," forming a community standard whereby students writing poems did 13 drafts or students presenting stage productions rehearsed for nearly a year. Still, Albers didn't get through to everyone. American Indian painter Harrison Begay left after a year because Albers insisted he should build on his heritage when he had hoped to develop a new, contemporary style.

As "social being," Albers took part in every possible group activity at Black Mountain. At first he participated out of a sense of duty, but later because he had become a genuine force among the faculty. Also, his status as informal head of the arts program gave him an increasingly important role as Black

Mountain moved further toward an emphasis on the arts. While faculty still taught the natural sciences and social sciences, by the end of the first 10 years, student participation in classes like chemistry, physics and economics had waned drastically. Perhaps the personal choice ideal of students learning when they are ready to learn was simply not compatible with keeping the classrooms full in these disciplines.

Events surrounding Rice and his management of the College further conspired to eventually thrust Albers to the forefront. By 1938, the faculty discovered they were no longer being paid equally, but that Rice was making decisions whereby some (including himself and Albers) were paid at least 25 percent more than others. In the wake of that controversy, Rice led a charge to dismiss several faculty members for what he judged to be poor teaching quality and lack of community involvement. Battles ensued among the faculty that resulted in two dismissals and several resignations. With his wife and his son and daughter still on campus, Rice managed an affair with one of his students, costing himself further support among disapproving faculty and students. As one biographer commented, “Rice’s temperament being akin to natural force, abhorred a vacuum. He sought controversy more than most men seek repose” (Duberman 1972:142). By 1939, the faculty had eased Rice into a leave of absence, followed by a sabbatical, followed by resignation.

Rice eventually divorced, remarried and made a fairly meager living by writing for magazines such as Partisan Review, Collier’s, and The New Yorker. His autobiography, I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century, was published to fine reviews in 1942. He died of cancer in 1968.

Rice’s departure from Black Mountain occurred just as the decision had been made to build a permanent home for the College across the valley on the shores of Lake Eden. Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer accepted Albers’ invitation to visit and submit initial architectural designs, but, predictably, these proved too costly. Eventually, architect Lawrence Kocher consented to design and build a more modest set of buildings. He also taught courses in architecture and design. Soon the whole community was spending two or three afternoons each week building, stick by stick, a studies building and family housing to complement a dining hall and dormitories. Robert Bliss, a student who immersed himself in this process and later became an architect, recalls:

Those were the best years at Black Mountain—working together on something that would last and was essential to the community, finding a profession you loved, learning from some extraordinary teachers. Of course everyone had a different experience there at different times, and everyone says his or her years there were the best Black Mountain years. (Bliss, 1991)

The war years ushered in a different kind of Black Mountain; one where students, and at least some faculty members, started lobbying for more structure in learning, but yet more freedom outside the classroom. Lectures and recitations were starting to occur within the classroom, while cut-off blue jeans and nude sun bathing appeared outside. Influential faculty member Eric Bentley insisted to his colleagues: “I can’t teach history if they’re not prepared to do some grinding, memorizing, getting to know facts and dates and so on. . .” (Duberman 1972:198). Needless to say, with Albers and many of the original faculty still on board, faculty meetings were decisive and volatile.

Overshadowing this dissent, however, was a new program that was to highlight at least the public notion of a historical “saga” for the College, the summer institutes. Like much at Black Mountain, the summer institutes started more by chance than choice. Some music faculty agreed to a music festival sponsored by the College of Music in Cincinnati during the summer of 1944. Albers decided he might as well run a companion art institute for the summer, as well as a regular summer academic quarter and a work program. Organized as a tribute on the occasion of Arnold Schoenberg’s seventieth birthday, the music festival drew several dozen music notables from throughout the country who banded together in the rustic valley to rehearse, conduct workshops for students, exchange ideas and perform.

The art institute fared equally well, with Albers managing to invite a variety of notables who spent their summer lecturing, coaching students and working on their own projects. Typical of the spirit in which

ingenuity frequently conquered disorganization at the College was the experience of stone sculptor, Jose de Creeft. When he arrived for the summer session, he found the place had no sculpting tools. So his first course was one in which the students built a forge and were taught how to make their own tools.

The summer institutes grew throughout the 1940s to include notable talents in art, architecture, music and literature. And it is probably these institutes and the renown of the individuals in attendance that contributed most to Black Mountain's reputation as an art school. Where else could Merce Cunningham be found teaching dance steps to Buckminster Fuller? Or Buckminster Fuller enlisting construction assistance on his model dome from Willem de Kooning, and Robert Motherwell? Or Arthur Penn directing a play produced and set to music by John Cage? Vigorous interaction and innovative teaching attracted scores of new students to the summer institutes, many of whom became so enamored with Black Mountain that they stayed on. The excitement and publicity generated by the summer sessions, in addition to a general higher education population explosion spurred by the G.I. Bill, put the Black Mountain College of the late 1940s on its healthiest economic footing yet.

Still, Black Mountain managed to avoid financial stability. Student turnover negated some of the volume gains. Faculty salaries rose substantially, but grants and endowments did not. Stephen Forbes, for example, who had always been counted on to supply money to the College in tough times, refused a request in 1949 because he was disenchanted with the new emphasis on arts education at the expense of general education. The ability to manage what money it had also did not increase at Black Mountain, although Josef Albers proposed a reorganization that would include administrators and an outside board of overseers. In the wake of arguments and recriminations about the financial situation and how to solve it, a majority (by one vote) of the faculty called for the resignation of Ted Dreier, the last remaining faculty member from the founding group. In protest, four other faculty members resigned—including Josef and Anni Albers. By selling off some of the campus acreage, the remaining faculty managed to save the College and retain its original mindset of freedom from outside boards and administrators, while setting the stage for yet another era in its history.

Charles Olson, a writer who had attained popular notice with his book *Call Me Ishmael*, had taught in some summer institutes and was asked to stay on as regular faculty in 1951. He soon became the driving force among the faculty, most of whom were new since the Albers and Dreier departures. He was promptly elected rector. His presence alone (at 6 feet, 7 inches and 250 pounds) accounted for some of his instant elevation in status. His dominant personality, his natural charisma and his keen intellect accounted for the rest. His ideas about education leaned decidedly toward the arts and literature, with an emphasis on literature. His own writing classes were experiences in excited interaction among students which often went on well into the night.

Unfortunately, Olson's administrative desires and abilities could be ranked even below those of Rice and Albers. And he arrived at a time when administration actually was beginning to seem desirable. Many of the faculty would have agreed with their disenchanted colleague Bill Levi who later wrote,

I began to feel a warm glow at the thought of a department chairman, a dean, a trustee, even a vice chancellor in charge of development! . . . The demon of Don Quixote was forever dead in my bosom, and Sancho Panza had won the final, the conclusive, the ultimate victory. (Harris 1987:169)

What Albers lacked in administrative ability, he compensated for in tenacity and focus. What Rice lacked in administrative ability, he balanced with action and ideas. However, when Olson couldn't manage the administrative function, he simply retreated. His idea about turning the successful summer institutes into a similar series of year-long institutes fell on deaf faculty ears. So he gave up trying to strengthen the regular program. His ideas for recruiting more students didn't work, and rumors that Black Mountain was a Communist community discouraged many prospective students, so he did no more recruiting. When he couldn't get the old sources of development funds to donate (instead, Stephen Forbes called his loan.), he

didn't prospect for new sources. His talent and energy were directed strictly at the literature and writing, including a fine new journal, The Black Mountain Review. This publication was started at the College in 1952 at a time when financial management and administrative leadership were begging for help.

With the energies of Olson and other faculty members directed toward poetry and short stories, the Black Mountain student body shrank to only about 20 aspiring writers by 1954 (from about 90 in the late 1940s). At the time, Olson was embroiled in personal issues that furthered his retreat from serious consideration of administrative problems. Although his wife was still with him at the college, a Black Mountain student who had given birth to his son was in New York. He commuted a bit between the two places until his wife finally left Black Mountain and his student and son returned.

He kept Black Mountain and its shrinking population of students alive by selling off campus acreage one piece at a time to nearby farmers. There was no reason not to short sell. The earlier work program of farming, fencing and building had waned with a lack of commitment and a lack of students. In addition the campus grounds were in serious neglect and disrepair.

The curriculum was in similar disarray, with courses loosely defined and coursework very much at the discretion of the student. "Black Mountain no longer had much in the way of community organization, government, ritual, even cooperation; each person sought his path, did his work, turned to others as resources when in need of comfort, guidance, association" (Duberman 1972:407). The learning community was simply a learning environment where it was as possible for a student to be stimulated by association with a few fine minds as it was to become absorbed in motorcycles or marijuana.

In the fall of 1956, with only a handful of faculty and students in residence, Olson announced he didn't feel like teaching any more. The others agreed that there wasn't much left, and they all decided not to open for winter quarter. Olson, his new wife and his son would stay on to see to the legal disbursement of property. Several others thought they would stick together to start something new in San Francisco or New York. But there wasn't enough sense of community to lay any definite plans, and finally they just dispersed: "People simply got in their cars and—usually after a farewell drink with Olson—scattered to their various destinations" (Duberman 1972:411).

In Retrospect

The vast majority of former Black Mountain students can point to clear instances of lasting influence on the rest of their lives. Mostly, this seems to have occurred through association: with one or two faculty members who made a difference, with a "community" of fellow individuals who were essential resources to one another, or with a new area of endeavor such as painting or writing or farming. Black Mountain, apparently, was a place where association was encouraged. Perhaps this occurred through the relatively small number of people shouldered into an isolated valley, perhaps by a common dedication to the unconventional, or perhaps to the existence of ideals about learning and teaching. At any rate, the encouragement of association with people and with ideas was not the norm in higher education then, nor is it now. Clearly, it is possible to graduate from most colleges and universities today with little, if any, significant association with faculty, students or ideas.

But at Black Mountain, as at other experimental colleges, association could hardly be avoided. Engagement with people and ideas was paramount; activity was rampant. It was social, and it was educational. As Eric Bentley would remark:

Where, as at Black Mountain, there is a teacher to every three students the advantage is evident... a means to the most concentrated and lively interchange that any education could afford. Where the faculty are a separate world the students continue their high-school habit of avoiding study, boasting of idleness, and the like; at Black Mountain, on the other hand, diligence is de rigueur. (Bentley 1945:424)

Importantly, at Black Mountain, the faculty was there to teach and the students were there to learn. Black Mountain celebrated teaching, and most rifts among faculty members concerned teaching competence. Teaching was not something to be squeezed in between more important academic endeavors. Faculty lamented that administrative duties took time away from teaching. Because teaching was celebrated at Black Mountain, it was possible to attract an incredibly dedicated and talented faculty group who worked for about half or less what they could have commanded elsewhere.

Obviously, one has to wonder why the College did not survive. The times changed, of course. Black Mountain's communal nature suddenly looked like Communism to many. Students and faculty who were once content to be on the cutting edge got serious about being on the radical fringe. Other students and teachers of the time just wanted a situation where they could actualize the post-war dream of two cars in every garage. Lack of administrative acumen hurt more as the demands shifted toward government regulation, competition for students and reliance on grants and donations. Perhaps John Andrew Rice's vision of replacing management with academic leadership could only happen in small doses—during the frenzy of enthusiasm for something new and only over a short period of time. It may be an ideal that doesn't wear well.

And, there is the tension created by a few people living together in a remote location:

The peculiar difficulty of the experimental college is that small numbers and community living make every personal irritation a communal fever, a fever which is caught and carried by the students as well as by the faculty. If students have a voice in all affairs, and if faculty and students live cooped up in a valley miles from anywhere, people are going to get on each others' nerves... (Bentley 1945:429)

Nevertheless, John Rice succeeded in testing his conviction that education should extend beyond the intellect to include human emotion. To Rice education should not just address what people know, but include how they approach and use that knowledge. And for most of the students who attended Black Mountain, the test was invaluable.

There have been 1,000 alumni of Black Mountain and several hundred former faculty. If Rice is right about the place of emotion in learning, many individuals probably carried the Black Mountain experience with them well beyond the North Carolina valley. Lucian Marquis feels it has influenced his teaching at Pitzer College, where he is a member of the political science faculty, and at St. John's, where he teaches summer sessions. Bob Bliss recalls once dreaming of an experimental college within a traditional university setting. He settled instead for "trying to get the message across in smaller ways," in his position as dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Utah (Bliss, 1991). Gerald Heard, who first visited Black Mountain with his friend Aldous Huxley in 1937, was so taken with the idea of learning communities that he went on to found Trabuco College in Ventura, California, in 1942. Another group of students started a large working commune in Oregon when they left Black Mountain. The art students have been said to represent a "Black Mountain school" of art, although the label refers more to their early learning than to their individual styles. Black Mountain graduates have turned up on the faculties of many progressive colleges, as well as more traditional ones. It is a reasonable assumption that they have passed on a great deal of what they came to understand about learning while they were at Black Mountain. John Andrew Rice captured this philosophy in the early years of the College, insisting: "It's up to you to make yourself better, and those who come after you still better" (Adamic 1938:640).

Chapter 9

St. John's: Back to Classics

Keith Wilson ⁹

Experimental colleges, with all their diversities, usually sound two common themes: flexibility and practicality. However, one experimental college runs deeply contrary to these themes. St. John's College, with campuses in Annapolis, Maryland, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, rejects these norms and has flourished under the ethos of rigidity and intellectualism. In stark contrast to most experimental colleges, St. John's symbolizes the neoclassical model of liberal arts colleges.

Evolution

Founded in 1696 as King William's school, this institution changed to become St. John's College in 1784. The small, traditional, private college meandered for the next 150 years until crisis struck in 1935. A combination of staggering institutional debt, administrative malaise and loss of accreditation brought St. John's to the brink of collapse. The board of directors sensed that only a drastic change would help. They turned to two men known for their energy and commitment to liberal education. In 1937 Scott Buchanan and Stringfellow Barr initiated a radical reform through a curriculum based solely upon Western classical literature.

Some 50 years later St. John's has not only persisted at Annapolis but in 1964 opened a second campus in Santa Fe. The combined student bodies total approximately 800 students. The College remains principally a 4-year undergraduate college even though in recent years a few select masters programs have been added. St. John's is a private, non-denominational institution that caters to the intellectual and financial elite. For two semesters the tuition eclipses \$13,000. The average incoming student will score in the 650s on the SAT math and verbal tests (just slightly lower than Princeton's beginning students).

The faculty emerge mostly from the fields of philosophy, language, theology, music, law and natural science. About one-half of them hold a Ph.D degree, even though it has no direct impact on their acceptance within the college. Approximately one-third of the 60 teachers at Santa Fe were graduates themselves of St. John's, and 50 percent of all faculty attended colleges with strong liberal education programs such as St. Mary's, Reed, Shimer, Antioch and the University of Chicago.

The physical aspects of the two campuses neither diminish nor enhance the St. John's concept. The colonial style of Annapolis contrasts sharply with the Spanish aura of Santa Fe. And yet, virtually the same program proceeds on each campus. St. John's is a residential campus where all single students are required to live in campus dormitories. Even though campus life revolves around the unique curriculum, there is still interaction between "St. Johnnies" as they are known and members of the respective communities.

⁹Keith Wilson, Assistant Professor of Religion, Brigham Young University.

Philosophical Roots

In the mid-30s Scott Buchanan turned a generic liberal-arts college into a curricular experiment based upon Plato's Academy and classical humanism. The origins for these changes had predated the 20th century by hundred of years.

The English were the first in modern times to fashion a college with a classical approach to liberal education. This classical approach included an immersion in Greek and Greek literature as well as an emphasis on teaching, discipline and structured living. This early model was quickly attenuated in the United States with the utilitarian movement that swept through colleges in the last half of the 18th and 19th Centuries. This utilitarian movement was a blend of democracy, enlightenment and practicality. In higher education it supported such values as education for all, applied skills and student centered programs. The War of Independence added force and legitimacy to these values. And yet it did not bring closure to the battle between liberal education and utilitarianism.

The pendulum continued to oscillate through such events as the Yale Report of 1828, the Harvard elective curriculum, and the progressives of Theodore Roosevelt and John Dewey. In 1916 Alexander Meiklejohn became president of Amherst College and his agenda focused on liberal education as a means for training the mind. He adopted the Socratic method in both his teaching and his administration at Amherst. Questions such as "Why do we do this?" and "Why do we do that?" probed the heretofore sacred cows of curriculum, college organization and teaching methods. Meiklejohn organized a faculty seminar during his stay at Amherst. The seminar participants were relatively few, yet it did propitiously include a senior student by the name of Scott Buchanan. This seminar became a forum for his ideas and reforms. He proposed a curriculum of the classics with the goal of exposing students to the timeless questions of the great Western philosophers. Meiklejohn's ideas evoked scattered pockets of support, but his own colleagues at Amherst did not rally behind him. He was forced to resign in 1923 by the Amherst Board of Trustees before he could even begin his experiment. For the next 4 years Meiklejohn published articles about the ideal college for The Saturday Review and The New Republic. A bold new president at the University of Wisconsin, Frank Glenn, invited Meiklejohn to establish his Experimental College at Madison. This college, which was really a 2-year college within a University, opened in 1927. Meiklejohn set his dream in motion. He implemented a fixed classical curriculum with emphasis on small seminar classes of 10-20 students. He secured a dormitory, Adam's Hall, and began a residential college program. At its crest the Experimental College socratically taught 155 freshmen and sophomores the lessons of the ancient Athenians. But the principles of free speech, dialectical learning and freedom of thought were anachronistic. By 1932 Meiklejohn's opponents succeeded in dismantling his Experimental College under the charges of Communism and free love. What his critics really objected to was his unswerving view of classical western thought as the fountainhead of undergraduate education.

Meanwhile, in 1930, a young 31-year-old president took the reins at the University of Chicago. Robert Hutchins disdained the emerging university emphasis on research and specialization and proceeded to change things. Working with the faculty and trustees he abolished competitive athletics, instituted course credits and took a firm stand against vocationalism. But his most proactive idea was a "Great Books" curriculum that followed the model of Plato's Academy. When the faculty resisted, he mustered all his persuasive powers and finally succeeded in 1936. But a deep schism remained between Hutchins and the trenchant faculties at Chicago. The "Hutchins College" survived only a few years before the deep-seated conventions of university structure reabsorbed it back into the traditional departments. Even though Hutchins eventually left Chicago for the presidency of the Ford Foundation, both he and Meiklejohn had significantly involved and impacted Buchanan.

During the early 30s Buchanan secured a faculty position in the philosophy department at the University of Virginia. Here he renewed a friendship with Stringfellow Barr which dated back to 1919 at Oxford. Barr had been teaching history continuously at Virginia since 1924. Meanwhile, a new president at the

University of Virginia appointed among others Barr and Buchanan to give their judgment on the Virginia honors program. Their committee went far beyond what their administrator had commissioned. Barr and Buchanan drafted a radical program for liberal education that centered in reading and discussing 100 of the great Western classics. Their proposal was mothballed at Virginia, but would emerge in a few short years in a different location.

At the same time the small private college of St. John's had reached the point of institutional collapse. The board approached Buchanan and Barr and offered them the leadership of St. John's. Barr became president and Buchanan, who disdained administration, became the dean. Buchanan set out to totally revamp the College. He drew from Meiklejohn, Hutchins and the Virginia Committee. He charted a direction that redefined the meaning of a classical, liberal arts college. Buchanan, described by some as a restless spirit, served St. John's for 10 years. He left his infant college in a dispute with the Navy over the Annapolis campus. However, his imprint serves them to this day.

Buchanan's new program centered on approximately one hundred Western European great books from the ancient Greeks to the present (see Appendix). The approach postulated that it was better to read Isaac Newton or Plato first-hand than to read what someone else said about their ideas. Teaching proceeded in small seminars with the professor acting as a facilitator and a resource. The College was a radical departure from compartmentalized learning and instead reflected the language of the mental disciplinarians of the 1800s who viewed higher education as the training of the mind. "This college makes no claim to training specialists," Buchanan said, framing his instructional creed (Self Evaluation Report, 1955:3). The curriculum became the first fixed curriculum in this century. It rejected the elective system for undergraduates which Harvard introduced prior to 1900 and virtually all had accepted.

The transition in 1937 from a small generic college to a radical liberal arts college occurred rather quickly. Of the 25 faculty members who were a part of the old St. John's, only four were destined to remain and finish their careers under the "New Program." The others left quietly either at the initial announcement of the pending metamorphosis or after attempting the program for a year or two. Barr and Buchanan brought with them a cadre of classical disciples to shore up their enterprise. They also introduced their curriculum reform which was a carbon copy of their Virginia honors committee report. Owing to the desperate condition of St. John's in 1937, Barr and Buchanan encountered little opposition. In fact, the St. John's Board of Directors gave Barr carte blanche approval for anything he deemed desirable for the New Program. St. John's welcomed this friendly coup.

St. John's became the pedagogical testing ground for the philosophies of both Meiklejohn and Hutchins. It stood in opposition to what Hutchins called the "false democracy"—that one kind of knowledge is as good as another. This small college, which began in 1937 with only 20 daring students and a handful of faculty, came to symbolize the debate between the educational progressives and the conservatives. The progressives led by John Dewey espoused more democracy, service, and vocationalism in the universities. The conservatives, led by Meiklejohn responded that through the methods taught in the classical texts one can come to know what science is and does and how it relates to the modern world. Meiklejohn was accused of dogmatism to which he responded:

Why should the study of the past, as carried on at St. John's College lead to dogmatism? When in the experimental college we turn to Athens or read what Homer, Euripides, Lucretius and Plato have said about judgments of value, it did not mean in our opinion those writers had, for all time, fixed standards of value that we must accept as unchanged and unchangeable. . . We are not looking for the last words on those subjects, but instead the first words. . . From the time of the Greeks, until the present. The knowledge and wisdom of men has been growing. . . (Fortune, 1945:208)

Mark Van Doren, a colleague of Buchanan's and an ardent supporter of St. John's remarked that this was,

The first serious effort in contemporary America to build a single and rational curriculum suited to the needs of minds which have work to do, and which some day should be unwilling to forgive any system of education that has required of them less discipline than this. (1944:53)

Thus St. John's took as its creed the training of the human mind through the classical texts. This small college believed that once trained, their students would be better suited to make their impact on society. In contrast, the progressives felt that the classics were outdated and that it was absurd to use them as the basis for confronting contemporary challenges.

To this day disciples of the St. John's philosophy recite the words of the philosopher Lucan, "Pygmies placed on the shoulders of giants see more than the giants themselves." The progressives respond that past giants are dwarfed by our twentieth century problems. Robert Hutchins differentiates the two camps with the simple dichotomy: "St. John's educates people to live instead of to earn a living" (Hutchins, 1937).

Academic Program and Curriculum

Today the academic program at St. John's remains virtually the same as it was when Buchanan first implemented it in the fall of 1937. This program is a unified curriculum with approximately one hundred western great books forming the superstructure. Buchanan defined this "Great Books" curriculum at St. John's as books of lasting appeal with varied interpretations and constant reference to the "unanswerable questions in European thought" (Catalogue 1937:22). Winfree Smith, a respected Dean at St. John's during the seventies stated that there is no such thing as "the great books" since they do not constitute a rigid canon. His concept circumscribed "a" list of great books in contrast to "the" list of great books (Smith 1983:1). The reality is that the original reading list of 1937-38 has remained largely unchanged and the list has been referred to since its adoption as "The Great Books." Freshmen study Greek, literature, philosophy, history, mathematics and natural science. The texts are the original works of the classical authors. In the second year the primary emphasis continues on the study of the Greek language with the addition of a class in music appreciation. The third year replaces the Greek language with the study of French. This carries on through the fourth and final year.

The weekly study regimen follows a set pattern. Students attend a Great Books seminar on Monday and Thursday evenings for about two hours. A three-hour laboratory class meets twice a week. Mathematics tutorials convene three times a week. And language classes also meet three times a week. The total instruction time amounts to 16-19 hours each week. Every student has the same schedule. The overarching goal of this rigidity is to immerse the students in an environment of common studies and conversation.

Grades and examinations assume a subservient role to the dialectical format. Three forms of examinations do exist. The "don-rag" is a carry over from Oxford. It consists of an oral examination twice a year in which individual students face their teachers in a grueling one hour interrogation. Once each year the student writes an original essay and during his/her senior year a thesis is submitted. Grades are not published or distributed even though they are tabulated each semester. At the completion of a degree, grades and credits are released for the purposes of articulation into advanced graduate and professional programs.

The Student at St. John's

The 700 current students at St. John's in Annapolis and Santa Fe represent a very dedicated group of academics. With 89 percent of all applicants gaining acceptance, the dean of admissions attributes this high rate to "being selected rather than being selective" (Boroff, 1963:9). Each prospective student must write an essay, discuss a significant book and project his or her future career path.

The St. John's lifestyle contributes to a pressurized academic environment. Three evenings a week are spent in scholarly discussions. There are few if any extracurricular activities or clubs. Those that the

administration does allow seem to complement the classical tone of St. John's. Fencing and formal dancing are popular activities. And yet the mood of this college is mostly one of hard work and deep intellectualism. Often the pressure overwhelms the younger students. Over 50 percent of incoming students never reach graduation. Weekends tend to become an escape from all the pressure. Loud music, drinking and dancing represent a release for many of these students of Socrates. Often the weekend will afford students either a waltz party or a beer bash or both in an interesting mix of cultures. But when Sunday evening rolls around most students find themselves busily preparing for Monday's classes.

The high cost of tuition often dictates the type of student who can attend St. John's. "We receive mostly the sons and daughters of professional people," reports Eva Brann, Dean of the Annapolis campus (Brann, 1991). This financial sieve surfaces in other ways. At Santa Fe only 10 percent of the student body is from a minority group and no blacks are currently enrolled. Dean William Carey quietly laments that St. John's has become a school for the wealthy and the poor (Carey, 1991). With over 50 percent of the student body financial aid is a necessity. For the other half of the students money appears to be no obstacle. The financial profile then of the St. John's student seems to be widely divergent with little representation from middle income families.

"The program" as it is called at St. John's is highly structured. This frustrates some students who come with interests in music performance or art. The routine is so concentrated and rigid that little time remains for daily practice or individual discretion. The administration and faculty view this rigidity as essential to the St. John's atmosphere. They quote in their defense Buchanan's colleague, Mark Van Doren. "Education is honored when it is hard, and it is more honored when it is hard and good" (1944:153). Gerald Grant writes that teachers openly professed "We will not pander to students. Many will leave; the way to wisdom is not easy, and few will persevere" (Grant and Riesman, 1978:41).

This atmosphere of intellectual rigor and discipline does generate some staunch disciples amongst the students. David Boroff in The Saturday Review recounts some of his interviews with such students. One transfer student commented that, "This was the first time he had not been bored by April." Another scholarly immigrant from a Midwest school remarked, "Ideas there were extracurricular." And a Princeton transfer student responded, "The difference there and here is between being a technician and a philosopher" (1963:9). Grant recalls one sophomore student defending St. John's with these words, "If there is anything wrong here, it's wrong with me" (Grant and Riesman, 1978:61). Kathy Quintero, a student during the seventies at St. John's recently put it in this perspective: "St John's will always be my intellectual home" (Interview, 1991). Obviously, for many there is only one real college for serious thinking students. And yet the rigidity and the narrow focus force many others to leave St. John's with dissenting rather than positive opinions.

The Faculty

The promotional booklet which each prospective student receives in the mail begins with this announcement: "The following teachers will return to St. John's next year: Homer, Sophocles, Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Plato. . ." (and some one hundred others). The only true faculty at St. John's are those who have etched their names in the classics. There are teachers who interact with the students, but these are known modestly as "tutors." This rubric underscores the faculty concept at St. John's. The role of the tutor is to facilitate the interaction between the great books and the students. While most tutors enter St. John's with an academic specialty as well as a Ph.D., there is little faculty stagnation. Instead all instructors are required to teach all disciplines and subject areas. This has the effect of putting the faculty through the same paces that the students experience. In fact in most classes at St. John's two faculty members are involved. One is the instructor and the other is preparing to teach the class. Even the instructor has the responsibility to reread the classic in preparation for a given class. The net effect of this format is that

faculty either learn to master and enjoy all the traditional topics in the liberal arts curriculum or they part company with this school and its demands.

A second pressure point for the instructors surfaces in their visibility. Classes are frequently observed and audited by other senior faculty. In addition to this all senior students who have been tutored by a certain instructor are asked to give their evaluation of his/her teaching prowess. When it comes time for a tenure decision, there is an abundance of teaching information upon which to base the judgment. As one tutor complained, "Too many of the faculty live in lucite cylinders" (Grant, 1984). Constant observation and public visibility intensify the pressure that faculty experience at St. John's.

This college takes pride in the abolition of academic departments and faculty rank. These unnecessary structures leave more space for the strong teaching emphasis. The tenure process is highly selective with only a spartan 25 percent of the faculty receiving approval. Of those faculty who leave 90 percent would stay if they could according to Anthony Carey at Santa Fe (Interview 1991). The tenure process includes four individual teaching appointments during a 7 year period. In the sixth year a tutor is either terminated or given tenure after the following year. All teachers are expected to minimize outside interests and concentrate full time on their students and teaching. Research and writing are optional, but must not interfere with the instructional format. Some tutors such as Eva Brann and J. Winfree Smith publish in various fields, but they are the exceptions.

These radical departures from traditional faculty mores create a distinct dichotomy in each instructor's professional path. The pressure to master new bodies of knowledge, the constant exposure and the lack of faculty security can combine to crush the untenured instructors. However, these same radical departures become strong motivations for others and serve to enamor and envelope them in the aura of St. John's College.

The St. John's Saga

With a tradition that now spans more than 50 years, St. John's nurtures a rich pervasive saga. This saga is fostered by devote faculty, loyal alumni, and upper level students. But one other aspect of St. John's assumes a preeminent position in this arena. This maverick college takes its entire *raison d'être* from the tradition of the "Great Books." The curriculum, the heart of the matter at St. John's, revolves around the most traditional works in western literature and civilization. Is it any surprise then that St. John's drips in the richness of its own saga?

Stellar leadership has also left an indelible impression in the mosaic of the St. John's saga. The decade of the Barr-Buchanan era provided this small college with an abundance both of history and folklore. Buchanan's spirit seems to stalk the hallways and his aphorisms are frequently cited. His statement to Hutchins towards the end of his administration symbolizes the saga of this early founder. "This spiritual and moral revolution is the only thing in the world worth living for" (Kass 1973:28). And yet, ironically, Buchanan resigned his post after 10 years and attempted to found an imitation of St. John's College in Massachusetts. It never materialized and subsequently Buchanan returned often to St. John's as a commencement speaker or guest lecturer. Statements that he made late in his life indicated his displeasure with his decision to leave St. John's in 1946 (Smith 1983:87). But even his impetuous departure did not lessen his imprint on St. John's.

The intensity of Buchanan's persona merged during the 1940s with some of the brightest names in education. People such as Robert Hutchins, Alexander Meiklejohn, Mortimer Adler and Mark Van Doren publicly defended St. John's in the national press. Their opponents were such heavyweights as John Dewey, Sidney Hook, and Helen Lynd. And yet, even St. John's critics unintentionally strengthened the presence of this small college. Their public assaults on the St. John's philosophy were presented in such national magazines as The New Republic, Fortune, Harpers and The Saturday Review. Win or lose, the debates

placed St. John's on the map and ultimately enriched the saga that pervades this maverick college.

The current saga of St. John's draws deeply upon the decades of the thirties and forties. But there is more. There is Richard Weigle who presided over St. John's for 28 years and won accreditation for the College in 1953. There is the transcendent dean, Jacob Klein. Many view this German immigrant as the crucial spoke that kept the wheel turning in the aftermath of the Barr-Buchanan departure. And there are more legends in the making like Eva Brann, a respected tutor who has taught at Annapolis since 1957. Perhaps the deepest reservoir, however, of the St. John's saga resides within the current alumni. Fiercely loyal, this group will talk endlessly of their halcyon days as students. They alone sufficiently insure that the St. John's tradition will not be forgotten.

Does It Work?

One of the best responses to this question echoes in the saying, "The proof is in the pudding." The graduates reflect favorably on St. John's. Over 60 percent of St. John's graduates pursue advanced degrees in their first year following graduation (compared to 53 percent at Princeton and 46 percent at Amherst). Twenty percent of these graduates enter teaching, 25 percent enter business or industry, 13 percent enter government or law, and the remainder disperse themselves over social work, medicine, library science and religious professions ("Self-Evaluation Report," 1955, 4). In an different alumni report funded by the Ford Foundation, 92 percent of the respondents expressed approval for the St. John's program. One third of those who replied went so far as to express "complete satisfaction with the present distribution of emphasis in the program" (Grant, 1984:73). The biggest advantage that these alumni identified from their St. John's experience was the ability to face and solve problems dealing with unfamiliar data.

On the flip side of the slate some negative marks also appeared in that 1955 alumni survey. One-half of all respondents regretted their lack of specialized skills when they left St. John's. Many cited the need for better writing skills than they currently possessed. And most gave the laboratory classes unsatisfactory marks.¹⁰ The debate ranges over the entire expanse of this "Great Books College." Disciples claim that St. John's is the very essence of learning; critics counter that it is simply adopting an abstract frame of reference. Proponents laud the virtues of thinking and training the mind; opponents assert that St. John's fosters intellectual prejudice against professional training and practical skills. Supporters extol the self-confidence that graduates possess; skeptics suggest that alumni are misfits and at odds with the world. And so the debate continues without a final word or closure.

There is one defense of St. John's that subdues most critics. St. John's has withstood the test of time. It continues to move forward much like it did in the fall of 1937. Unlike many other educational experiments this one has endured virtually unchanged. The leaders are different. Where there was once one campus now there are two with plans for a third. In 1971 Ronald McArthur paid the supreme compliment to St. John's. He modeled the new Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, California exactly after the St. John's format. These developments lend substance to Eva Brann's claim that, "St John's is no experiment unless western civilization is an experiment." Perhaps she is right or perhaps the final word is yet to be written on, "The Great Books College."

¹⁰The author acknowledges the age of this alumni report as a limitation. However, St. John's administrators were reluctant to share their most recent self-evaluation reports. Two factors mitigate somewhat the age of this 1955 survey. First, a large number of alumni were sampled (600). And second, St. John's more so than other colleges has been very slow to change or alter portions of its program.

Chapter 10

Monteith College: Spreading Innovation

Katrina Green ¹¹

Origins

Wayne State University began as a post secondary educational component of the Detroit public school system. This program later developed into a city college, a city university, then achieved state university status in 1956. As an institution it gained a reputation of catering to regional students and those of underprivileged backgrounds (Riesman, 1970:38-39). Educational innovation came to Wayne State University in 1959 with the establishment of a small college within the larger university—Monteith College was born (Official Proceedings, Feb 20, 1964 and Inside Wayne, November 15, 1961).

However, Monteith's genesis was prior to 1959. Monteith's founding document, "the Grey Document", emerged from an earlier self-study of Wayne State University's Liberal Arts Division with a focus on undergraduate general education. This document came about through the efforts of three men. There appears to be some disagreement as to the members of Monteith's initiating trio. According to Riesman, Gusfield, and Gamson the members included Floyd Murphy, Donald Pearson, and Sidney Karr (Riesman, 1970:40). However, all available university documents suggest that the trio consisted of Woodburn O. Ross, Max Coral and Alfred H. Kelly (Official Proceedings, June 25, 1964). Although the names may be different the process was the same. The study became a proposal for a new college through the urging of then President Clarence B. Hilberry.

Clarence Faust of the Ford Foundation for the Advancement of Education mentioned to President Hilberry the Foundation's desire for experimentation in urban state universities with the focus on general education and liberal arts within its own college (Riesman, 1970:43). President Hilberry saw the Foundation as a source of income and suggested to the trio the development of a new college. The proposal was accepted by the Ford Foundation with a grant for \$700,000. The college proposal was then put forth to get the approval of the University Council, Council of Deans, and the Board of Governors. All took supporting action in the fall of 1958 (Official Proceedings, June 25, 1964). This new college was unique. It was the first attempt to set up a separate college within a larger university focused on solving a particular problem (Detroit News, December 22, 1958).

The new college was to be named Monteith. Its namesake was John Monteith (1788-1868). He along with Father Gabriel Richard helped to establish the University of Michigan, of which he became the first president. He also was pivotal in establishing Detroit's first public library, which he envisioned as a facility for the continuing education of adults through independent study (Official Proceedings, June 25, 1964). A Dean of Monteith College, Yates Hafner, stated best how the college and its namesake were to be

¹¹Katrina Green, Student Services, University of Utah.

intertwined:

His broad and exact learning, his love for truth and justice, his spirit of service and collaboration, his active engagement in civic life, his courage in speaking out against the majority when he thought the majority was wrong, his vision and his hope—are quantities that Monteith College encourages its students to achieve. This kind of life in today's world is the point of general education (College Catalog, 1973-74:4).

Philosophy

The Ford Foundation's intentions supported the most basic element of Monteith's philosophy. The foundation required an emphasis on general education within the college, and Monteith accomplished this by making general education a matter of central concern over the entire four years of undergraduate study (Official Proceedings, October 25, 1962). By emphasizing general education, the college assumed there existed of a body of knowledge which every educated person should know.

Monteith was not designed for a specialized group of students. The idea was to admit any student who was eligible to enter Wayne State University. To do this the college sent letters of invitation to every third person who was admitted to the university. In doing so it created a population within the college which was representative of the university as a whole. However, there was a ceiling set on enrollment of about 1200 students for the college.

This enrollment cap served several functions. First it assisted in creating a sense of community in the college by keeping it small. Second, it facilitated the teaching method of small discussion groups. This was important as the small groups facilitated the development of the student's communication abilities by allowing more time for student discussion. The small groups also prepared students to take more responsibility for their own learning which developed independent work capabilities.

The Monteith innovation "was a local development that reflected national anxiety about the rise of specialization" (Riesman, 1970:40). The faculty were not organized by way of traditional departments, but rather were separated into three divisions: Science of Society, Humanistic Studies, and Natural Science. These divisions made up three basic sequences of required courses within the college. These course sequences were integrated attempts at asking large questions. The idea was to provide a general education which would transcend all boundaries artificially imposed by departments (College Catalog, 1973-74:7-9).

Curriculum

What exactly did this general education consist of? There were to be no traditional disciplinary lines of study, but rather an approach which would link the various disciplines into the three core divisions. As a freshman the student began with the Science of Society core courses. This sequence was pursued for five quarters. During this time the next phase began with sequences in the Natural Sciences. In the third year the final sequence of courses in the Humanities was begun. These areas extended progressively through a student's undergraduate education and were designed to keep the entire range of material in focus. The senior colloquium and essay were the culmination of the general education requirements at Monteith (Official Proceedings, Oct. 25, 1962, Knapp, 1966:13, and Riesman, 1970:44). The use of a senior essay was recognized as being on the forefront of education. Also seen as forward-looking was Monteith's use of independent study (Detroit Free Press, June 19, 1963).

As a student progressed through the general education program greater emphasis was placed upon independent study. This structure supported John Monteith's desire for adults to continue their education throughout life. By encouraging students to develop strong independent study skills of investigation and

reflection, students would continue their education beyond their college years. With extensive use of independent study for junior and senior students, the college was able to maintain small freshman and sophomore classes (Riesman, 1970:43). Independent study being of importance at Monteith lead the college into an experiment with the university library in 1960. The idea was to explore methods of developing a more vital relationship between the library and college teaching. Teachers coordinated with the library staff to form assignments which required students to develop independent skills in library use (Knapp, 1966).

Not only was Monteith's thematic divisions unique, but so also was course content and the manner in which courses were taught. Students were to attend two required lectures weekly, then meet in groups of about 12 for discussion of the seminar. Focusing on basic knowledge, courses were designed to provide a liberal education as a means of enabling students to deal with world problems (Detroit News, December 22, 1958). In addition to providing basic knowledge to deal with problems, faculty confronted and challenged students. Faculty were not necessarily looking for "right" answers, but rather for students to use their experiences and relate them to the course to create an answer (Riesman, 1970:79,122).

In addition, each course was taught by a team of teachers from one of the core divisions, providing the student with a variety of content, methods, and teaching style. However, this team-teaching structure resulted in difficulties for the faculty. A course was not one person's responsibility, and disagreement often existed among those involved in a particular course. Course content and basic classroom logistics had to be determined by the team. Other issues arose such as, what would be the structure of the grading policy, and would there be a tone of casualness or orderliness set for students?

Atmosphere

Classes conducted through interdisciplinary study, team teaching, and small discussion groups added to the development of close relationships between students and faculty. Students identified with the college as a specific community. They were a part of the college, not just a number attending the university.

The atmosphere surrounding Monteith was more like a family than a large university, yet students had access to all the benefits the larger university provided. Many students were active in campus affairs; Monteith students held such various positions as member of the Student-Faculty Council, the Student Education Council, assistant to faculty members, and swimming instructor for emotionally disturbed and retarded children (Detroit Free Press, June 19, 1963). Monteith created a family atmosphere, a sense of belonging, and students felt encouraged and supported in their efforts to become involved.

Recognition

Through the sense of community created at Monteith its graduates gained a sense of confidence. In 1975 the Dean of Monteith reported that the make up of alumni consisted of five percent physicians, five percent scientists, one-half percent attorneys, five percent professors and deans, and five percent in some area of mass media (South End, October 2, 1975). Monteith developed a strong reputation for providing an outstanding educational experience.

In 1962 it was too early to draw firm conclusions about the success of the Monteith program. Although in a nation wide survey conducted to test the climate of education, "...Monteith placed at the 79.79 percentile in a range from 24 to 94 percentile. Monteith was considered to be in the company of a very few private institutions of high prestige" (Official Proceedings, Oct. 25,1962). The program began to be seen as a success seven years after its beginnings when the Accreditation Commission of the North Association commended Monteith for constituting "an unusually significant opportunity in an urban institution... It adds a dimension often lacking in large institutions" (South End, June 11, 1975:3).

Monteith gained additional national recognition when it was included in a study by the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education which endeavored to measure educational impact and student development by examining 15 diverse institutions. The study determined that “Monteith students changed more dramatically in propensity to be involved in academic and intellectual pursuits than students at the other 14 studied institutions” (College Catalog, 1973-74:12). This was a considerable accolade, in that the study included institutions such as Antioch, Sarah Lawrence and two University of California campuses (Detroit News, June 11, 1975). Since its beginnings Monteith had received enthusiastic endorsement from deans of professional schools and educators across the country (South End, October 23, 1969). Yet, this was not enough; Monteith’s praises were no match for the university’s financial pressures.

A Bitter Battle

The first blow to Monteith came on May 7, 1975. The Dean of Monteith, Yates Hafner, met with President George Gullen on May 8 only to be informed that a proposal, based upon budgetary constraints, to phase out Monteith had been approved the day before by the Wayne State Board of Governors (South End, December 9, 1993). Both the high and the low points in Monteith’s story centered around the roles of two Wayne State University presidents. During Monteith’s inception, President Hilberry promoted its creation and approval. In 1975 President Gullen initiated the discontinuance of Monteith.

The secretive approach to eliminating Monteith sent an alarm throughout Wayne State University; a president and provost not following university procedure was cause for concern. A sense of distrust and bitterness grew from the belief that the administration, particularly Provost Henry Bohm and President George Gullen, did not follow proper university procedures in their proposal to phase out Monteith. Shortly after the proposal became public Provost Henry Bohm resigned. Many individuals in the university community confidentially expressed alarm about not only the handling of Monteith, but also the subsequent sudden and unexpected resignation of Provost Henry Bohm, Wayne State’s chief academic officer (South End, October 2, 1975).

During the Board of Governors June 13, 1975 meeting a motion was made and carried that a freshman class be admitted for the 1975-76 school year. It also was determined that Monteith share in achieving a balanced budget. During this same time period, the Board of Governors and its Budget and Finance Committee decided to form a committee to study the proposed discontinuance of Monteith (Official Proceedings, June 13, 1975). The study was conducted during the end of that summer and the beginning of fall. The committee’s report was presented to the Board of Governors on December 12, 1975. However, the report had previously been presented to the University’s Policy Committee on October 20, 1975, and then again to the University Council on November 5, with the recommendation that due to the university’s budgetary problems Monteith should be phased out.

Monteith’s faculty countered the budgetary argument by saying that the college’s portion of the university budget consisted of less than one percent. In addition, Monteith had already reduced its college budget and was willing to make attempts to find areas for further reductions. Yet, faculty claimed that as holes appeared in the university’s logic, new areas of attack were found. On November 12, 1975 at a University Council meeting the stance changed from the budget issue to a bitter attack on the quality of the Monteith program (South End, December 2, 1975). Monteith supporters argued that it was the only college that was meeting two of the university’s fundamental goals. These two goals were reported in the spring of 1975 by the Wayne State University Self-Study Task Force as being “to maintain and strengthen programs in general education” and “to strive to solve the problems of depersonalized education” (South End, June 11, 1975 and October 2, 1975). Another argument made for the phase out was that Monteith duplicated other offerings available on campus. Monteith faculty argued that although courses may have similar content they are taught differently, and that those examining the college could not discount that

effect on the students. Yet another area of attack came in the form of claiming that Monteith had a high level of attrition. Monteith faculty countered with the structure of the program; it was designed so that students who entered the program could complete it within the college, or get their degree from another college. So, in fact, the numbers presented may not have been reflective of all students who had benefitted from attendance at Monteith (South End, December 3, 1975).

Monteith faculty felt their concerns were not being heard through use of university channels, so they turned to public avenues. In doing so they gained the support of State Senator Jack Faxon, D-Detroit. In the Detroit News (December 6, 1975), Faxon blamed the attack on Monteith as part of a general trend away from liberal arts education towards specialized professional schools. To further his support of Monteith he offered, along with other senators, State Senate Resolution No. 316 in support of Monteith. This resolution was adopted by the Senate on December 10, 1975. In addition to this support were several rebuttals to the attacks on Monteith in the school newspaper, South End, refuting the content and quality of the study conducted by the ad hoc committee of the University Council. The Monteith faculty also developed a plan to expand Monteith with the hope that a “new” Monteith would be allowed to continue. This proposal was released to the press as a final effort to save the college, which caused concern for the Board of Governors and others because they felt the plan had not gone through proper university procedures. Despite all the efforts of those supporting Monteith, the final decision came on December 12, 1975.

The study by the ad hoc committee had become the resolution of the University Council. It was presented and approved on a 7-1 vote by the Board of Governors on December 12. The resolution stated that:

WHEREAS, the educational goals of large numbers of students are being thwarted by the unavailability of programs or classes and by a lowering of the quality of education.

WHEREAS, the Council believes that first priority must be given to students who cannot be served elsewhere in the University and that the widespread problem of the decline of quality of education must take precedence over the interest of a small group.

THEREFORE, Given these educational needs, the limited resources of the University, and the duplicative nature of Monteith College,

The University Council RECOMMENDS that a program discontinuance of Monteith College be accomplished by a phase-out; . . .

FURTHER, THAT all funds saved by the abolishing of Monteith College be used to augment the various Schools, Colleges and the Libraries (Official Proceedings, December 12, 1975:2663-4).

As a note of interest, the only dissenting member of the Board of Governors was Michael Einheuser. Three years prior Einheuser had been the Monteith Student Board President, and had spoken with President Gullen regarding Monteith’s status. The President promised Einheuser that “as long as I’m president of this university, there would always be a place for Monteith College” (South End, February 4, 1976). The president did not hold true to his promise.

The struggle over what to do regarding Monteith was a bitter battle. Each side felt that it was treated unfairly. A member of the University Council’s policy committee, Ross Stagner said it best. He told the governing board that in his many years of teaching he had not seen “such an extraordinary case of trying to bring political and public pressure to bear on an educational policy decision” (Official Proceedings, December 12, 1975:2666 and Detroit Free Press, December 13, 1975). Involving the public heightened the intensity of the battle; there were more people with wider opinions and emotions who became involved. Because Wayne State University is a public institution there is some claim to their involvement, however it should not overrun university autonomy. This was reinforced in the December 12, 1975 Board of Governors meeting by a representative from the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors. The representative said that there was a need for proper procedures to be followed in all university activities

(Official Proceedings, December 12, 1975:2667). Perhaps the best indication of the fact that indeed a battle had been fought was found represented best in the Detroit Free Press (December 13, 1975).

The debate over whether to close Monteith has frequently been a bitter one, and at the close of Friday's board meeting a 19-year-old student tried to throw a pie in the direction of Wayne President George E. Gullen, Jr. and Board Chairman George C. Edwards. The attempt was blocked by a Wayne security man. . .

Legacy

Phasing out Monteith did not mean it vanished, the college left behind a legacy of its own. Although, Michael Evan Thomas suggests that today:

You would have to look hard into the nooks and crannies of WSU to find any hint that there was such a college as Monteith. Its buildings are gone, three of which were beautiful Victorian houses torn down in 1981—the year the last of Monteith's students graduated. Ironically, they used to stand on what is now Gullen Mall, named after George Gullen, the WSU president who led the move to phase out Monteith (South End's TimeOut, December 9, 1993:9).

He later admits that Monteith did have an impact. It provided for a public good, left curricular innovations at Wayne State University, and inspired other schools.

One public good is the Monteith Cooperative Nursery, begun as Monteith College Nursery. Two students saw the need for a nursery (so parents could return to school by having a good, inexpensive place to take their children) and talked the Monteith student board into setting aside three rooms for the nursery. Monteith students and interested parents all volunteered to clean up, collect needed materials and supervise the children (Detroit News, November 11, 1970). This nursery remains open to all students (South End, December 9, 1993).

Curricular innovations encompassed a wide range of areas. The Afro-American Experience started in 1968 as a part of Monteith, and became integrated with Wayne State University's Center for Black Studies. The Chicano-Boricua Studies, the first educational program in United States bringing two distinct Latino groups together in a common setting, taught courses in social, political, urban, and cultural realities of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans (South End, December 12, 1975). This program became a segment of Wayne State University's College of Lifelong Learning. The Program for Labor School Graduates, offering day and evening courses to adult workers who have been away from school for several years, was of special interest to members of the local community. Monteith gained much support in their efforts to survive, from union groups who used and encouraged others to use the program. This program was recommended to join the Wayne State University's College of Liberal Arts. Upper division courses were offered at Monteith in the areas of Third World Studies and Women's Studies for those interested in understanding minority groups, and have since become their own programs at Wayne State University (South End, December 9, 1993).

Not only has Monteith left programs to Wayne State University, they started a trend towards small learning units in large universities in this country (College Catalog, 1973-74:11). Monteith's advice was sought and taken by other colleges and universities both within the state of Michigan, and across the country. Examples of program influenced by Monteith are the Residential College of the University of Michigan, Justin Morrill College of Michigan State University, Oakland University, James Madison College at Michigan State, and University of California, Santa Cruz, a cluster of small colleges all organized on the unique curriculum and course structure developed by Monteith (South End, December 3, 1975:2 and December 9, 1993:9).

Monteith as a college may not have lasted past Wayne State University's budgetary problems, but its ideas continued on. John Monteith would have been saddened at the college's demise, but pleased that it provided those who attend the knowledge to continue their independent study. The Ford Foundation would also have to be pleased that their funding of Monteith provided a model of encouragement for general education within a large university. Every person involved in the founding of an experimental college hopes it will continue and thrive. Those at Monteith should not despair with its demise, for it left an important legacy by which it will be remembered.

Chapter 11

Miami-Dade Community College: An Open Door to Quality

Linda R. Fife¹²

Introduction

Community colleges by their nature are unique institutions of higher education. They have a comprehensive mission to serve all aspects of the community's educational needs, from terminal and transfer degrees, to vocational education, to developmental education including English as a Second Language, to leading edge training for business and industry. Additionally, most community colleges are open-door institutions, allowing admission to any student who wishes to enroll.

In 1984, Miami-Dade Community College was selected by a national panel of community college experts as the number one community college in the nation (Roueche & Baker, 1987:10). What makes this institution unique among others with missions and circumstances similar to its own? Why is Miami-Dade Community College acknowledged so frequently in educational literature as a leader in innovation and reform? This chapter explores the history of Miami-Dade Community College, the challenges it has faced, and the innovative ways in which it has met these challenges in order to provide a quality education to all members of the community who demonstrate the willingness to pursue one.

Overview

In January of 1960 Dade County Junior College opened its doors. It was, from the beginning, a school with a commitment to the concept of education for all students. In the words of Robert McCabe, its current President, "When Miami-Dade opened its doors in 1960, it was the only college within 250 miles of Miami that would accept Black students" (Baker, Roueche, & Gillet-Karam, 1990:81). The student body numbered approximately 1,428 and the faculty approximately 65. The College was not situated on its own campus, but held classes in public schools and portable buildings. The administration, however, was slightly more centralized. Roueche and Baker state:

The president's office was a renovated tractor shed, and other officials were in buildings originally designed for agricultural education, specifically for housing cows. One dean and his staff were the subject of much humor because they were housed in what had been a poultry farm's

¹²Linda R. Fife, Faculty, Salt Lake Community College.

laying house. Its location earned the college such nicknames as “Pig Pen U” and “Chicken Coop College.” (1987:21).

The college continued to grow, and in 1963 began construction of its first permanent building. In 1973 the school, with an enrollment of over 9,200 students, was renamed Miami-Dade Community College (Roueche & Baker, 1987:22). During the following years enrollment continued to soar, growing from 23,241 on two campuses in 1967 to approximately 120,000 on five campuses in 1994 (Jenrette & Napoli, 1994:ix).

Miami-Dade’s student population reflects that of the Miami community. The high number of immigrants from Cuba and Haiti produce a population which, to a large degree, does not speak English as their native language. In 1987 Roueche and Baker reported:

Miami-Dade College today is a huge system, serving some 41,000 credit students each semester. Over 51% of its student body is Hispanic, 31% is white non-Hispanic, and 16% is black non-Hispanic. Miami-Dade has more lower division black students than any other college or university in Florida and more Hispanic students than all other Florida higher education institutions combined. Sixty percent of its students enter with deficiencies in at least one of the basic skills areas. Over 50% are not native speakers of English. There are more full-time nonimmigrant alien visa students at Miami-Dade than at any other college or university in the nation. Each year nearly 30,000 disadvantaged students receive financial aid through the college (1987:29).

The Problems

Miami-Dade is, like most community colleges, a comprehensive, open-door institution. As such, its students are not denied access as a result of basic skills deficiencies or low test scores. Obviously, this type of approach to education results in a highly diverse student population, not only in terms of ethnicity but in teams of academic aptitude, interests, educational goals, and life situations. The many educational needs of this large and diverse student population, coupled with unrestricted enrollment into the many programs (145 in 1994) offered at Miami-Dade (Jenrette & Napoli, 1994:ix) resulted in Robert McCabe’s concerns in the 1970’s which many community colleges shared: the ability of the institution to provide a quality educational experience while maintaining an open-door approach to admissions. McCabe found out from faculty, staff, and community members that unrestricted enrollment into all programs coupled with the lack of academic standards was resulting in huge numbers of students at Miami-Dade whose performance in school was appalling. During an interview in 1988, McCabe stated:

A son of a friend was in a college algebra course where the teacher couldn’t teach because the class was full of people who couldn’t add. It happened enough that I was beginning to feel ashamed of what we were doing (Zwerling, 1988:22).

It has been argued that it is not possible to provide quality educational programs to an unrestricted student population with diverse backgrounds and educational needs. Indeed, Zwerling has stated that the primary role of the community college is to “assist in channeling young people to essentially the same relative positions in the social structure that their parents already occupy” (Roueche & Baker, 1987:33). The faculty and staff at Miami-Dade led by Robert McCabe, however, do not believe that open access and quality education are mutually exclusive. Strongly committed to the open-door approach to education, yet faced with burgeoning enrollments of students unprepared, under prepared, and/or lacking the commitment for higher education, Miami-Dade turned its attention to identifying specific problems and solutions which would allow all students who demonstrated the commitment an opportunity to learn, supply the level of student support required by disadvantaged students, encourage and support faculty members, and in general create a teaching and learning environment which would prevent the open door from becoming a

revolving door of failure for the student. The reforms instituted at Miami-Dade from 1978 to the present have made this community college one of the most frequently acknowledged successes in higher education today.

Meeting the Challenge

Miami-Dade continues to be a strong and viable institution of higher education which serves the diverse learning needs of its students in innovative ways. Although the college's reforms have been comprehensive and continuing, it is possible to see a continuum of change that began in 1978 with an emphasis upon student support services and student outcomes, which was enhanced by the implementation of a five year, faculty oriented "Teaching/Learning Project" in 1986. Some of these reforms are discussed below. For the sake of clarity, they are referred to as "student oriented" and "faculty oriented" which in no way implies that these improvements were directed at, or have benefitted, either group exclusively. Indeed, the reforms from 1978 to the present have served to enhance and improve the teaching and learning environment for faculty, students, and staff alike.

Student Oriented Reforms

Standards of Academic Progress - As previously mentioned, two of the most serious problems faced by Miami-Dade were that of totally unrestricted enrollment coupled with the absence of any type of academic standards which had to be met in order for students to remain in school. To address these problems, in 1978 Miami-Dade implemented Standards of Academic Progress (SOAP), which required that students maintain specified grade point averages and pass half of all classes for which they register. The process includes a system of warning, probation, and suspension for those students who fail to meet these standards. Students are advised of a change in academic status, may have their course loads limited, and are given advice on possible ways to improve their performance. Students who ultimately fail to make satisfactory progress are dismissed (Roueche & Baker, 1987:50). As a result

a balance of open and selective admission is achieved. All students are offered an opportunity to succeed in college, but they must prove that they merit the expenditure of the college's time and money in order to proceed through a curriculum of study. They are constantly monitored along the way, and they are offered appropriate instructional assistance, as required, but they are expected to meet the college's standards of progress within a specified period or face suspension or dismissal (Nigliazzo, 1986:33).

Academic Alert and Advisement and Graduation Information System (AGIS) - Using a \$900,000 Title III grant, the college designed and implemented an integrated computer system which allows individual tracking of each student. The system produces several types of personalized letters each quarter which inform students of their academic progress and status and which provide information on appropriate courses for the following quarter. With this system, students are able to identify potential problems early, receive positive feedback about successes, and receive assistance in planning their courses of study (Roueche & Baker, 1987:52). In addition, AGIS provides important information to students and advisors regarding progress toward completion of the students' program as well as courses required for transfer to other institutions of higher education (Roueche & Baker, 1987:56).

Basic Skills Assessment and Course work - In 1979, Miami-Dade implemented the Comparative Guidance and Placement Test to assess the basic math, reading, and written English skills of entering students. Later, the college switched to the Multiple Assessment Programs and Service (MAPS) (Roueche & Baker, 1987:59). Prior to the use of these instruments, as mentioned above, enrollment into all programs was

unrestricted. Basic skills assessment has enabled Miami-Dade to identify those students who are likely to have difficulty with college-level work, and to direct them to the appropriate developmental classes prior to enrolling in regular college classes. In addition, study skills and time management classes, writing labs, and individualized computer programs designed to improve specific skills are available to students.

General Education Requirements - In 1981, as the result of a general education study, Miami-Dade began to require that degree-seeking students take five interdisciplinary core courses in general education. Up until that time, as expressed by Lukenbill and McCabe:

Miami-Dade Community College (Florida), like most other community colleges, did have general education requirements—specific courses that students had to complete. The college did not have statements about why these courses were necessary, what they were to achieve, or what relationships existed among the courses. Neither faculty members nor students understood clearly why these requirements were imposed (1982:85).

Miami-Dade's new general education program is based upon an interdisciplinary approach to building a basic foundation of knowledge for understanding the world.

Unfortunately, only a handful of community colleges in the 1980's have recommitted to the concept of general education. The Dallas County Community College District (Texas), Los Medanos Community College (California), and Miami-Dade Community College (Florida) are examples of colleges that have developed authentic programs of general education based on the historical concept of this important idea (O'Banion, 1989:14).

Faculty Oriented Reforms

In 1987, Miami-Dade implemented their five year "Teaching/Learning Project." This project was the result of the increasing concerns of Miami-Dade's President, Robert McCabe, regarding the fact that "Miami-Dade was projecting large numbers of faculty retirements in the 1990's...the diversification of the student population, [and]...the growing volume of information of adult learning, learning styles, and cultural influences on learning preferences" (Jenrette & Napoli, 1994:2).

The project was described by McCabe as

organized in such a way that (1) student learning will become an institutional goal; (2) administrators, faculty, and support personnel will work as a team toward the institutional goal; (3) faculty and others will realize that the faculty are the key players in this effort; (4) productive technologies and strategies will be chosen to attain the institutional goals; and (5) administrative practices will be altered to met the teaching/learning needs (O'Banion, 1989:110).

The following three major goals were established for the Teaching/Learning Project: (1) to improve teaching and learning at Miami-Dade; (2) to make teaching at Miami-Dade a professionally rewarding career; and (3) to make teaching and learning the focal point of Miami-Dade's activities and decision-making processes (Jenrette & Napoli, 1994:4).

One of the first products of the Teaching/Learning Project was the "Statement of Teaching/Learning Values at Miami-Dade Community College" (Jenrette & Napoli, 1994:154-157) which provides a comprehensive foundation for the goals mentioned above. Other key results of the project include new faculty orientation, pre-service, and mentoring; required graduate classes and videotapes for faculty regarding effective teaching and learning, classroom feedback, and cultural differences in learning styles; establishment of classroom equipment and maintenance standards; and statements of faculty excellence which serve as the basis for retention, promotion, tenure, and the hiring of new faculty (Baker, Roueche & Gillett-Karam, 1990:269).

In addition, an Endowed Teaching Chair program was implemented, with the goal of raising \$10 million for endowment of 100 chairs and \$2.5 million for scholarship and program support (Traylor, Katsinas & Herrmann, 1989:24). As of June 1989, 33 chairs valued at \$75,000 each had been endowed by corporations and private donors (Baker, Roueche & Gillett-Kamm, 1990:270). Endowed chairs are unusual at a community college; the scope of this effort is truly impressive. In addition:

unlike chairs in a traditional university setting, this honor [is] awarded to full-time faculty whose service to Miami-Dade students [is] outstanding, Criteria for awarding endowed chairs were derived from the Statement of Faculty Excellence. Faculty who wish to be considered candidates for a chair must present a performance portfolio to the Endowed Chair Committee for evaluation. Help in preparing an endowed chair portfolio is available to faculty through each campus's Center for Teaching and Learning (Jenrette & Napoli, 1994:12).

Results

In 1987, Roueche and Baker included the following information in their chapter on the outcomes of the student-oriented reforms at Miami-Dade:

1. General Education - "Both faculty (83%) and students (78% to 82%) thought the core courses had a 'positive impact' on Miami-Dade students."
2. Basic Skills Assessment - "73% of the faculty supported the use of placement testing and the resulting greater control over student academic choices... Students, especially those most affected (i.e., those taking developmental courses) supported the use of placement tests... 70% of the students agreed that the writing, reading, and mathematics courses they took were appropriate for their skills level."
3. Developmental Courses - Because of the length of time between developmental course work and exams such as the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST), it is difficult to assess how significant developmental course work is in overall academic performance. However, of 1,324 developmental/ESL students surveyed "93% indicated that the course in which they were presently enrolled increased their chances of future academic success. Over 70% believed they could not complete college without developmental instruction."
4. Standards of Academic Progress (SOAP) - "81% to 87% of the students in non clear SOAP categories, over half of the students in clear SOAP categories, and 65% to 69% of the staff, administrators, and faculty agreed that SOAP is an effective means of identifying students who experience course difficulties. The faculty have also reported that students have become much more serious about their studies and about their programs with the SOAP system in place."
5. Academic Alert and the Advisement and Graduation Information System (AGIS) - "In the 1984 survey, 37% of both Spring and Fall students said they improved their performance as a result of receiving an Academic Alert Letter. However, these percentages were not as low as they appear because 25% of all students surveyed were in their first term and had never received a letter."
6. "The 1984 self-study survey on AGIS revealed that 81% to 90% of the respondents thought the AGIS system effectively provided information about courses required for graduation. In fact, when the surveyors asked administrators and staff what single major change had the most positive impact on the college in the last ten years more of them named AGIS than any other change" (Roueche & Baker, 1987:68-83).

The faculty-oriented reforms implemented by Miami-Dade have had significant success in terms of improving the teaching/learning environment for faculty. Faculty members were heavily involved in the development and implementation of the project, which focuses on developing excellence in teachers and providing opportunities for professional growth and development. The successes, as well as areas where improvement could have been made, have been described by Mardee Jenrette and Vince Napoli (1994) in The Teaching Learning Enterprise: Miami-Dade Community College's Blueprint for Change. The book serves as a valuable resource for other institutions interested in developing excellence in teaching and learning.

Summary

Miami-Dade Community College has a long history of meeting the many educational needs of its diverse community in an open-door setting. Faced in the 1970's with the problem of increasing numbers of unprepared, underachieving students with diverse backgrounds and educational needs, as well as a high percentage of faculty reaching retirement age, an increasingly diverse student population, and the growing emphasis upon teaching and learning methods and styles, Miami-Dade undertook a series of reforms aimed at improving the total teaching/learning experience for students, faculty, and staff.

Reforms at Miami-Dade have included the use of technology to improve the student advising process, basic skills assessment and training, new general education requirements, and the implementation of a Teaching/Learning Project aimed at faculty development. They have placed more responsibility for obtaining an education in the hands of the students. Miami-Dade has succeeded in meeting students' educational needs while remaining an open-door institution. These reforms have made Miami-Dade one of the most frequently acknowledged leaders in higher education reform today.

Conclusions

Certainly, the steps that Miami-Dade has taken to meet the needs of its students and faculty are impressive. However, the reforms undertaken by Miami-Dade are not exclusive to that institution. And the problems of a large student population with diverse educational needs and abilities are typical problems in community colleges. What then, makes Miami-Dade unique?

First, Miami-Dade is the largest community college system in the United States with the largest enrollment of ethnic minority students. The sheer number of students with diverse educational needs that this institution serves makes it unique not only in the challenge presented in meeting these needs, but in the tuition revenue generated by these student numbers. Faced with the choice of continuing unrestricted and unmonitored enrollment and progress, or monitoring student enrollment and progress which would result in some student dismissals, Miami-Dade opted for quality and the probability of reduced tuition revenue.

Next, although the methods that Miami-Dade has used to meet the needs of its students are not unique by today's standards, it is currently acknowledged as a national leader in the use of technology for student support systems, touch tone registration, basic skills assessment and developmental education, distance learning, and more. It may not be the only college using these methods, but it was among the first and is commended in much of the literature on community colleges for educational innovation.

And most importantly Miami-Dade's current president, Robert McCabe, has an ongoing commitment to students and faculty. His stated support of excellence in open-door education has been consistently backed by his actions. L. Steven Zwerling, quoted earlier in this paper as a critic of community colleges, came away from a site visit to Miami-Dade still skeptical about community colleges' performance in general, but impressed with Robert McCabe's accomplishments and the support and enthusiasm of his faculty. He states:

Somehow if the number one community college (and I say that now more as convert than critic) could continue to model modes of institutional self-transformation to colleague community colleges, directing their attention not to the system (the software) but to the process (the people), Miami-Dade would continue to write history. . . So I still had my critic's list of things. But I knew that McCabe is undoubtedly working on them and probably would have his tux on tonight, and that tomorrow a lot of people on the faculty will be fighting their way through the Miami traffic so they can continue their commitment to doing a little bit of God's work (Zwerling, 1988:23).

Chapter 12

The University of California at Santa Cruz: Small *is* Beautiful

L. Scott Marsh ¹³

Remove an absolute minimum of trees, shrubs, branches; nature and use will take care of the rest. Consider public safety but also consider the basic mood of the place. Any manicuring of this area will produce a commonplace effect. Build many trails, reveal many places where a student, or a teacher, or an administrator could sit in a quiet hour with only redwoods, the grass, the pack-rat nests and the dead twigs intruding upon his solitude. There are few places on earth where such a phenomenon might occur—other than in national parks and remote wildernesses. To have this opportunity on a campus of a great university is a priceless event. . .
—Ansel Adams (Gregory, 1979:20)

In the early 1900s, renowned photographer Ansel Adams reflected on the unique and beautiful coastal California site which he had been commissioned to document, and which was soon destined to become a new and innovative campus in the University of California system. This innovation in higher education, an innovation in organizational scale, design, and academic plan was to be created on two thousand acres of natural meadow and redwood forest overlooking Monterey Bay. At a time of increasing technological complexity and scale, when the impersonal “multiversity” was being both defined and cultivated, perhaps no other educational innovation so well addressed British economist E. F. Schumacher’s thesis of “small is beautiful.” Designing smallness into a large and traditional organization of higher education, and situating this innovation within a stunning natural environment, clearly demonstrates that at the University of California-Santa Cruz, small *is* beautiful.

An Educational Behemoth Attempts Innovation

By the late 1950’s the University of California system, one of the largest and most prestigious systems of higher education in the world, was not popularly known for radical educational innovation. The University of California’s five campuses were a part of a large system of traditional higher education and research centers. Although the system’s master plan designated specialties for each university campus, each campus provided consistent and relatively uniform programs in undergraduate education, graduate education and research. It was during this time that the innovations which were to become the Santa Cruz campus emerged. These innovations took hold with the 1965 opening of Cowell College, UCSC’s first liberal arts

¹³L. Scott Marsh, Graduate Student, Department of Educational Administration, University of Utah.

college. Today these same innovations continue to characterize the unique Santa Cruz campus of the University of California.

Viewed today, the first clue that the Santa Cruz campus is dramatically different from other UC campuses (UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Irvine, UC Los Angeles, UC Riverside, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara) and research/specialty institutions, is the view from the campus entrance. Consciously not located in a large metropolitan area, UCSC sits above the small beach town of Santa Cruz. From the campus' main street entrance one views a restored barn, a farm house, abandoned lime kilns, and acres upon acres of meadows stretching up to a timberline of redwood forest. Even the university's sign is surprising—it is a single, very large redwood tree placed on its side, with the words “University of California Santa Cruz” carved into a planed surface. The visual statement is strong—this is a significantly different kind of University of California campus.

Further investigation reveals starkly innovative characteristics of this campus. Nestled in the redwood timberline are eight residential colleges, each with its own unique architectural design and complete with student body and faculty. The UCSC office of admissions describes the Santa Cruz campus in a recent promotional piece:

...at UC Santa Cruz, all undergraduate students and faculty are affiliated with one of the eight residential colleges. Designed by the nation's leading architects, the colleges are distinct communities with their own housing, dining, and recreational facilities, and each is an integral part of the greater campus. The colleges surround a central core of buildings that serve all students, including the main library, science labs, performing arts complex, and classrooms. In order to foster broad intellectual interests, each college has an interdisciplinary mix of faculty and students. . . the colleges are the center of each student's life, but they are by no means the limit.

Interest in innovation at this University of California campus is perhaps most readily reflected in the UCSC grading system. Waived by the Regents for this campus was the UC system wide approach to grading. In its place was set a pass/fail (later changed to pass/no record) system with written evaluations by the faculty of each student's work. Available at no other UC campus, this grading system is available to the entire undergraduate population of UCSC.

It is clear that the UCSC campus is a radical departure in physical and academic design from the standards and traditions of the University of California system. Why was this iconoclastic campus founded? Why would such a large and traditional system build a campus which for many, seemed to be the antithesis of the University of California system? We may begin to answer these questions by investigating the intentions of UCSC's founders, and specifically their desire to fully address undergraduate liberal arts education within the context of a first rate research university system.

A Chancellor's Opportunity

The unique character of UCSC will always be firmly linked to one man—Clark Kerr. As Chancellor of UC Berkeley from 1952 to 1958, Kerr attempted to create a collegiate environment for undergraduate education on the Berkeley campus. This attempt failed. Kerr “. . . found it impossible to affect the environment of undergraduate education, to establish college communities, and to bring a sense of (a small liberal arts college) to Berkeley. . . he could not win the faculty, organized as they were in departments and professional schools, to this vision” (Grant & Riesman, 1978:254).

Yet Kerr's failure to reform undergraduate education at Berkeley proved to be most timely for the future of the Santa Cruz campus. During the October 1957 meeting of the UC Regents, two significant issues were decided which would have a profound effect on both Kerr and the future campus. The Regents

elevated Clark Kerr from his position as Chancellor of UC Berkeley to the post of President of the UC system. Additionally, the Regents authorized three new UC campuses in anticipation of significant growth in student enrollments (McHenry, 1977:87). In July of 1958, when Kerr took office, an opportunity to shape the character of undergraduate education within a campus of the University of California was his.

Today, at the heart of the Santa Cruz campus, stands the McHenry Library. A tribute to Clark Kerr's former graduate school roommate, Dean E. McHenry served as assistant for academic planning in the Resident's office under Kerr during the planning of UCSC, and was appointed by Kerr as UCSC's first Chancellor. As graduate school roommates, Kerr and McHenry "...had argued about who had had the better undergraduate education: Kerr at Swarthmore with its intense feeling of intellectual community, or McHenry at UCLA with its research faculty and library." (Grant & Riesman, 1978:254) The authorization of three new campuses gave McHenry and Kerr unrivaled opportunities to affect undergraduate education, and to wed the value of a small liberal arts experience to the contemporary UC research campus. The UCSC campus began with Kerr's direction to McHenry to find some way "...to make it seem smaller even as it grows larger" (Stadtman, 1970:416).

Kerr and McHenry Devise a Plan

The initial UCSC plan consisted of a campus of fifteen to twenty physically separate, visually different, and thematically varied residential liberal arts colleges. Each college would establish its own unique approach to learning, and depending upon its approach to education, would maintain an enrollment of between six hundred and one thousand students. Each college unit would be residential in nature and provide housing for one half to two thirds of its student body. The physical design of each college would be architecturally unique and would include facilities such as a study lounge, cafe, gathering area and recreational facilities which would enhance each college's autonomy. Campus growth was anticipated to reach a maximum enrollment of 27,500 students. The 1965 comprehensive plan for UCSC states that:

- (1) a series of liberal arts colleges was to be the basic unit of planning and of student and faculty identification;
- (2) undergraduate education would receive initial emphasis,
- (3) residential facilities would be provided for more than the usual proportion of students;
- (4) early distinction would be sought in the arts and sciences;
- (5) a restricted curriculum would serve student needs;
- and (6) tutorials, seminars, and independent study would be stressed (McHenry, 1977:88).

The UCSC campus was conceived as a cluster college design. McHenry believed that "...if we could establish firmly a series of colleges primarily devoted to undergraduate teaching that could command respect and status, collegiate values might endure after the campus became quite large and the graduate component became substantial" (McHenry, 1977:88).

McHenry felt that cluster colleges would draw undergraduate education and specialized research closer together, while maintaining the integrity of both. He sought a faculty interested in both undergraduate teaching and first-rate research. McHenry believed the cluster college design would diminish the impersonality of the large "multiversity," and would foster close learning relationships. McHenry desired a campus which maintained a small scale intimacy as it expanded in size.

To these ends the faculty appointment and governance structure was developed. Each faculty member would hold dual appointments. Fifty percent of a faculty member's salary would be provided by his/her college, the other fifty percent provided by a board of study (UCSC's disciplinary divisions). As both a college fellow and a member of a board of study, a faculty member would teach classes for both college and board. College courses would reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the college faculty, while the more traditional boards of study would provide disciplinary course work. Majors would be developed by both colleges and boards of study, with the college majors tending to be interdisciplinary in nature. The faculty

member's office would be located in his/her college, and college teaching facilities would be the most common classroom venue.

Aggressive growth of the UCSC campus was the plan. Of the approximately twenty colleges planned, the first twelve would open at a rate of approximately one per year (Ring, 1972:19). In addition to the residential liberal arts colleges, three professional schools and additional research facilities were planned. The cluster colleges would promote UCSC's initial concern with small scale undergraduate liberal arts education. As these cluster colleges became firmly established, professional schools, graduate education and research activities would be added.

Not only was the UCSC cluster college concept different from the other UC campus designs, it was also more costly. The very nature of the collegial design required the campus to duplicate facilities between residential colleges. Dean McHenry sought sponsors for each residential college to provide for college facilities which exceeded comparable non collegiate UC campuses (McHenry, 1977:90). Hence Cowell College, Stevenson College, Crown College, Merrill College, Porter College, Kresge College, and Oakes College all refer to benefactors which assisted in the physical costs of college construction. This commitment to raising substantial funds by McHenry appeased state officials and University Regents, and allowed UCSC's collegiate plan to move forward.

An Origin Myth for Santa Cruz

Two different stories are told of the Regent's decision to place a south central coast campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz. The first story notes that the regents narrowed the selection of sites to two—Almaden in the Santa Clara Valley and the Cowell Ranch property in Santa Cruz. The Regents chose the Almaden property, but before negotiations could be completed, news leaked out and property values soared. Because parcels would have to be purchased from several owners, the price became prohibitive. Hence the Santa Cruz site was chosen (Stadtman, 1970:413). The second story also narrows the choice of properties to Almaden and Santa Cruz, but has the Regents boarding a bus in Berkeley for a day long excursion to the two sites. After a beautiful summer morning in the cool redwood forests and rolling meadows of the Cowell Ranch, the Regents boarded a bus for the hotter inland area of Almaden, just south of the San Jose metropolitan area. As fate would have it, the bus broke down in Almaden and left the Regents to hike several miles in the hot summer sun. Air conditioning costs became a vivid factor for the Regents, and Santa Cruz was chosen (Gregory, 1979:36).

The latter of these two sagas brings to light UCSC's most dominant characteristic—the exceptional beauty and grandeur of the site. No matter how the site was chosen, there can be no doubt that the campus' beautiful, expansive and isolated site dictated much of what UCSC was to become. As Ansel Adams opined on the possibility of establishing a university within an area of such natural beauty, "... there are few places on earth where such a phenomenon might occur... to have this opportunity on a campus of a great university is a priceless event" (Gregory, 1979:40).

Kerr and McHenry's cluster college design was combined with the campus planning committee's desire to place the campus' dense redwood forest as the central unifying feature of the campus. What Kerr referred to as "redwood cathedrals" would visually separate the architecturally diverse colleges. Each college was meant to be "... a miniature Swarthmore or Reed, only without laboratories or trustees... fittingly, McHenry saw the general library as the central focus for the campus" (Gregory, 1979:36). The physical topography and natural resources of the Cowell Ranch had helped to both dictate the campus' physical design and support the educational intimacy of the collegiate model.

A Contemporary Portrait of UCSC

In 1994, the UCSC campus consisted of eight residential colleges (the ninth and tenth under construction), central campus buildings (such as the McHenry library, the Whole Earth Restaurant—a student run cooperative dining facility, bookstore, and recreational facilities), research labs, two agro-ecology projects (a farm based on the French intensive method of organic agriculture and a separate organic garden project), an arts village, a predatory bird project, large expanses of natural areas, and bike paths and bus service which connect the campus community with the town of Santa Cruz (there is a notable absence of substantial parking areas—remote parking is the rule, not the exception at UCSC). Affiliated with the campus is the nearby Joseph M. Long Marine Laboratory—an offshore research facility for UCSC’s Institute of Marine Science, and Lick Observatory—the University of California system’s astronomical research station. Approximately nine thousand students at UCSC currently pursue majors in twenty eight boards of study, with approximately ninety percent of the student population being undergraduates and ten percent involved in graduate education.

The grading policy has evolved from the original UCSC design. Instead of the almost exclusive use of “pass/fail” with narrative evaluation, students may opt for letter grades instead of narrative evaluations in all upper division course work and in a number of lower division courses as well. The “pass/fail” has been replaced with “pass/no report.”

The original faculty matrix of college fellow and member of a board of study continues. Each faculty member receives fifty percent salary from his/her college and fifty percent from his/her board of study. All hiring, retention, promotion and tenure decisions are made by consensus between these two bodies. Although most courses and majors are offered through boards of study, colleges continue to offer courses and majors in their area of specialty.

In the early years admission to UCSC was very competitive. At the height of its popularity UCSC had four times as many qualified applicants as it could admit (McHenry, 1977:110). The University of California’s innovative program at Santa Cruz was in high demand. Later, in the mid 1970’s, admissions stabilized, and then in 1976 they abruptly fell. The California economy was shrinking, the applicant pool was getting smaller, and professional and vocational preparation was on the rise in popularity (Adams, 1984:20). Although the pressure of declining enrollments stimulated a “repackaging” of UCSC’s image into more conventional and professional terms, the college/board of study structure, the grading system and the physical collegiate environment remained virtually intact.

The UCSC Innovation: the Jury Remains Divided

Nearly thirty years after the opening of Cowell College, the Santa Cruz Campus of the University of California is not exactly what the original planners intended. The enrollment of approximately nine thousand students is significantly short of the projected enrollment of twenty-seven thousand, five hundred. This change in enrollment is reflected in the number of residential colleges which have been built on campus. Only eight have been constructed so far—less than half of the original colleges planned. The three professional schools have not been built, and the percentage of the campus’ graduate program are fewer in number and smaller in size than originally anticipated.

Kerr and McHenry’s original intentions for UCSC, well documented in the original comprehensive plan, have not been fully realized. It must be noted that neither has the other UC campus’ comprehensive plans of that time. The system wide growth that was anticipated by UC planners of the late 1950’s did not materialize as projected. The entire system has reassessed enrollments, funding and missions, and adjusted accordingly.

Consistent with Kerr and McHenry’s intentions, each founding provost and faculty of the eight UCSC

colleges developed a unique college approach to undergraduate learning and teaching. Page Smith, founding Provost of Cowell College and Robert Edgar, founding Provost of Kresge College, oversaw radically innovative approaches to undergraduate education in the founding of their colleges. Like Smith and Edgar, the Provosts, faculties and students in each of the eight colleges helped to forge a unique college culture and *raison d'être*.

Within the literature surrounding the UCSC innovations, the original vision of Clark Kerr and the original missions of the colleges are the two points of reference which have been commonly used to evaluate UCSC's success or failure. Kerr's intentions, defined within the UCSC comprehensive plan, were due to enrollment and funding factors—factors which impacted all campuses of the UC system. The missions of the original colleges were not uniform—they were as numerous and varied as the colleges and the people who inhabited them. Because the founding missions were so diverse, and external factors played such a significant part in the internal development of the campus, the original plans of Kerr, McHenry and the colleges are difficult to use as criteria for judging the success or failure of UCSC's innovations.

Underlying the challenging and sometimes rocky history of the Santa Cruz campus, has been a consistent desire to provide a university environment which maintains a dual commitment—to excellence in undergraduate liberal arts education and to first rate academic research. To this end the collegiate structure was developed, and the campus was built. Faculty and student affiliation grew from this structure, and a university design was established from which the campus would emerge. Kerr's innovative desire for UCSC to “feel small even as it grows big” is clearly apparent on the UCSC campus. Kerr's vision of a traditional UC education offered on an intimate human scale has surely been realized—and in a most eloquent manner in the redwood forests of coastal California.

Tradition and Innovation: the Future of UCSC

It is clear that a continuing debate on the original innovative intentions of UCSC versus traditional University of California approaches to post-secondary education will be a part of the UCSC culture for the immediate future. This debate began with the opening of the first college, and has grown as UCSC's stakeholders, observers and evaluators have multiplied. Tension between the colleges and the boards of study arose early in UCSC's history, emerging during the establishment of the second UCSC college. Only Page Smith, the Provost of the first college, was able to select and hire faculty without consent of boards of study. From the founding of Stevenson College (UCSC's second college), the influence of the boards of study—the powerful traditional disciplinary affiliations, became apparent. Although presently the boards of study have seemingly eclipsed the colleges in importance (as determined by numbers of major programs and courses offered), the equal division of influence over faculty appointments continues.

The future of the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California will continue to be shaped by the design of the original founders. The physical collegiate structure of the campus, the faculty and student affiliations with small liberal arts colleges, the natural environment and the demands which it has made upon the character of the campus—all of these will continue to maintain and safeguard the essence of Kerr's original founding intention. In comparison to other UC campuses, UCSC will feel small even as it grows large.

No other campus of the University of California is as much of an “outsider” as is Santa Cruz. As such, UCSC will continue to bear the brunt of criticism from traditionalists as well as experimentalists. UCSC was granted and maintains an institutionalized license to innovate. A recognized and sanctioned innovation within a large traditional system of higher education, UCSC can neither transform itself into a traditional campus, nor leave its parent system behind. UCSC will continue to foster a collegiate environment for undergraduates as it is slowly embellished with research and graduate activities. For an innovative campus within a traditional system, sitting in a redwood forest high above the California coastline, UC Santa Cruz

is “like few places on earth.” UCSC has an important message for higher education—small *is* beautiful.

Chapter 13

Prescott: From Parson to Parsimony

E. Ann Adams ¹⁴

Prescott College is a private 4-year liberal arts institution nestled in the forested mountains of central Arizona. It was founded in 1966 by Dr. Charles Franklin Parker, a long-time minister of the First Congregational Church located in Prescott. During his 29-year career, Dr. Parker dreamed of creating an educational institution that would develop in its students a strong liberal arts appreciation by allowing them to actively explore their environment. In his view, education was to be a life-long experience that included an ongoing dialogue between one's self and the environment.

Today, using the natural setting of the Southwestern wilderness as their classroom, students at Prescott pursue an outdoor curriculum that emphasizes experimental learning and extensive fieldwork. Often, they are involved in activities that require both physical and mental encounters with the environment. A recent issue of Arizona Highways (March, 1990) reported that last year alone, Prescott students

... camped along the shore of the Sea of Cortez to study marine life, trekked through Arizona's Mogollon Rim to contemplate Native American perceptions of nature, tested for industrial pollution in international watersheds along the Mexican border, retreated to a mountain cabin to contemplate Thoreau, ventured across the Pacific Ocean in sea kayaks to explore Tiburon Island, and conducted a cultural survey of the Baja peninsula.

These activities may appear adventurous, yet, they comprise a good portion of the routine coursework for the 280 students who attend Prescott College.

Demographic Overview

Currently, the student body is comprised of 160 men and 120 women seeking baccalaureate (Bachelor of Arts) degrees in one of five curriculum areas: Environmental Studies, Southwestern Studies, Human Development, Humanities, or Outdoor Leadership. Students come to Prescott from various locations throughout the United States. In addition, a handful of foreign students have attended the school in recent years. Regardless of their origin, most students attending Prescott range from age 21 to age 30. Recently, the school has added an adult learning program that includes individuals from age 30 to beyond age 60.

The cost of tuition is \$7,200 and does not include additional costs/fees associated with "Outdoor Action" field courses, nor does it supplement costs for personal camping, backpacking, biking, or skiing equipment required for those excursions. It should be mentioned, however, that Prescott College participates in all

¹⁴E. Ann Adams, Clinical Faculty, Department of Educational Studies, University of Utah.

of the available Title IV financial aid programs. In fact, half the students receive some type of financial assistance.

The admissions process takes place in the fall and again in the spring. Requirements for admission include: either graduation from high school or a GED, a 500-word essay describing the student's educational goals, why he/she wishes to attend Prescott, and how Prescott can help him/her to achieve academic and personal goals, official transcripts of all high school and college coursework completed, and two recent letters of recommendation. In addition, prospective students are encouraged to arrange for a personal interview. Applicants are also required to pass a basic mathematics and an English composition exam. Should students fail to demonstrate competency in these areas, they are required to complete preparatory courses in both disciplines and repeat the testing process. Prescott does not cater to an intellectual elite, nor to any specific applicant pool. In fact, it accepts and admits 85-90 percent of all who apply. Most of the students who come to Prescott are outdoor types, intrigued by the non-traditional, personalized approaches being employed at the school. According to the Admissions Director, students are attracted to the college because it values small classes (a student-faculty ratio of 10:1), student self-direction, an interdisciplinary approach, and hands-on learning (Janssen, 1991).

Of the 28 faculty members that comprise the teaching staff at Prescott in 1991, 11 hold doctorate degrees, 13 have master's degrees, and 4 are teaching with baccalaureate degrees. The college also employs a small number of adjunct staff to further enrich its curriculum within certain specialties. Instructors teach in their own area of expertise; however, there are a number of opportunities for them to cross interdisciplinary lines. Not unlike the student body, faculty members also represent many states of the union and are drawn to Prescott because they enjoy the natural environment. They believe in the power of experiential learning, have noted its impact on student growth, and relish the strong sense of community that is felt across the 2.5-acre campus.

With regard to financial concerns, Prescott College functions within a \$4.5 million budget. Most of the revenue (89 percent) is generated from student tuition and fees, while some (10 percent) is obtained from unrestricted private gifts. Approximately 1 percent comes to the school from state/local appropriations. In addition to these monetary possessions, Prescott also holds as assets its buildings, grounds, and equipment. These properties add an estimated value of \$400,000 to the total operating budget.

Currently, the school is on sound footing. It was recently recognized in Money magazine's Guide to American Colleges as "one of the top 100 private schools for your money."

A major concern has surfaced with Prescott's newfound notoriety. There is the fear that growth may follow success. If this should occur, it is doubtful that the institution would have the ability to expand its physical facilities quickly enough to meet the demands of an overflowing population. Moreover, growth would certainly inhibit Prescott's ability to deliver the unique academic programs that have made its rapid ascent possible.

Philosophical Roots

In early autumn of 1963, Charles Franklin Parker received a \$15,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to begin planning for Prescott College. Specifically, this money was to be used to support an Academic Symposium wherein a group of community leaders, an Academic Advisory Council, and members of Prescott's board of trustees would gather to complete three important tasks: 1) assist Prescott College planners in determining a workable definition for a 4-year liberal arts college, 2) define the purposes, academic programs, and methods useful in relating the institution to the environment of the Southwest region, and 3) orient the new college with the great traditions of other institutions without constricting the vision of the inchoate Prescott College.

Hoping to formulate plans within these general guidelines, participants in the symposium assembled

at the Camelback Inn in Phoenix, Arizona on November 7, 8, and 9, 1963. Approximately 90 individuals attended to collectively consider what they perceived to be the ideal liberal arts college.

Dr. Parker, as founding president, delivered the opening address. Throughout his remarks, he upheld his Judeo-Christian tradition, yet, appeared mindful of his opportunity to establish new patterns of thought and behavior. The United Church of Christ or the Congregationalist Church was to be the spiritual and ideological godparent of Prescott College. Hence, a Christian atmosphere with moral and spiritual emphasis was to provide the means for “obtaining light and truth from His holy word” (Parker, 1965). Still, Parker anticipated societal demands and changes that would require a new Congregationalist college with a uniqueness, a creative set of standards, and a commitment to spiritual, cultural, and environmental circumstances. Furthermore, he predicted that Prescott would offer an aggressive and flexible liberal arts curriculum.

In an effort to design what he termed to be a creative, academic community, Parker offered the following suggestions (Parker, 1965):

1. The college should be co-educational.
2. Classes should be small to promote intimate, tutorial relations between students and faculty.
3. Modern techniques of group and individual instruction should be utilized.
4. Living facilities should be small to encourage personal, social relationships.
5. The institution and its clientele should reflect good moral standards and wholesomeness in both formal and informal activities.
6. There should exist a community of scholarly sharing wherein students and faculty become excited about searching and questioning; attainment of knowledge was to be “as thrilling as a Saturday night football game.”
7. There should be considerable confrontation between the disciplines or “interdisciplinary cross-fertilization.”
8. Students and faculty should share respect and agreeableness as they search out the truth.
9. Each student should be given the privilege and prerogative of becoming the finest individual possible. Faculty members must allow for individual growth (even if it leads to non-conformity).
10. Develop a respect for the diversity of people, religions, and nations, and work at improving communications among those groups.
11. Use the region of the Southwest as a laboratory for studying cultural differences among Indian tribes, Spanish cultures, Anglo-Americans, and other inhabitants.
12. Create a sense of belonging even for those labeled as different.
13. Provide continued learning experiences for graduates, develop their imaginations and curiosity in such a way that they become “life-long” learners.

Dr. Parker closed his speech by proposing a motto for his newfound institution: “Freedom Through Faith and Knowledge.” “Freedom” was representative of the right of the individual to grow, “faith” was in reference to the moral values that one should acquire as practical guides for living, and “knowledge” was related to attaining a better understanding of the world through actual experience.

Following Dr. Parker’s concluding remarks, selected participants were invited to address the group. The purpose of these presentations was to provide background information about the geographical, agricultural,

and economic aspects of the Southwestern region. Additional speakers were called upon to provide further insight regarding curriculum concerns and current issues in higher education. Then, the participants were divided into five panels: the humanists, the physical scientists, the social scientists, the administrators, and the plant planners. Expert panelists in each of these areas were asked to meet independently to discuss subject matter, share educational philosophies, and review the suggestions presented by Dr. Parker and others. Ultimately, from their recommendations, would emerge the profile of a new, liberal arts college.

The Academic Program

In terms of the geographical area, the founders of Prescott College believed that the unique physical environment of the Southwest provided unparalleled opportunities for study and research in the natural sciences and in the humanities. The wide variety of faunal and floral specimens indigenous to the region would certainly provide a natural laboratory for zoologists and botanists. Likewise, the volcanic fields, deserts, and high plateaus could offer geologists and geographers an exciting arena for conducting their work. And Arizona, with its rich cultural history of American Indian tribes, would furnish a natural laboratory for the development of future historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists (Euler, 1965).

Moreover, participants at the symposium felt that placing students in an untamed wilderness would cause them to ponder the meaning of their existence, to become more sensitive to the beauty that surrounds them, and to develop a reverence for life and creation. Furthermore, it was thought that field experiences would remove students from a hectic and mechanized existence and place them in situations where they would have to rely upon their own resourcefulness and adaptability. It was hoped that these combined experiences would produce knowledgeable individuals who not only had an appreciation for their environment but also a desire to make the world a better place.

The founders of Prescott adamantly favored the establishment of a unified and diverse curriculum in which no dichotomy would exist between the sciences and the humanities. From their perspective, it was imperative that students acquire a clear understanding of interdisciplinary relationships. This seemed especially pertinent when considering the development of civilizations. In the words of one Symposium participant, “without the physical world there would be no living beings, without living beings there would be no society, and without society there would be no artistic or literary expression” (Parker, 1965). Hence, Prescott chose to depart from the traditional departmental divisions and narrow specializations that existed in other contemporary institutions. As a result of adopting an integrated curriculum, the breadth and depth of a student’s educational experience were expanded.

It was also decided that Prescott’s emphasis should lie with a holistic approach to education. The founders vowed to avoid the kind of pre-professional and vocational training offered by some state colleges. Instead, they were committed to a more worthwhile enterprise: the development of the whole person. In order to accomplish this goal, symposium panelists agreed that curriculum offerings at the College should provide the means for students to not only acquire knowledge, but also develop the intellectual skills necessary to think critically. In addition, they felt it necessary for students to be exposed to a variety of life experiences outside of the classroom in order to become more broadly educated. In their view, these experiences would lead the individual to heightened levels of self-awareness and social consciousness. In order to facilitate knowledge acquisition and the experiential learning component, Prescott College adopted a unique academic calendar consisting of two, 10-week quarters (fall and spring) in which theoretical knowledge was to be acquired; and three, one-month blocks (fall, winter, and spring) during which field experiences were to take place.

A third component that was to be integrated into the curriculum was flexibility. The founders were fearful that any form of regimentation would stifle individuality. In an effort to prevent this from occurring,

the founders of Prescott adopted a policy that allowed students to plan, within broad curriculum guidelines, their own programs of study. There were to be no required courses. Instead, students were free to design their own coursework by selecting from a wide variety of electives. It was recommended that each student be assigned to a faculty member to assist them in this regard. Through this process, it was hoped that students might be encouraged to develop their own unique interests, talents, and abilities.

With respect to teaching/learning approaches, instructors at Prescott were not to concern themselves with imparting facts. Rather, they were to incorporate Socratic techniques that would prompt students to employ reasoning and problem-solving skills while learning. According to one presenter, learning would result from investigation, analysis, and application (Parker, 1965). The application component mentioned here refers to the fieldwork experience that is incorporated into each student's program of study. The structure of the curriculum at Prescott also requires an interdisciplinary approach to learning. As a result, teachers are required to relate academic disciplines by stressing the overlap that exists across academic areas such as science, social science, and the humanities.

In order for these approaches to be effective, the size of classes are small and instructors must be willing to form open, tutorial relationships with their students. These preceptorships are especially critical to learners at Prescott where "education is an experience that takes place between and among people" (Parker, 1965). Furthermore, faculty members are not only required to possess knowledge and skills relative to their own field of study, but, must also have acquired a broad understanding of other disciplines.

Since the primary focal point for learning is placed on competence and mastery as opposed to credits, letter grades are nonexistent. Instead, pupils receive a summative evaluation from their instructor(s) at the completion of each course. Students also submit a self-evaluation reviewing their work and accomplishments.

Toward the end of their coursework, during their senior year, students are encouraged to complete internships and service projects that may be conducted within the Prescott community, or as far away as Antarctica. These experiences vary in length from a semester to over 1 year. The internship/service experience allows students to apply their knowledge and skills, and test their career choices early. In the past, many students at Prescott have returned to their internship/service project sponsors for postgraduate employment.

The faculty employed at Prescott belong to an egalitarian structure wherein all receive the same salary and benefits package (valued at \$22,000/year) regardless of their responsibilities, longevity, or seniority. There are no titles and no academic divisions—even though original appointments are made specific to one's field of expertise. Faculty members at Prescott are hired for one specific task: teaching. Obviously, this includes organizing and accompanying students on field experiences and serving on student advisory committees. There is no research requirement, although instructors are expected to stay current in their own fields as well as other disciplines.

Most of the faculty currently on staff at Prescott are relatively young (late 30s, early 40s). This might be due to the school's modest compensation plan. It is interesting to note a statement made by one symposium panelist who recommended that Prescott's first instructors be seasoned and experienced, middle-aged close to retirement aged individuals who can later be replaced by young, able faculty who will bring fresh, new insights to our school (Parker, 1965). Given the attrition rate over the past 10 years, it appears that that moment has arrived.

The administrative panel that gathered in 1963 perceived their purpose as providing organizational structures and orderly procedures necessary to keep the college functioning (Parker, 1965). Beyond this general declaration, they offered few guidelines for establishing an administrative hierarchy. This action could be viewed as a symbolic gesture. Perhaps the founders were sending the message that administrative bodies at the college level should not interfere in the curricular issues that were central to the purpose of the Symposium.

Nevertheless, within the first couple of years Dr. Parker had developed a workable governance structure

following guidelines proposed by the administrative panelists. It consisted of trustees, a college president, and a vice-president. The locus of power was clearly located with the president and board of trustees. The trustees were granted authority to formulate policies, select administrative officers, and handle public relations for the College. In turn the president's responsibilities included the appointment/dismissal of teachers, budget appropriations, and general administrative tasks. The sole responsibility of the vice-president was fund-raising. During Prescott's formative years, students were not involved in administrative decisions, however, they became more entangled in school affairs later on.

The Academic Symposium held in November 1963 was the formative event in the history of Prescott College. Participants at that meeting offered suggestions and made recommendations that became the strong philosophical base that continues to guide the College today. In the next section the survival of Prescott will be attributed to the stalwart commitment of the student body, faculty, and administration to those concepts proposed nearly 30 years ago.

Historical Evolution

Prescott College became chartered and offered its first instruction in the autumn of 1966. From this date until the early 1970s, the school was in its formative stages. Time and money were spent on erecting buildings and expanding campus facilities.

The institution's founder, Charles Franklin Parker, opened the school with a \$1.5 million budget. Most financial support was obtained from local ranchers and business people in Arizona along with a handful of East Coast investors that had strong ties with the Congregationalist Church of New England. Other monies had been obtained through grants and small-scale fund-raising activities. It is interesting to note that beyond these early years, the Church and its New England traditions had little influence over the college. Undoubtedly, this is attributed to Parker's practice of appointing others to manage his institution while he spent his time publishing theology books. As nondenominational presidents began leading the school in the early 1970s, Prescott gracefully discontinued contact with the Congregationalists. The College has, however, maintained open relations with New England benefactors and established financial contacts with various business organizations and corporations across the United States. In fact, Prescott currently has a number of these individuals serving on its board.

With the exception of the Congregationalist traditions that were present at the Symposium of 1963, Prescott College has remained consistent with all of the philosophical groundwork laid by its founders. Over its 25 year history, it has remained committed to the education of the whole person. It has allowed students to apply their acquired knowledge and skills in experiential learning situations and has employed an interdisciplinary approach with regard to curriculum. The school has also recognized the importance of involving students in planning educational programs around their unique goals, interests, and talents. These methodologies, implemented since the origination of the college, have provided direction and emerged as part of its valued traditions.

In 1974, circumstances arose that enabled Prescott College to test the strength of its purpose. The president during this time was an authoritative individual named Ronald Nairn. He was a brilliant and charismatic leader who claimed to be the youngest person to have received a Ph.D. from Yale University. He was also a personal friend of Barry Goldwater and used his political contacts to generate national interest and financial support for Prescott College. In fact, millions of dollars were raised during his presidency.

Unfortunately, Dr. Nairn was a poor financial manager. During his term as college president, he managed to accrue a \$5 million debt. In an attempt to "cover Parker's shadow," the Machiavellian leader overspent his budget by erecting new buildings and by reorganizing the school into three different colleges, for which new administrators and faculty were hired. Because of his stubborn and cantankerous personality, Dr. Nairn had frequent conflicts with his subordinates and trustees. In fact, at one point three of his vice-

presidents terminated their contracts with the school (Stuckey, 1991). Nairn's rampant spending included paying individual scholars \$2,000 to travel to Prescott and present two-day seminars held at various times throughout the academic year. To make matters worse, Dr. Nairn had fallen prey to a "wealthy" married couple from Chicago, Henry and Barbara Lowther, who were interested in the unique programs offered by the school and wanted to rescue Prescott from its pending financial collapse. The president and the board were desperate and could find no reason to refuse their generosity. As a result, they allowed the couple to invest money in the school. In the process, the couple finagled the bank into placing their names on Prescott's accounts (Maerzke, 1991). Within a matter of days, they cashed checks totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars and reneged on their promise to pay the college's insurance premium that had come due. Posthumously, it was discovered that the Lowthers were on probationary status from an Illinois court for an earlier stock fraud conviction. Luckily, they were confronted short of completely destroying Prescott College (Stuckey, 1991).

Understandably, the College rapidly lost support. The financial woes, coupled with the surrounding community's disgruntled attitude toward the "hippie" clientele that flocked to the school during this period, required action from the board of trustees. In response, Nairn was fired. An acting president, Frank Mertz, was appointed, and the school was granted a 6-month period in which to correct its situation.

About this time, faculty members decided to take matters into their own hands. To help the school conserve its financial resources, they agreed to surrender a portion of their salaries. They also organized several ad hoc committees of administrators, faculty members, and students to restructure the college. In addition, the faculty spearheaded a series of fund-raising campaigns to raise enough revenue to keep the school open. Their most celebrated effort took place on the college's soccer field as they gathered with students to "curse the Lowthers" and "pass the hat." The collection resulted in loose change and one-dollar bills totaling \$320 (Stuckey, 1991).

Unfortunately, their efforts fell short. By autumn's end in 1974, Prescott had lost its property, its buildings, and all of its physical assets. The institution had no alternative but to declare bankruptcy and surrender its accreditation rights. Amazingly, even though the campus was closed, the school continued to function. This was due to a committed faculty (whose living rooms were converted to classrooms) and to a determined student body that refused to allow their college to die. For the next several months, students attended classes at their instructors' homes, in the basement of a local hotel, and at a nearby community college that had sympathetically donated classroom space for Prescott's use (Maerzke, 1991).

Meanwhile, various financiers from across the country were informed of Prescott's misfortune and money began to trickle in. Most donors were either carry-overs from the Goldwater connection, parents of the student body, or former graduates of the college. Others had become so impressed with the demeanor of Prescott students that they vowed to support the school. One New York contributor, for example, met a Prescott graduate who was serving as a boatman on a river-running expedition. After spending several days with the young man, the donor expressed his desire to contribute to a college "capable of producing such fine individuals" (Stuckey, 1991). Funds obtained from these interested parties, along with those raised through local efforts, literally resurrected the College.

In the spring of 1975, Prescott College officially reopened with an enrollment of 50 students. During that same year, the College was re-accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges. An influential Prescott trustee, Herman Bleibtreu, was instrumental in regaining the suspended accreditation rights. At the time Dr. Bleibtreu was serving on board, he was also a full-time faculty member at the University of Arizona. He approached the North Central Association of Colleges' accrediting team and threatened to withdraw the University's membership if they failed to sign the diplomas of the 1975 Prescott graduates. Rather than risk losing accreditation rights to the University of Arizona, along with other prominent institutions in the state, the North Central Association of Colleges conceded, signed the diplomas, and reinstated Prescott College (Maerzke, 1991).

The years following 1975 reflected a renaissance that profoundly affected Prescott. A renewed sense of

commitment arose as students, faculty, and administrative committees continued to adopt precautionary measures to ensure the school's longevity. Changes in the administrative structure, a heightened concern for environmental issues, and the addition of new degree programs had a dramatic impact on the College.

As a result of the problems encountered during 1974-75, the power structures originally erected at Prescott have completely changed. The board of trustees has become the board of directors, the president is on a first name basis with the student body, and a "big, happy family" attitude abounds across the campus. Furthermore, instead of the locus of power resting upon the president and the board of directors, control has been diffused to various levels across the organization. For example, students and four faculty members are elected to positions on the board of directors. In addition, weekly student meetings are held at the college chapel, providing a forum in which students can voice concerns and discuss issues with representatives from the board. This post-1974 restructuring effort has not only created a system of checks and balances within the administration, but it has also allowed for student and faculty input into the decision-making process.

As public awareness of environmental issues has increased over the last decade, Prescott has grown in both popularity and in enrollment. The natural setting of the school and its emphasis on wilderness experiences has become very appealing to budding environmentalists seeking a nontraditional, college experience. In response, Prescott has changed its motto from Parker's "Freedom Through Faith and Knowledge" to "Prescott College: For the Liberal Arts and the Environment." At the same time, it has instituted a "Wilderness Orientation" class wherein small groups of new students are led by instructors and advanced students on a 18 day expedition through the isolated mountains and canyons of the desert Southwest. It should be mentioned that this is a required, freshmen course used to familiarize students with the geographical area and introduce them to experiential-learning techniques. The changed motto and the establishment of this new course are indicative of Prescott's heightened commitment to environmental education.

In an attempt to better serve its community, Prescott has added two new degree programs. First, is the Adult Degree Program that was designed for individuals whose work schedules make it impossible for them to complete a regular college program. Students in this program are given opportunities to earn credit for time spent in the work setting while completing a series of independent study courses. Students who have previously earned baccalaureate degrees commonly use this program to obtain their teaching credential.

Second, the College has responded to the needs of Southwestern Native Americans by making the Adult Degree Program available to them. This 2-year program is intended to train and certify Indian instructors to teach on their reservations. The program has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education in an effort to counteract the 75 percent attrition rate that exists for Indian students attending American colleges.

The addition of these two programs, along with society's increased attention toward environmental issues, has caused the enrollment at Prescott to climb dramatically. It is quite apparent that the College has successfully overcome the crisis it faced 17 years ago. Indeed, Prescott owes its survival to the financial support it received from local donations and national benefactors. It is also indebted to a committed student body and a unified faculty that remained steadfast and true to the values and philosophies prescribed by the institution's founders.

Assessment

Prescott College's systematic method for assessing effectiveness is the accreditation process imposed by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. This evaluation occurs every three to 10 years and is conducted by a team of educational experts. Prescott's most recent accreditation took place this past year and the school received a maximum vote of confidence (10 years) from the accrediting team.

In its report, the North Central Association referred to the college as a beacon for higher education and applauded its unique programs for being on the cutting edge of educational philosophy in America. The sole recommendation offered by the accrediting team was for Prescott to broaden the membership of the board of directors to reflect national influence instead of a regional focus (Pieper, 1990). This is likely to occur as the school continues to gain national recognition.

Prescott's opinion of itself may best be reflected in the words of current president Doug North, a graduate from Yale University and a former faculty member at Goddard College. He describes the college as an "innovative institution that is palpably vibrant with energy and excitement; a college that places emphasis on teaching and learning, and concerns itself with producing individuals capable of creating and managing change rather than preserving the status quo" (Janssen and Maerzke, 1990).

In addition to the accrediting team's commendations and Dr. North's statements, the institution has made formal attempts to measure its own effectiveness. However, these efforts have fallen short. Most have come in the form of self-studies and result in little more than brief histories of the school. Clearly, this is one area where Prescott needs to improve.

Presently, the College relies on enrollment figures and commendations from alumni and students to gauge its achievement. In terms of enrollment, the 187 students that attended Prescott in 1985 more than tripled to 642 in 1990. These figures represent total enrollment, including both Adult Degree programs. In spite of its rapid growth, alumni and members of the student body continue to compliment the college for its ability to produce self-directed and active learners who are motivated to make a difference in the world. One individual interviewed for this report revealed that his experience at Prescott had changed his view of himself. He stated that, "learning in an environment where thinking is encouraged has taught me to think for myself. As a result, I have come to trust my own mental capacities" (Packard, 1991).

While the accreditation team's report, the president's remarks, enrollment figures, and alumni/student evaluations may be positive indicators, they are hardly accurate measures for effectiveness. Until the school develops more sophisticated means of gathering this data, it will continue to produce saccharine self-evaluations. In any event, the manner in which information is disclosed in campus news articles, in the course catalog, and in the words of former students reveal that Prescott has a rather high opinion of itself.

In contrast to these positive perspectives, some characteristics of the school warrant critical consideration. First, there are the rather lax admission requirements that allow almost anyone with a high school diploma or GED to be accepted. As a result of these easy standards, Prescott may be sending the message that their academic curriculum is not as vigorous, nor as demanding, as other liberal arts programs. Second, there is concern that too much emphasis is placed on outdoor activities and environmental studies. Some critics question the appropriateness of the field component as a viable means for acquiring essential knowledge and critical concepts from a variety of academic disciplines. A curriculum that incorporates hiking, biking, and mountain climbing as part of the learning experience leaves one wondering if Prescott exists as little more than a glorified, outward-bound program. Third, the open and friendly environment in which students at Prescott function may make for a difficult transition as they reenter a competitive world at the time of their graduation.

Nevertheless, enrollment figures continue to rise as a reflection of the school's popularity. There is concern, however, that increasing growth will require changes that may prove detrimental to Prescott College. Class size will increase and adjustments in the curriculum will be necessary to accommodate larger numbers. These alterations could undermine Prescott's ability to deliver the unique and creative programs offered in the past. Furthermore, the campus facilities need to be expanded and this will bring substantial expense. Given the shaky financial history of the institution, faculty and students are fearful of the implications and the shadow of the 1974 debacle.

Prescott has entered another critical stage. The current choices will hold serious implications for the future. In order to preserve consistent values, Prescott must continue to rely upon the keen sense of community, ownership, and collegiality which bind the institution together. These strengths will play a

vital role in the survival of Prescott College.

Chapter 14

Fairhaven: Harbinger or Hostage?

Michael M. Packard ¹⁵

Fairhaven College is a small liberal arts college located within a larger state-sponsored university. The purpose of this discussion is to explore Fairhaven's innovative and distinctive nature, and to discover if this collegiate innovation can thrive within its larger, traditional university setting.

The Setting

Fairhaven is one of seven colleges making up Western Washington University (WWU) in Bellingham, Washington. The university has an enrollment of over 10,000 students, both undergraduate and graduate students. It is a state supported comprehensive coeducational institution, which awards both bachelor and master degrees in a variety of fields. The university is located on a 223 acre suburban campus north of Seattle near the Canadian border. The state college system primarily serves residents of Washington (Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges, 1994).

The College

Fairhaven is organized as an interdisciplinary liberal arts college within the university, and emphasizes student-directed learning. According to Fairhaven's promotional material, students are "challenged to bring what they learn to bear on human concerns and crucial real-world problems, to experiment, to discover and to act." Fairhaven describes itself as an experimenting college where innovative teaching methods and varied classroom structures are welcomed. Diverse learning styles, including experience, are respected and encouraged. Fairhaven has its own set of graduation requirements and allows students to design their own majors. The college offers small courses with an emphasis on discussion and exchange of ideas, promotes faculty exchanges, and is committed to a close working relationship between students and teachers (Western Washington University General Catalogue, 1993-94).

Fairhaven's Beginnings

Fairhaven was one of the many "alternative" colleges founded in the sixties. It was founded in 1967 in order to "provide students with an opportunity to take an unusual degree of responsibility for the

¹⁵Michael M. Packard, Graduate Student, University of Utah.

structure and content of their own educations” (Western Washington University College Catalogue, 1993-94). The main influence in the founding of Fairhaven was Paul Woodring, a faculty member at WWU and educational editor of *Saturday Review* (Sign, 1994). Woodring has been described as a “visionary” with a national reputation as an educator (Eaton, 1994). He was highly regarded at Western Washington University and his name came up over and over during the research for this investigation. He is retired, but still living in Bellingham. The college of education at WWU is now named after Woodring.

Woodring confirmed that he had been the main force in establishing Fairhaven College, saying, “Well, it was my idea really” (1994). He saw that Western was getting so big that faculty and students were not as well connected as they ought to be. He mentioned that even though WWU is not particularly large for a public university there were more students at WWU than at Harvard or Yale. His original intention was to establish a cluster of small colleges on the WWU campus. He felt that the quality of the undergraduate education at Western could be improved by returning to the concept of a small liberal arts college within the university. What he really had in mind was a group of cluster colleges similar to Oxford or the Claremont Colleges, but this dream was never fully realized.

Fairhaven College opened in 1967 along with two other small and innovative colleges at Western Washington University, which was then called Western Washington State College. The other two colleges were Huxley College of Environmental Studies, which is still alive, and a college for ethnic and cultural studies, now defunct.

At the time of Fairhaven’s founding, enrollments were growing and there was money available in the budget of the expanding state college for this experiment. It was hoped that the new college would:

1. Recapture the best features of a small college while making full use of the facilities of a much larger institution.
2. Provide a superior quality of liberal education at a cost no higher to either students or taxpayers than that of conventional education in a state institution.
3. Create an atmosphere conducive to experimentation with curricula, teaching procedures, staffing arrangements, independent study, and the use of new educational technology.
4. Enable students to make a greater contribution to education planning, and give them a greater sense of participation.
5. Provide a model which, once success had been demonstrated, would suggest basic changes in the entire college and perhaps for other colleges as well (A Plan for Fairhaven College - an experimental division of Western Washington State College, 1966, reprinted in the Fairhaven College Evaluation Report, 1978).

Woodring’s motivation was to bring back the advantages of a small liberal arts college, the sense of community, close contact between students and faculty, and the experience of living in a college community. But, he said, they made one great mistake. The new college was supposed to be a residential college where what went on outside of class was as much a part of the learning as the more formal instruction. A new building was designed and built to house both the students and the college, and residence in the college was made a requirement of attendance at Fairhaven. But this was the late sixties, and students were in revolt all across the country. The curriculum and structure at Fairhaven were flexible enough that the only thing the Fairhaven students had to revolt against was the residency requirement. This plus the fact that off campus housing was less costly than living in the new facility quickly turned Fairhaven into a commuter campus (Woodring, 1994).

Curriculum

Originally there was some interest in a “great books” curriculum at Fairhaven. But by the time the college opened, the curricular pendulum had swung over to the Dewey side of the scale. Fairhaven’s curricular emphasis has remained on interdisciplinary studies and student designed majors. Throughout the years there has been criticism from some of the more conservative corners of the WWU campus that Fairhaven’s curriculum has lacked structure, and some students have been able to graduate without a rigorous course of study.

Dr. Woodring believes it is true there was less clarity in the curriculum than there could have been. He notes that a college like Fairhaven needs the right students. When asked how successful Fairhaven had been in carrying out its mission, he said about halfway successful. He believes that the students who came to Fairhaven tended to be some of the brighter students and also some of the more rebellious students. Some of them have gone on to great achievement. He also thought that because of the emphasis on student-directed learning, some students had been allowed to slide through without achieving as much as they could or should have. The bright and motivated students tended to get a great education because they were free and encouraged to follow their interests, but the freedom gave less motivated students or students who did not deal as well with ambiguity an easier way out than a set of requirements would have.

The Fairhaven College Evaluation

The questions about curriculum combined with financial pressures to bring Fairhaven close to oblivion in 1978. Several years of declining enrollment, a high cost per student ratio, and questions over how the space in the Fairhaven building was being used caused the university administration to call for an evaluation of the entire Fairhaven program. The evaluation was done by a committee made up of seven faculty from various WWU departments and one Evergreen State faculty member. After looking into the college the evaluation committee came up with a thick report that identified both strengths and weaknesses in Fairhaven.

The greatest promise they found was in a core group of highly motivated and dynamic students at the college “of a caliber all too rarely found at state-supported institutions,” and a number of faculty who were committed to and involved with the students. Other strengths identified by the evaluation committee were:

1. For self-motivated students, Fairhaven provides almost unlimited pathways to learning within an interdisciplinary educational structure.
2. Faculty members have high commitment their students and to teaching. Staff and faculty work closely with students on co-curricular and extra curricular activities; this relationship is impressive.
3. Fairhaven’s principle of regular evaluation for tenured faculty has merit.
4. Fairhaven’s image, as perceived by high school and community college counselors, is positive.
5. Some Fairhaven students perform at very high levels while at the college.

The committee also pointed out some significant weaknesses:

1. Low and declining enrollment.
2. Sharply declining admissions pool.
3. Very high faculty staffing formula.

4. Very high administrative costs.
5. Erratic program focus and quality.
6. Some administrative ineffectiveness and inefficiency.
7. Difficulties with the retention, tenure, and promotion system (Fairhaven College Evaluation Report, 1978).

The committee decided that Fairhaven's weaknesses outweighed its strengths, but chose not to recommend closure of the college because of the quality and diversity of students that WWU would lose as a result of the closure of Fairhaven. Instead the evaluation committee came up with a strong prescription of recommendations to reform Fairhaven, and deadlines for the college to meet on the road to reform. The committee recommended that if Fairhaven failed to meet the deadlines then the college should be closed. A local newspaper dubbed the committee's prescription as a "Message to Fairhaven: Change or Die" (Cheshire, 1993).

The recommendations from the committee were extensive. All entering students were to be required to take a common core curriculum of 45 credits which would give students breadth of perspective and prepare them for self-directed learning. Students would be required to take at least 50 credits from courses outside of Fairhaven. The requirements for independent study and student taught courses would be standardized and made more explicit. All entering students would attend an orientation program and be assigned a faculty advisor who would meet with them at least once per quarter. The separation between Fairhaven College and the rest of WWU would be reduced by encouraging the movement of students and faculty between the college and the larger university. A new strategy would be developed for student recruitment and the administration of Fairhaven would be streamlined. There were also changes made in the way the dormitories attached to Fairhaven were administered (Fairhaven College Evaluation Report, 1978).

There was also a report filed by one dissenting member of the committee who believed that the best course of action would be for the university to cut its losses and immediately close Fairhaven. In her report, June Ross said,

Fairhaven College was created from an aspiration and no planning documents were used in establishing the College. This lack of specific mission and specific goals has continued to plague Fairhaven College to this day. . . Instead of facing reality and recommending closure of Fairhaven College, the report of the Committee proposes a lengthy series of costly recommendations to attempt to correct the weaknesses. Given the marked divergence of personal viewpoints on curricular and other aspects of the Fairhaven College program and the apparent individualism which has been fostered in Fairhaven College it is difficult for me to perceive how the existing faculty, staff, and students will make the necessary and considerable sacrifices of their individualism in order to permit the Fairhaven College programs to operate effectively and efficiently (Ross, 1978).

Despite this opposition, Fairhaven did survive and made the mandated changes in order to continue operating as a part of Western Washington University. Fairhaven's current dean, Marie Eaton, believes that the "Fairhaven College Evaluation of 1978" was something of a turning point for the college. Since then, the curriculum has had more structure and there has been a renewed emphasis on maintaining a connection between Fairhaven College and the rest of Western Washington University. Both Marie Eaton and Paul Woodring agree that Fairhaven may have gone too far in its past. In allowing students to completely design their own majors, they may have turned over too much curriculum control to the students. Incoming students are required to take a foundation seminar, a writing competence course and a series of courses designed to familiarize them with classic liberal ideas. These courses are organized around

themes such as: Humanities and the Expressive Arts, Society and the Individual, and Science and our Place on the Planet. Fairhaven students receive considerable guidance in these early courses, then they make a transition to more independent study and design their own majors working with a small committee of faculty and students. This curricular structure was motivated at least partially by the recommendations of the evaluation committee of 1978. Prior to that there likely was some abuse by students of the freedom to write their own majors.

Innovative Programs

The Bridge Program was an early project. It brought retired people and pre-school children together with the students at Fairhaven. This program started in 1975 and went on until a budget cut ended it in the mid-eighties. Some of the “Bridgers” are still around the WWU campus, and still participate in courses.

Fairhaven maintains an exchange program that encourages faculty to teach with faculty from other colleges, both at Fairhaven and at the other colleges in order to get new ideas and keep their teaching lively.

The Upside Down Degree Program allows students with an associate degree from two year technical colleges to add the Fairhaven foundation courses and some advanced study to their previous work and earn a bachelor degree. The name “Upside Down” refers to the fact that the order of specialized and general studies is reversed from the typical degree program.

The fairly new Law and Diversity Program is focused on recruiting minority students who have traditionally been under-represented in the judicial system, and prepares them to be admitted to and succeed in law school. Independent study, internships, and service learning allow all Fairhaven students to add more experiential learning to their college experience.

Fairhaven of the 1990’s

There are approximately 400 students at Fairhaven, many of them non-traditional. The average age of Fairhaven students is 30 years, in contrast to the average age for the rest of WWU which is 22 years. Fairhaven is primarily a commuter campus. Many of them hold jobs off campus and commute to classes between work hours.

The type of students who tend to do well at Fairhaven are those who are interested in the connections between disciplines. If a student wants to study biology, she would be better off in the College of Arts and Sciences at WWU. But if a student is interested in the interaction of politics and biology in contemporary society, then Fairhaven would be a great place for her. Students with strong independent study skills tend to do best at Fairhaven, although the college does have support to help students who haven’t already developed those skills.

The spirit of innovation seems to be alive. During the winter quarter of 1990, an unusual course called “Canons in Conflict” was offered at Fairhaven. This course had all thirteen faculty and a third of the students (85) intensely involved in class for fifteen hours a week, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon daily. The first half of each session involved one faculty member leading instruction of the other faculty members, while the students observed the interaction and group process and reflected on the behavior and ideas of the faculty. During the second half of each session students broke into six seminar groups, each with two student facilitators. One rotating faculty member participated with each seminar group, but was restricted to a non-teaching role. The main focus of the course was on the curriculum at Fairhaven: who should study what, and why? But in exploring this question the course also explored larger issues of epistemology,

paradigm shift, and historical change. The course also involved dramatic departures from the conventional roles of faculty and student.

There was considerable and genuine conflict and controversy involved in the course. It was a radical course even by the standards of this progressive college. The course was organized in a joint effort between a faculty member, Robert Keller, and a student, Peter Frazier. These organizers believed the course to be largely successful and thought that the success was due in part to the fact that it was a collaboration between students and faculty and was administered by both (Frazier, 1992).

Canons in Conflict was a 12 credit course that occupied a tremendous amount of time and energy for those involved; over 700 pages of readings, two books and a number of other handouts were used. A film series accompanied the course in addition to lectures, dramatic readings, guest speakers, and informal discussion. Boredom was not a problem, but assimilation and synthesis of the information was. The course seems to have left its mark on the college with the concept of positive conflict having become a part of the everyday vocabulary at Fairhaven (Eaton, 1994). Much dialogue centers around the nature of community at Fairhaven (Cheshire, 1993).

Conclusions

The relationship between WWU and Fairhaven has both advantages and disadvantages. Probably the greatest disadvantage for the college is that its life is held in the hands of university administrators. Since WWU is a state funded institution, when Fairhaven seems to be on the margin of the University and budgets are tight, Fairhaven is a tempting target. WWU is a high quality university but is fairly traditional in its outlook. Some of the more conservative faculty at WWU have regarded Fairhaven as being outrageous. There have been numerous proposals throughout the years from university faculty to close Fairhaven College. The 1978 evaluation has not been the only threat to the survival of Fairhaven.

There have been divisions in the past between WWU and Fairhaven. One concern at Fairhaven is that of building connections with WWU. Dean Eaton says that she is constantly working to develop the sense that Fairhaven is another department in WWU. In 1994, Dr. Woodring stated that Fairhaven is probably safe from the threat of closure. At the same time Marie Eaton also thought the college to be secure. But with a new administration or budget cuts the future of Fairhaven could become cloudy again.

The university may benefit from the new ideas and quality teaching which comes from Fairhaven. On the other hand, the influence which the university continues to exert over the curriculum at Fairhaven could diminish Fairhaven's innovative qualities. The university may constrict the creativity and innovation of the smaller college, although the 1978 mandates from the university have seemed to bring a satisfactory degree of clarity and structure to Fairhaven's curriculum.

The students of Fairhaven have both the advantages of the resources in a large university, and the close relationships with faculty and other students that a small school provides. Fairhaven has provided the opportunity to motivated, self directed students to shape their educations for twenty seven years now. This is an accomplishment to be proud of. Hopefully Fairhaven will be able to continue providing a collegiate alternative for many years to come. Yet it remains clear, the future growth or extinction of the college is ultimately in the hands of the larger university administration.

Chapter 15

Evergreen: Ever Green?

Zandile Nkabinde ¹⁶

Evergreen State College, a 4-year, state-supported, liberal arts college, is a survivor, one of the few major experiments in curricular innovation arising from the decade of the sixties which remains functioning at the beginning of the 90s. Established in 1971 and located in a wooded area outside Olympia, its early students were inclined toward a less structured approach to studying liberal arts than was common in more traditional institutions—especially state supported colleges and universities. Investigations by Jones and Smith (1984) suggested that little has changed and that while the school now awards bachelor's degrees in everything from creative writing to marine biology, there are no formal majors nor any letter grades. The faculty team-teaches a multidisciplinary core of subjects and gives written evaluations of students' work. Despite its nonconformity, Evergreen's academic reputation is rated highly in the region by college presidents and deans.

The Origins of Innovation

More than 70 years before Evergreen, another college carried the banner of innovation into Olympia. In 1891, the Rev. J. R. Chaplin platted an area on Cooper Point Peninsula where he hoped to begin a utopian community with its own college, People's University. Chaplin started his dream closer to downtown Olympia in 1900, hoping to move soon. But People's University lasted only until 1906 despite, or perhaps because of, new ideas such as emphasizing practical methods of learning and offering education to working students. Evergreen owes even a greater debt to more recent innovative colleges. Most, if not all, of the educational concepts Evergreen now employs were first used in experimental programs and institutions as far back as the 1960s (Clemens, 1987).

Although nameless until 1968, the idea of a new college in Washington State first surfaced in 1964. Richard Jones (1981) concluded that the student unrest of the 1960s and the demands it made for improvements in the quality of undergraduate teaching resulted in a number of state-instituted, "alternative" colleges. Evergreen State College was among those colleges which were attempting to explore new ways of serving the educational needs of America's young people. These colleges also caused much controversy by attempting to challenge the status quo. Jones (1981) reported that not all experimental colleges have survived as alternative colleges, and those which have survived have maintained their integrity as experiments in varying degrees.

The idea for establishing Evergreen State College originated with the Council of Presidents, a group composed of the presidents of Washington's five public-supported universities and colleges. A report issued

¹⁶Zandile Nkabinde, Graduate Student, Department of Special Education, University of Utah.

by the Council in November, 1964, concluded that another college was needed to balance the geographical distribution of the existing institutions, especially since Western Washington was growing at a more rapid rate than the rest of the state. With the University of Washington in Seattle and Western Washington State College in Bellingham, the Council noted that southwest Washington was the only region without a 4-year public college. Based on the Council's recommendations, the Washington State Legislature created the Temporary Advisory Council on Public Higher Education in 1965. This group of legislators, educators and community leaders was charged with determining if and when a new college was needed, where it should be located and what kind of college it should be (Clemens, 1987).

Evergreen's founding trustees consisted of prominent members of the community such as bankers, businessmen, legislators, contractors and community activists. These trustees have had a great impact on the survival of the experiment. Right from the beginning, they worked hand in hand with the educators and state officials in sharing decisions. For instance, the hiring of Evergreen's first president and the initial group of administrators rested in their hands. In 1967 the state of Washington inaugurated this new 4-year college. The state capital, Olympia, was chosen as the site. The board of trustees hired Charles McCann, then dean of the faculty at Central Washington State College as the first president of Evergreen (Jones and Smith, 1984). He in turn, with the support and encouragement of the trustees, made his initial choices based on a strategy for constructive change. First aboard were the vice presidents: Dean Clabaugh, the College's executive director, as vice president for business; Joe Shoben, from the State University of New York at Buffalo, as executive vice president; and Dave Barry as vice president for academics. Jones (1981) reported that administrators were hired and told to recruit a small and distinguished group of planning faculty. Evergreen's three founding deans were Mervyn Cadwallader; Don Humphrey, who had headed an interdisciplinary science program at Oregon State University; and Charles Teske, who had experience with independent learning at Oberlin College (McHenry, 1977).

The Evergreen State College 20-year report (1987) concluded that with the assistance of farsighted legislative funding, McCann, Barry and the original deans were able to hire 18 faculty members prior to opening day, 1971. Jones (1981) reported that the 18 members of the planning faculty, which were given the academic year of 1970-71 to design the college's specific policies and programs, were carefully recruited for their experience in experimental education. The founding faculty included advocates of the western classics, self-paced and collaborative learning, independent study, cooperative and wilderness education, and several veterans of Cadwallader's interdisciplinary programs at San Jose State and Old Westbury.

Yet even though Evergreen was established because there was a regional need for such a college, there was one advocate in particular who made this dream possible. His name was Mervyn Cadwallader, a disciple of Alexander Meiklejohn and an ally of John Tussman. Cadwallader had previously directed an experimental program at San Jose State College which imitated a Tussman innovation at UC Berkeley. Jones (1981) commented that Dean Cadwallader emerged as Evergreen's first acknowledged visionary. His strength was his ability to envision and articulate the academic objectives for Evergreen. While the college's first president, Charles McCann, was a powerful advocate of individualized education and innovation, he initiated no particular innovations of his own (Jones, 1981). He remained Evergreen's leader for 9 years and was followed by the former governor, Dan Evans, in 1977.

The Meiklejohn-Tussman Connection

Jones stated that in the autumn of 1970 a small book, *Experiment at Berkeley*, by Joseph Tussman was read and discussed by 18 men who had been invited to Olympia, Washington, to design an alternative college. This experience was to have a decisive influence on the development of one of the most revealing experiments in the history of American higher education. Cadwallader, who suggested that they read the book, was greatly inspired by Tussman's moral curriculum. He was hoping that the planning faculty at

Evergreen would find the Tussman program appealing and adopt it. To his surprise none of the planning faculty included this moral curriculum in the first year's offerings. Tussman's innovative program resembled Alexander Meiklejohn's experimental college at the University of Wisconsin. Both irony and serendipity suffuse this Meiklejohn-Tussman-Evergreen lineage (Jones, 1981). The annals of Evergreen have shown that Tussman was primarily attracted to Meiklejohn's model on curricular grounds, its concern with "initiation in the great political vocations." He sought to achieve this objective by studying some of the seminal works of classical Greece, 17th-century England, and the United States Supreme Court. Investigations by Jones suggested that it was not, however, the curricular innovation of these two men which claimed the imaginations of the Evergreen planning faculty in 1970. What influenced them most was the pedagogical innovation which both men employed in their curricular objectives: substituting the traditional format of separate teachers, courses, and times, for the creation of groups of students, who are all studying the same things at the same time, over a prolonged period (Jones, 1981).

The history of the Meiklejohn-Tussman experiments confirms that Evergreen was not a radical new invention. Instead it was the continuation of an educational strategy which was first tried at the University of Wisconsin in the 1920s, and then at San Jose State, and then at Berkeley just a few years before it was eventually tried at Olympia.

Founding Purposes

Evergreen State College was created to be a different, nontraditional institution, one which did not duplicate the other regional colleges. The planning faculty were given 1 year to decide what kind of college it would be. Furthermore they were to prepare a curriculum for October, 1971, when the first one thousand students would begin.

The purposes for creating the college as described by Jones and Smith (1984) included the following elements:

1. To serve the needs of Southwest Washington where much of the demographic growth was expected. The authorization bill referred to Evergreen as "Southwest Washington State College" in language which paralleled the authorizations of the other three regional institutions; Western, Central, and Eastern.
2. To provide services to state government and its employees. The selection of Olympia, the capital city, as the site for the new college seemed to give the planners this additional function.
3. To develop an innovative structure that would not simply duplicate the existing academic resources of the state. The State Senator who headed the Temporary Advisory Council of Public Education (which recommended the new college) stated at the first meeting of the incipient Board of Trustees, "It was not the intent of the Legislature that this be just another 4-year college; it is a unique opportunity to meet the needs of the students of today and the future because the planning will not be bound by any rigid structure of tradition as are the existing colleges, nor by any overall central authority, as is the case in many states."

"The basic structure of our coordinated studies program," Jones (1984) wrote, "follows Tussman's model to the letter." It was multidisciplinary and theme oriented; it depended on small, intensive seminars; and there were common reading lists and schedules. At Berkeley, however, Mr. Tussman's experiment was one small program in a large institution, as Mr. Meiklejohn's had been at Wisconsin. At Evergreen ten coordinated-studies programs are offered each year and form the focus of the entire curriculum. And at Evergreen, apparently, the structure has achieved its critical mass (The Chronicle, 1984).

Current Demographics

The original student body of 1,000 in 1971 included a fair number of hippie types. The Chronicle of Higher Education (November 14:1984) reported that the academic year 1976-1977 saw the peak enrollment of 2530 headcount, and then the enrollment began to drop. True, its enrollment has never approached the figure of 10,000 that was originally predicted. In 1986 the enrollment reached 2,838 which was the largest ever. The total enrollment for fall 1990 was 3,310. Of these, 3,125 were undergraduate students and 185 were graduate students. Fifty-seven percent are women, 43 percent are men. The student body is increasing and the college seems to be attracting more women than men. The focus remains principally upon undergraduate students.

According to the Evergreen State College Institutional Report (1989) there were 153 full-time regular faculty in 1989 and 30 part-time adjunct faculty. Jones (1981) reported that because of declining enrollment Evergreen has been able to staff some programs at a 1 to 15 faculty-student ratio. While an ominous trend for the college, this has been good for the experiment.

A brief overview of the student body underscores the diversity of Evergreen students. The first student body in 1971 was composed of students from 35 Washington counties, 41 states, and 3 foreign countries (Clemens, 1987). There were various reasons for students to choose such a college. Some were discontent with previous college experiences, some believed they could do their own thing, some were simply looking for something different. But all held one thing in common: taking risks. They entered a college with no history, a very mixed image and still in the process of defining itself. At least faculty and staff were being paid for risk taking. In a sense the first Evergreen students were the true pioneers.

Most scholarly articles praise Evergreen for its dedicated faculty and emphasis on teaching. Seventy-four percent of the faculty hold the Ph.D. or its equivalent. Males teachers outnumber their female counterparts by a 2:1 ratio. Dr. Charles McCann, former dean of the faculty at Central Washington State College and an articulate spokesman for individualizing the college learning experience was selected to be the first president of Evergreen College. McHenry (1977) explained that most faculty members were hired because of a special competency which this new college needed. The three founding deans all matched this model. Mervyn Cadwallader, an exponent of the "moral curriculum," was hired because he had experience with interdisciplinary study at San Jose and SUNY Old Westbury. Charles Teske had experience administering independent study at Oberlin. And Don Humphrey had built a reputation for imaginative interdisciplinary work in the sciences at Oregon State. Other faculty members were attracted to the College because of their quest for a place to teach that emphasized classroom contact with students rather than faculty research in the lab. The Olympia campus is partially residential; 27 percent of the students live on the campus in 11 residences and 19 modular duplexes. The rest live nearby in rural houses or in the communities of Olympia, Lacey, or Tumwater. There is a regular bus service between the campus and Olympia. The geographical location of the college meets the needs of its students. The College is situated on 1,000 acres of woods and hills and has a 3,300-foot waterfront (salt water) just outside the city of Olympia, Washington's capital. The campus, most of which is forested with alder, maple, and Douglas fir, has trails for walking, jogging, and bicycling. The beach provides a perfect place for strolling, sunbathing, and marine research. Enrollment is currently just above 3000 students. Eighty-five percent are full-time. Students are diverse by age: 51 percent are between 18-24 years of age; 34 percent are 30 years or older. The median age is 25.

Financial Base

The original source of funds for the College came from the state. In fact, it became the first and only publicly funded institution of higher education founded in the State of Washington in the 20th century.

Jones and Smith stated that every year since 1970 there had been at least one bill introduced into the Legislative hopper to close Evergreen, turn it into state offices or at least a southern branch of the University of Washington. But the College has survived, in spite of recurrent bills to abolish it. The reasons for its survival may be based on the support it receives from the community. Among some of the legislators the College is seen as a resource and an asset. The college has also become a very positive force in the community and enjoys a healthy relationship with the city of Olympia. Another reason for its survival may be the fact that it serves as a continuing-education center for state employees and others based in Olympia. When the College was first established it had the support of the state governor, Dan Evans, who later became the second president of the College. That may have had a great impact on the survival of the College.

Joseph Olander, who became the third president from 1985 till present, claims that public funding has eroded for new and existing curricular programs, faculty development, library acquisitions, financial aid, student services, and access to current equipment. He argues that 20 years ago, Washington State spent twice as much per capita on higher education as the rest of the country. He contends that today, although its expenditures have increased slightly, Washington state ranks 22nd out of 50 states. Evergreen is a College, says Olander, whose resources must grow if the future promise of its founding dream is to be fulfilled.

According to College records, in 1985-86, Evergreen received more than \$1.3 million in gifts and grants, topping the million-dollar mark for the first time. The amount of \$24,049,007 was the total for all revenues, including \$3,505,474 from student tuition and fees, and \$13,223,820 state appropriations. But fund raising efforts over the next 10 years must increase ten-fold if Evergreen is to go forward. The College must seek more support from foundations that believe in the Evergreen dream and want to continue to take risks in its behalf (Clemens, 1987).

Tuition for 1986-87 was \$1,212 for an in-state student and \$4,206 for nonresidents. Projected annual undergraduate tuition for 1991-92 is \$1,611 for residents and \$5,649 for non-residents. The estimated cost of books and supplies is \$500. The cost of room and board is approximately \$3400, and personal expenses are estimated at \$1200.

Student Involvement

Evergreen is a learning community whose mission revolves principally around its academic mission. Therefore, all other aspects of life at Evergreen should not only support the process of teaching and learning, but enhance them as well. There are no community service projects. Students work hand in hand with their faculty members and the administration. Decision making and governance is a joint effort. "Our student-centered philosophy and definition of community has involved students, faculty and staff in the governance process from the very beginning," says Larry Stenberg (Jones 1981). He further stated that campus-wide governance has expanded the learning process beyond the classroom and created a better understanding of Evergreen and how it functions. Also the College has given students a significant role in planning their education through such activities as scheduling and textbook selections.

According to the school prospectus (1990-91), each year the federal government awards the College money to create student jobs. The State of Washington subsidizes career or academically-related employment for students who need such services. The state work study program at Evergreen is used for both on and off-campus positions. Student teaching is another area which allows students to use their skills.

Students do evaluate faculty members, through portfolios and narrative evaluations of their instructors. However, student participation as far as voting for faculty retention or dismissal is very minimal. Since the faculty has limited time for research, seldom do students get involved in scholarly research work.

Student Profiles

Evergreen is committed to admitting students of diversity. Its low tuition of \$3,550 a year, may be another contributing factor to its popularity among the masses. The College seeks qualified students who demonstrate a spirit of inquiry and a willingness to participate in their educational process within a collaborative framework. The College has certain admissions standards, but they are not highly selective. The College is also interested in attracting students who express an interest in campus or community involvement, a respect and tolerance for individual differences, and a willingness to experiment with innovative modes of teaching and learning. Lowest acceptable secondary school class standing is 50th percentile. Other college entrance exams like SAT or GRE may be considered but they are not required.

Since Evergreen seeks to achieve a diverse student body, special consideration has been given recently to ethnic minorities and nontraditional students. The policy which went into effect in the fall of 1990, replaced one in which students from the top 50 percent of their class were admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis (Gabelnick, Matthews, & Smith 1990). Evergreen has historically sought to reserve some number of spaces in each class for students who have not excelled in high school or college, but who may adapt favorably to a noncompetitive, interdisciplinary academic environment.

Educational Programs

Evergreen's curriculum eventually offered students four primary ways of earning credits:

1. The year-long coordinated studies programs typically involve: one group lecture, two days of smaller seminars, and perhaps two workshops or laboratory sessions during a week. Most are created and led by three to five faculty members representing various disciplines. They divide their responsibilities in advance by preparing contracts that set out the duties of each member of the team; students also sign contracts detailing their obligations. Faculty members spend the better part of one day a week in a faculty seminar, debating and discussing among themselves a topic related to the program.
2. Group contracts allow a group of students to organize a course of particular interest to them with a willing faculty member or team of faculty members. The course can last from one to three quarters.
3. Individual contracts permit individual students to study topics of their own choice with a single faculty member's sponsorship.
4. Internships, which the college encourages, give upperclassmen opportunities to gain experience in off-campus jobs.

The College also offers courses that are more conventional. Subjects that do not lend themselves to thematic development in seminars, and subjects that are best learned sequentially, do not fare well in the coordinated-studies format. Jones (1981) reports that, "We should not despair if the mathematicians and linguists continue to teach courses." Reaffirmation is a continually recurring theme in the lexicon and literature of Evergreen from 1971 to 1986. Accordingly there have been significant changes in the curriculum. According to a self-evaluation report, although a program may be offered annually, it is never twice the same. The evolution of the curriculum, in fact, began almost as soon as Evergreen opened. The most prominent feature of Evergreen's arts and science education is a curricular commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and learning, not only in team-taught coordinated studies, but also in thematically coherent group and individual contracts. Significant themes and problems promote engagement in study by both students and faculty. It is more important that students reap the benefits of studies growing from among different fields than that they merely acquire specialized knowledge or cover a body of knowledge.

Disciplinary background and sound consistent academic advice become crucial aids to success (Evergreen Report, 1986).

The College has attempted to emphasize Third-World perspectives throughout the curriculum. There have also been three developments which have influenced the curriculum to this day: the realization that “real-world” themes provide the most powerful focus for coordinated studies, the creation of group contracts for specialized learning, and the establishment of the Office of Cooperative Education to find more placements for interns (Jones, 1981). Interdisciplinary work has been considered the academic key to linking theory and practice, especially if it leads to internships, research, and public service projects. One of the factors that contributes to student involvement in the educational program is the part they play in curriculum development. At Evergreen there are dedicated bulletin boards throughout the College where curricular ideas are constantly submitted for public view. This allows the students to share their views with regard to curriculum development. The curriculum is subject to change all the time. But while refining the content and structure of its curriculum, and expanding services to southwest Washington and state government since its beginning, Evergreen has remained remarkably true to the founding vision of a student-centered, interdisciplinary education in the liberal arts.

At Evergreen it is essential that students receive as much individual attention as possible. For example, students regularly organize and conduct book seminars where they read and discuss a book related to their program. The purpose of this exercise is to examine a reading assignment in relation to the program theme. But there are other benefits. Students learn how to work together as a group by paying attention to issues of equivalent participation and relating to implied faculty authority. The seminars are small, and students customarily take responsibility for certain parts of the reading and discussion. They are designed to be truly interactive and give students practice in problem-solving and group dynamics.

Core Programs are coordinated study programs especially planned for first year students. While each core program has a theme, they all expose students to interdisciplinary learning, to certain learning skills, and to the Evergreen approach which places so much responsibility on the individual student to both learn, teach, work collaboratively, and to shed any need for competitiveness when it comes to scholarship.

Individual learning contracts are examples of where a student and faculty member work on a one-to-one basis. The contract may include reading, painting, photography, research, field studies or any activity that involves the student in individualized learning. These are more common for advanced students with well-defined goals. Internships are similar to Individual Learning Contracts. There is a one-to-one relationship with a faculty member, but also with a field supervisor.

Evaluation is another special part of the academic structure and student/teacher relationship. Although there are no grades, there are regular individual evaluation sessions where the teacher and student share and discuss a written evaluation of the student’s activity in the course. The student also prepares a written evaluation of the faculty member. That evaluation goes to the Dean after it has been discussed by the student with the faculty member. The student has to make a transition from passive learning to active learning.

Perhaps the most serious problem for a faculty member, particularly in this teaching-centered institution, is maintaining contact with the profession and personal advancement. The college is acutely aware of this problem. Most faculty members agree that the problem of staying current is real and that the Evergreen curricular structure makes it difficult to provide a reduced teaching load in order to facilitate part-time research.

Self-Studies

According to an Evergreen self-evaluation (1986), this institution has had its problems over the years. The college is fully accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, even though it endures

much criticism by many traditional academicians.

The early years of the College were years of prosperity amid controversy. Student demand was very high, and yet some powerful legislators threatened to close Evergreen even before the College opened. In addition the local press was less than favorable, but the college benefitted from positive, national exposure.

The early period of prosperity did not last long. A lack of careful enrollment analyses and the external environment masked subtle changes until the situation reached crisis proportions. The College tackled the problem head on in the fall of 1978 by commissioning a committee to make recommendations. In February of 1979 the committee submitted its report, the first attempt to develop a marketing plan for Evergreen. In the fall of that year a comprehensive marketing plan went into effect. The plan included very specific strategies for recruiting new students and increasing public awareness. Indeed, the consistent increases of new students, the higher retention of current students, and the excellent press Evergreen has received, indicate that the implementation of this plan has benefited Evergreen considerably.

The College has survived in spite of frequent legislative attempts to abolish it (the most recent in April 1983). Moreover, Evergreen has prospered and is still evolving. During 1985-86 a strategic planning process reaffirmed many of the College's visions, values and aspirations. Some were ideals that finally had become reality. Others, like the "issues carousel" (a set of revolving concerns) have continued as works-in-progress (Clemens, 1987).

The College persists in striving for the lofty goals of the 1967 visionaries, but as Provost Hill points out, the added challenge is to work even harder now so that Evergreen is accepted. Maintaining an innovative spirit and commitment to excellence is demanding in the face of finite resources, increasing enrollment pressures, uncertain economy, and a wavering of faith in higher education across the country. Recent reports on the national crisis in education call for a reaffirmation of many of the fundamental Evergreen principles. Many feel the time is right for education—Evergreen style (Clemens, 1987).

External Evaluation

From a national perspective Evergreen State College enjoys an increasingly favorable reputation as one of the finest liberal arts colleges in the nation. The November 28, 1983 issue of U.S. News and World Report (1987) published the findings of their survey of 1,308 4-year undergraduate schools. A total of 162 responded, selecting top schools in five categories of liberal arts colleges that grant bachelor's degrees. In the category of smaller comprehensive universities with regional reputations that emphasize the liberal arts, Evergreen State College was ranked first in the Midwest and West.

In September 1984, Parade magazine carried an article written by Lisa Birnbach, citing Evergreen as one of: "the 10 best-kept secrets among American colleges." Two years earlier, Seventeen had proclaimed Evergreen along with a handful of other colleges to be a "hidden gem" in higher education. The media has projected a very favorable image for Evergreen nationally. The alumni of the College have also been instrumental in promoting positive public relations for the College.

The consistent support of state funds is one reason for the viability of Evergreen. For instance, the college does not need to make a profit in order to survive. Political influence has had a great impact on the survival of Evergreen. The former governor of Washington state and the now U.S. Senator Dan Evans, was the second president of the college in 1977-1983. During his term of office he also employed his political credibility and skill as an orator in an ongoing campaign to inform the public about the uniqueness of Evergreen. His contributions have had a lasting effect in propelling this college forward.

The College has also served the needs of the Olympia community and has found a true friend in this city. Some community members have even gone to the extent of forming "Friends of the College" who have made large contributions to Evergreen during turbulent times. There are many publications and books written about the college and this has helped Evergreen immensely.

The survival of the College also stems from involved founders who remain committed to their dreams even now. Some of them are still faculty members at the College or support it in various ways. For example, one member of the original planning group, Richard Jones, is still a faculty member at Evergreen. The first president Charles McCann was there long enough to leave a lasting impression on the College. Nine years of service helped his predecessors to see a tangible pattern to follow. The College also has devoted alumni which help to maintain its viability.

Conclusions

Evergreen has focused more on effective teaching than student outcomes. With dedicated teachers such an approach to teaching can produce independent, intelligent thinkers. At Evergreen students are encouraged to get involved and to apply their knowledge in a proactive way. Therefore, students not only learn but they also initiate.

Evergreen still retains most of its distinctive features. For example, the Evergreen innovation to operate without academic departments is still sound and alive. Letter grades continue to be taboo and written evaluations are the norm. Evergreen is still committed to collaborative teaching as its primary pedagogical mode. Students who choose Evergreen seem to hold similar values such as serving other people, a purpose in life, and making the world a better place to live.

Chapter 16

College of the Atlantic: Spirit of Time and Place

Barbra Wardle ¹⁷

Towering pine trees march in measured cadence down rocky slopes to the sea, interspersed with staccato notes of giant granite boulders. The tang of salty sea air is underscored by the wheeling cries of sea birds on the brisk New England wind. This is the setting for the College of the Atlantic, one of the newer experimental colleges in the United States.

Geographical location was an important consideration to the founders of the College of the Atlantic. This is coastal mountain terrain surrounded by the waters of the cold north Atlantic Ocean. Mount Desert Island, site of the campus, is connected to the mainland by a permanent causeway.

The campus covers 26 acres adjacent to the Acadia National Park and is on the shoreline of Frenchman Bay. It is within walking distance of Bar Harbor, Maine. In 1967, the local economy was based primarily on ocean and tourist related endeavors and was mainly limited to summer.

The climate is harsh, with short summers and wet, penetrating cold winters. The College blithely addresses the problem of cold temperatures by stating, "One of the most common ways to deal with the cold is by chopping firewood. The chopping warms you as much as the later fire" (COA 1990-1991:6). The search for winter industry and employment for the islanders was one of the early considerations for the establishment of the College.

Mount Desert Island, Maine, is the home of this educational institution dedicated to the study of humans and their relationships with the earth and sea. Philosophically, the institution strives for a balance between education and research, with students heavily involved in each area. The educational emphasis is interdisciplinary and explorational, with student-teacher ratio of 10:1.

Origins and Evolution

The idea for the College of the Atlantic (COA) began in 1967 as a casual conversation between Les Brewer, a Bar Harbor businessman, and an old classmate, Father Jim Gower, the new parish priest. They were discussing the recent failure of Nelson Rockefeller's efforts to find a way to expand the economic base of the island. The business economy of the island was poor, so Rockefeller had tried to develop new industry to employ local citizens without destroying the ambience of the island. This search had been unsuccessful, so the problems still existed. The local Chamber of Commerce had been discussing the

¹⁷Barbra Wardle, Assistant Professor of Art, Utah Valley State College.

possibility of establishing a school on the island to provide quality education for the local students, as well as to benefit the Island.

As Brewer and Gower talked, they became convinced that the school idea would be the answer to more than one problem. It would provide both employment and education for locals, bring young people from the world to the Island, and stimulate the economy of the area in the winter months.

They contacted three other friends, Bob Smith, Bernard Cough and Dick Lewis, to work with them on the idea. The group believed this could work and enlisted Fred Burrill, a lawyer, who handled the legal process of incorporation for the newly formed Board of Trustees (Aronow, 1983:6-7).

The next major effort was to obtain a site, which they did in typical New England fashion. There was an abandoned Catholic Seminary site on the island which was owned by a group of five citizens of Bar Harbor. Members of the new board took these owners to lunch one day, and as Brewer remembers:

In the automobile on the way back from lunch it was, by gentlemen's agreement, settled that the Board would have a 5-year lease on the Seminary property for one dollar a year, plus taxes. (Aronow, 1983:8)

Brewer and Gower invited officials from the Maine State Department of Education to the site and explained their ideas for the college. Petitioning for approval for a college on the site, Brewer (1991) promised:

We'll guarantee you one thing, that if, at any time, our Board of Trustees feels we can no longer make it. . . You won't have to come tell us. We'll come tell you when we know we can't continue. (Brewer, p. 2)

The Board of Education granted the petition, and with these major successes—a Board of Trustees, a site, and approval from the Maine State Board of Education—the project was a reality; it began to gain momentum with other residents. Although this started as an idea to help the local economy, it soon developed into a serious attempt to provide quality education in an unusual setting.

The original trustees included Ann Peach, a secretary; Reverend Cushman McGiffert; and Eddie Hayman, a lyricist. Hayman suggested the name, "College of the Atlantic;" he thought the name would work well in a song, if they decided to have a school song.

They began to seriously discuss the underlying philosophy of goals and direction for the college. Because of the location and the influence of the sea on business, industry and life in general on Mount Desert Island, oceanography was to be part of the philosophy. Also, the south end of the Island included Acadia National Park, so the environment was an important factor. Reverend McGiffert stated:

This (educational philosophy) was properly the responsibility of the faculty, but at this point, we were serving in lieu of a faculty. Father Jim should be given credit for giving the first impetus to the thought of ecology as an area of focus. He had read a new section in Time Magazine on ecology, which can be defined as 'a study of our environment' which (was) fine, except that's a narrow branch of biological sciences; and, it can be about people, so he thought it ought to be 'human ecology' as the center of our philosophy. (Aronow, 1983:9)

Thus, the concepts of human ecology and oceanography became the foci of both education and research at COA. The area of art and design was added during the planning stage, and these became the areas of emphasis for COA. Their goal was to provide an education that truly would prepare students to live in the world of the future, and perhaps, improve that world with skills learned at the college.

The next step was to choose a president who would be the personification of the college and would represent it to the world, as well as to build COA both physically and intellectually into a quality educational institution. Reverend McGiffert remembers:

I don't know how many presidents of colleges, or would-be presidents of colleges wrote to us and invited themselves to come up here, at their own expense, to talk to us. Each of them left us with a big fat document on what they thought the college should be and what it should do. This was absolutely invaluable. We had very little idea what a president should do, and we learned all about it free of charge from these men. . . they each did a good sales job, but we didn't take any of them. (Aronow, 1983:10)

The Board finally hired Dr. Edward Kaelberg from Harvard as the first president. He had recently returned from establishing educational programs abroad as part of Harvard's outreach system. His experiences of building education from the ground level, willingness to try alternatives to established procedures, openness to innovation, and especially his caring attitude, were strong credentials that had a direct impact on the development of COA.

With Brewer's help, Kaelberg persuaded Ann Peach to become his secretary. They set up offices in the Turrets (Gate House) building, with Ann's personal typewriter, card table and Les Brewer's folding chair. There was no heat in the building. Their first college purchase was a coffee pot, to help keep themselves warm. Kaelberg remembers:

So for the first few months. . . most of my efforts were spent trying to put together a prospectus or brief statement of what the college might be about. . . Ecology is concerned with the relationships of various forms of life, in which we were interested, but we were particularly emphasizing the human involvement in this relationship. This college is going to stress the interrelation and interdependence of. . . living things one to another, people to people, as well as people to other living things.

As time went, my definition of human ecology changed somewhat. . . One important word in its definition was generosity. . . It is very much at the core of what we hoped to bring into play. I guess I mean intellectual generosity as much as anything. . . , a real sympathy and an effort to try to understand other ideas; a willingness to give of yourself and to take from others what they want to give. It seems to me that we should know whether or not we receive relative to what we contribute. An equally important question is, am I contributing relative to what I am receiving? (Aronow 1983:12)

The above statement was part of the philosophical underpinning that guided COA through its first few years of existence. As faculty and staff were hired, and as students began to come, the creed of giving more than is received became a guiding standard for COA. Each student is still expected to give at least one term to an internship which should benefit either the College, the island community, or the world at large.

The political as well as educational climate of the early 1970s was tenuous, bordering on volatile. For most of the preceding decade, issues such as the Vietnam War, drug use, civil rights and more recently, ecology, had generated strong feelings on both sides of each issue, and had left a residue of societal problems. College campuses across the nation were often centers of confrontation, anger, and frustration. This was a time of change, with widespread rejection of authority and confrontations with traditional value systems.

The College of the Atlantic began in 1969, with the first 2 years spent in designing the curriculum, hiring key personnel and preparing the site. The Board decided to begin a small pilot program in the summer of 1971, with a small group of students and four faculty. The faculty members chosen were Bill Carpenter, literature; Glenn Paulson, science; Seth Singleton, political science; and Sam Eliot, literature and ecology. This small summer project provided considerable information for establishment of the full program. In October of 1971 the decision was made to begin full formal classes in September of 1972. A particular profile was designed for hiring additional faculty and staff. The Board was looking for certain fields or specialties such as biology, anthropology, law, music, literature, etc., but more specifically, they

were looking for a certain type of people. They were seeking such characteristics as open-mindedness, a spirit of adventure, a common sense of values, a concern for the environment, and especially people who cared about people.

Eighteen hundred faculty applications were received, and 10 new faculty members were hired (Less than 1 percent of those who applied).

The Board and staff then met and planned throughout the winter and spring of 1972 to create a course of study which would both educate students properly and serve the cause of world ecology. The interests and special abilities of each faculty member were considered, and the courses for the first year were designed from their strengths (Aronow 1983:18).

Demographic Profile

The prospectus and application information about the college were sent out. Several hundred students applied. Each student who applied was thoroughly screened and most were rejected. The same qualities used for faculty were applied as criteria for student admissions. Sixteen men and sixteen women enrolled as the first official class of COA.

Much risk was involved in this modest beginning on the part of both COA and the students. COA was not yet accredited, and could not even promise the students that they would be able to graduate. The preponderance of transfer or older students was a distinct advantage in the first class, as students became fairly equal partners in the governance structure and in designing the educational program of the college. Most of the students and the faculty of COA were in their 20s, so there were definite similarities between students and faculty in viewpoints, attitudes, ethical stance, and beliefs.

The first year of COA was a year full of various challenges. Here, in the inchoate stages of our national concern for ecology, was a college focused on human ecology. From its small beginning in 1969, COA has grown to a 1990-91 student population of 239 undergraduates, with 62 percent women and 38 percent men. The first graduation had four students. Their largest graduating class will be Spring 1991, with 48 students receiving a B.A. in Human Ecology. In addition, there are 3 master's candidate students, with three more admitted for fall 1991. COA's students represent 27 states and 9 foreign nations. From its beginning with mostly transfer students, the larger proportion of students now enter as freshmen, and 67 percent of entering freshmen go on to graduate (Thomas 1991:1).

The faculty now includes 21 full time teachers, 11 adjunct faculty, 13 faculty associates and 16 research associates. Their areas of specialization cover the following: literature, math, marine biology, ecology, art, public policy, music, writing and education. Faculty members have degrees from Harvard, MIT, University of Chicago, Bowdoin, Texas, Parsons, Berkeley, etc., with 80 percent holding Ph.D.s or M.F.A. degrees.

Financial Base

The two original sources of funding were student tuition and support from the Board of Trustees. These were the financial means until the mid 1980s, when COA applied for and received Title III money. COA has received two consecutive Title III grants for \$600,000 to strengthen computer resources, institutional research, teacher education, academic planning and residential life. In addition they have garnered one Federal Improvement of Post Secondary Education grant, one Endowment for the Humanities grant, and one Pew Trust Grant for \$400,000 for their Arts and Sciences building. The Board of Trustees actively participates in fundraising for the College, with about \$700,000 contributed during this past year (Brewer 1991:2).

Tuition and fees currently total \$11,499 and approximately 60 percent of COA students receive financial aid (Thomas, 1991:1). COA has its own private GSL or Guaranteed Student Loan Fund, which has a

permanent endowment of \$300,000. This fund issues student loans, interest free, on a rotating basis, and has an excellent success rate of student payback. Federal grant and loan programs are also available to students.

Until now, COA has offered only one degree, that of B.A. in Human Ecology. They recently added an additional M.A. in Human Ecology (Tuhy, 1991:2).

Student Involvement

For students, life at COA was and is one of complete involvement. Students are equal partners in decision-making, program design, desired curricula and goal setting. The governance structure is by committee, with each committee including administrators, faculty and students. Committee decisions are then reviewed by the All College Meeting, which is attended by every student, faculty and administration member.

Initially committees at COA proliferated until at one point there were over 70 committees, all staffed by 10 faculty, 32 students, 4 administrators, and various board members. There was such great community spirit that everyone became involved. The group spirit began to have its drawbacks. Everyone was so concerned for everyone else that simple decisions were hard to accomplish. The dissent of even one or two members was sufficient to halt any action.

At one point, a board member offered a case of beer to every committee which would voluntarily disband. He only had to make good a couple of times. (He also stated that anyone who started a committee had to give him a case of beer. He collected on several new committees.)

Students often work together on each other's senior project. Each student is required during their senior year to design and complete a senior project. This may be a significant intellectual endeavor, a scholarly treatise, an experimental project, a research project, or some service-oriented work. Students are also involved with research in conjunction with faculty, or on their own with faculty consultation. A significant number of the research associates of COA are former graduates of COA who are continuing research in areas chosen as students.

The Students

At first, Ed Kaelberg made recruitment visits to local high schools, sent mailings to all prospective students, and tried many different ways to find the students. Admission standards now are admittedly high, but they are not limited solely to the conventional, GPA, ACT or SAT scores. Current admission is highly personalized, with emphasis on the individual's current academic skills, not just grades. The present admission committee looks for evidence of the following:

1. Academic preparation and achievement.
2. Intellectual curiosity and an enthusiasm for learning.
3. Desire to be a part of a small college with a human ecology focus.
4. A tendency to seek out intellectual and personal challenges.

There is a certain amount of self-selection, in that not every student is willing to spend their winter on the coast of Maine, or is interested in oceanography, ecology or the human relationships with nature. COA is highly self-disciplined, with students involved in decision making on almost every level. Students accepted at COA are carefully chosen, based on the above criteria, with the expectation that they will both benefit from education at COA and also be a benefit to the College.

Prevailing Themes

COA boldly expects the theme of human ecology to permeate all coursework. They only offer two degrees: a B.A. and a M.A. in Human Ecology. There are three tracks to the degree, with programs in human studies, art and design, and environmental studies. Areas of emphasis include: marine studies, environmental and biological sciences, public policy, creative arts, environmental design, culture and consciousness, education and writing. Certification is available for teacher education. Each of these areas has required programs of study, but encourage interdisciplinary courses across program lines. The idea of interdisciplinary education is paramount with the faculty. Many of the offerings at COA are interdisciplinary, combining art and science, writing and public policy, literature and art. Not surprisingly, in his 1990 speech, Peter Moon, a graduating senior, declared:

This college was founded on human ecology, and human ecology is not confined to a limited body of knowledge. Instead it serves as a context in which to frame other disciplines. Without the tools of science and design, human ecology remains an ineffectual and powerless world view. Without arts and the humanities, we remain unable to develop meaningful goals, since it is these disciplines which allow us to human well-being. It is only when we develop these disciplines as an integrated whole, when we are able to apply the concepts of human ecology to everyday dilemmas, that human ecology becomes an ethical foundation capable of guiding our actions. (Moon, 1990:5)

All COA students are required to complete their basic coursework in which they design and arrange 36 credit hours. (One credit at COA equals 3.3 semester credits at other institutions). Thereafter each student is required to complete two non-credit requirements. The first non-credit assignment involves a community or college service experience that contributes to the island or campus community. Second, they must write a human ecology essay, which describes the student's development as a human ecologist and demonstrates competence in writing (COA Catalog, 1990-91:13-17).

Each student may submit a proposal outlining and justifying what they want to study and how they will design their own individual course of study. This thinking and writing step is intentionally built into the process of COA independent work. The requirement to present a proposal forces the student to clarify learning goals, and to plan how to meet them. These may include independent studies, group studies, pure research, community service, as well as regular course work.

Internships are also available and applicable to the educational process. They offer specialized training in an area compatible with individual career paths and interests. They are supervised work experiences which allow students to apply their knowledge and skills in the job market. They also help develop new skills, clarify future goals, and establish important career contacts with extramural groups (Catalog 1990-91:8-14).

Teaching and Learning

The majority of teaching/learning processes at COA utilize the Socratic method in small seminar-type classes, faculty/student-designed courses of study, and experiential learning. There is some lecture, but the transfer of knowledge takes place more often as a high level of student-faculty interaction, peer group learning, research, and self-exploration.

All programs are nondepartmental, with faculty members teaching horizontally across multiple disciplines. The emphasis is on student initiated learning, hands-on processes, and student/faculty joint research.

Because of its location, COA provides some isolation from everyday life, enabling students to concentrate more on the educational process. However, the central educational theme of ecology requires a deep

commitment and strong involvement from both the faculty and the students with world problems. Many of the research programs, internships and service projects are spread throughout the world. Both faculty and students are involved in looking and working for solutions to world problems (Tuhy, 1991:1-13).

The College of the Atlantic is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. This accreditation is reviewed and renewed regularly. In addition, ongoing relationships are maintained with other institutions such as Antioch, University of Moscow, Prescott and the University of Maine. Faculty members often visit other educational institutions, business and industries in diverse areas of the world. In return, COA frequently hosts guest scholars and lecturers from other institutions.

Several years ago, COA held a symposium on experimental education, and invited college representatives from Prescott, Franconia and Black Mountain. They discussed the problems and difficulties that had closed the doors of Black Mountain and Franconia and that were threatening the demise of Prescott. COA representatives felt they benefited greatly from the interchange (Carpenter, 1991).

Governance

College of the Atlantic is democratic in governance structure, with administration, staff, faculty and students having equal voice in the decision-making process. Governance is by committee, with final approval on decisions occurring in the All College Meetings. Everyone has an equal vote in this maverick educational democracy.

The administration is led by the president at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees, with various administrators serving in needed positions, such as admissions, public relations, security, etc. There are no departments nor is there any tenure or rank. Faculty are hired on 3-year contracts, with a performance review from both.

Life Course

COA has had a pattern of slow continuous growth since its inception. There have been occasional financial problems, and some organizational reshuffling, but the support of the Board of Trustees has been unwavering. They have always had more applicants than they could accept, both for faculty and students.

There have been three presidents: Dr. Edward Kaelberg from Harvard, 1969-1982; Dr. Judith Swazey from Harvard, 1982-1984; and Dr. Louis Rabineau, former Chancellor of Higher Education, Connecticut, 1984 to the present. Of the founding alumni most are still involved, actively supporting the college and continuing to have voice in its governance.

In addition to the rigorous educational program, the College sponsors these research organizations:

- **Society for Human Ecology (SHE)**. The purpose of SHE is to promote the development of collaboration and an interdisciplinary understanding of human ecology and its applications. It is affiliated with the International Association for Ecology and International Association for Impact Assessment.
- **Allied Whale**. This is the marine mammal research group, and has been a leader in the development of scientific techniques used by whale biologists in modern whale research. Allied Whale, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard, runs the Mt. Desert Rock Whale Research facility, the oldest land-based marine mammal research facility on the East Coast.

The basic mission of COA is education. Research at COA is a part of the educational process of teaching students to explore, question, and examine the relationships between humans and the environment. This

does not lessen the quality of research performed, but enables students to work with faculty members in a number of diverse areas.

Students at COA become familiar with the authors, scientists and philosophers of the past, but their view is toward the future. Education in human ecology is the broad base from which they travel in many directions to pursue career goals that focus on assisting mankind. Over 30 percent of COA graduates continue their education and obtain advanced degrees. Many others go into business, education, journalism, public administration and conservation (COA Bulletin, 1991:3).

Faculty and students explore the world together at COA. President Rabineau, in an interview for The Washington Post, stated:

Some colleges start with the notion that they are a repository of ideas and the faculty is there as experts to dispense wisdom. We go about it the opposite way: take students where they are and develop them. We want them to learn how to learn. (McCarthy, 1990:1)

College of the Atlantic is not the “educational Eden,” but it is a college where students can learn to learn. The emphasis is on the future, rather than reverence for the past. Both faculty and students have come to COA from more tightly structured learning institutions, and most who come stay. Of the original faculty, all but one are still at COA. The administration hires quality teachers who teach students to shine. As important as research is at COA, excellence in teaching and learning is the major goal.

Chapter 17

Conclusion: Making Sense of Irrepressible Dreams

L. Jackson Newell ¹⁸

America's colleges and universities tend to be conservative in the conduct of their own affairs. As a result, they often lag behind the emerging needs of the communities they serve—local, national and global. Yet the truly distinctive examples among them continue to anticipate changing social conditions, present viable alternatives to traditional ways of doing things, and remind us (by their own origins and practices) that significant educational innovations can be initiated and sustained.

In this manner, these maverick colleges strengthen higher education in the same fashion that biodiversity serves the natural world. They foster practices and harbor ideas that are essential to the vitality and responsiveness of undergraduate programs everywhere. While vastly outnumbered by their less adventurous sibling institutions, these unusual colleges are a font of diverse thought, a stimulus to question prevailing assumptions and, sometimes, as source of inspiration and courage.

Rhythms of Birthing and Ironies of Fate

Not surprisingly, new colleges with distinctive philosophies are most frequently founded when traditional institutions fall short of meeting societal, community or individual needs or when societal or community needs emerge that existing institutions are unable or unwilling to serve. The wider the gap between need and response, the more likely knowledgeable and creative people will muster the energy and courage to start something new. It should not surprise us, then, that some of America's most successful maverick colleges trace their origins to periods of intense social upheaval or educational ferment.

Setting the Stage in Early Nineteenth Century London

Thomas Babington Macaulay, a celebrated 19th century British historian, is widely credited with writing an unsigned essay about the origins of London University in the 1820s (Macaulay, 1826; in Clive and Piney, Eds., 1972). The universities of Oxford and Cambridge, he reminded his readers, awarded degrees only to students in good standing with the Church of England. Growing religious and cultural diversity within British society, precipitated by increasing industrialization and a global empire, meant

¹⁸Adapted from "Origins and Character of Distinctive Colleges," by L. Jackson Newell, in *Creating Distinctiveness: Lessons from Uncommon Colleges and Universities*, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports (No. 6), 1992.

that many Evangelical Protestants, Jews, dissenters and others outside the established Church had the necessary means and sought the benefits of university education. When Oxford and Cambridge remained unresponsive to the new demand, London University opened its doors to qualified students, regardless of their religious beliefs.

A product of Trinity College at Cambridge himself, Macaulay lauded London University for its responsiveness to new social realities and for its imaginative curriculum and administration. But the new London University was assailed by “Oxbridge” dons and by established political and religious leaders. A distinctive departure from academic norms of its day, London University staked out religious tolerance and the separation of scientific and theological thinking as hallmarks of its bold mission. These innovations, of course, began as heresies and shortly became orthodoxies in British higher education. This is just one early example of the influence that innovative colleges and universities can have on the larger systems of which they are a part.

The American Way

The London University pattern has been repeated time and again in the United States. Strains in the social fabric, as illustrated by the origins of London University, and changes in the production and organization of knowledge, such as those that came with the spread of the German research university model around the turn of the century, illustrate conditions that can call forth the energy necessary to try new ideas and practices in academe.

Among the colleges reviewed on the preceding pages, Antioch and Berea offer early examples of higher education’s response to questions raised by social change. Among the oldest distinctive colleges in the United States, these two came to life when the federal union was torn by the elemental moral and economic struggles that led to the Civil War. While Berea sought to address the grim reality of slavery and Appalachian poverty, Antioch advanced education’s adaptation of Jacksonian democracy.

The progressive movement in American politics at the turn of the century, which sought to reform our major public and private institutions (including education), produced a backdrop of social change that nurtured a number of experimental colleges founded in the first two decades of the 20th century. Two of them described earlier in this volume, Reed College in Portland, Oregon and Deep Springs College near Bishop, California, continue to flourish. The founders of both institutions were leaders and beneficiaries of America’s new burgeoning industrial economy, and each sought to create a college tailored to the challenges of a new era. Each aimed to use imaginative new means to prepare able and courageous leaders for the nation’s complex new institutions. In this era, business was king, the American West was open, and new forms of higher education were in the making.

The Changing Impetus for Change

As progressive ideals spawned progressive experiments, a wealth of ideas and counter-ideas about higher education fired debate in the late 1920s and 1930s. In this era, the stimulus for creating distinctive colleges arose primarily from strains within academe itself.

It was now over half a century since Johns Hopkins University opened its doors, and many other universities had since adopted the German pattern—based on professorial specialization, departmental organization and research orchestration. The benefits of university research for America’s industrial and military establishments were already evident, as were the implications of this new organizational structure for undergraduate teaching.

The controversy over the relationship between research and teaching, which continues to dog us, called forth a pantheon of reformers. Their philosophies reflected a common interest in the future of American

democracy, and the place of higher education in serving it, but their prescriptions often differed as sharply as their personalities. John Dewey advocated preparation for responsible citizens through task-oriented educational environments emphasizing areas of personal interest. Alexander Meiklejohn believed that if education was to “strengthen a student’s grip on life” it must be at once carefully structured and intellectually searching, particularly for lower division students (Meiklejohn, 1932:13). Dewey and Meiklejohn had their differences, particularly over the importance of structuring curricular content.

But if Dewey championed freedom and discovery in learning, and self-discipline in education, another crusading reformer of undergraduate education, Robert Maynard Hutchins, was going another way. When he assumed the presidency of the University of Chicago, Hutchins’ dream was to create within this university a strong and independent undergraduate college. Fearing that great ideas were being swamped in a sea of technical information, he based his plan on the study of classic works—on the great ideas produced by the western civilization.

Around 1930, Alexander Meiklejohn, Robert Hutchins, and others invested their energies and lives in creating experimental colleges within great research universities—rather than in founding new liberal arts colleges. If universities begat the problems, then universities were where solutions should be invented and tested. Exemplary of this era, we have examined Hutchins’ Chicago College Plan, known best as “the College.” But two other legacies of the time, both small independent colleges, owed their inspiration to the similar doubts about the popular directions in the means and methods of American higher education: Black Mountain in North Carolina and the rebirth of St. John’s in Maryland.

Siren Songs of the Sixties

The 1960s, like the 30s, saw a new wave of experimentation in higher education. As the aims of the new research universities and the anguish of the Great Depression had precipitated an earlier reform wave, so the social unrest caused by the Vietnam War and civil rights movement—as well as the continued increases in higher education enrollments—seemed to foster plans for new colleges and innovations in the late 1960s.

Three contrasting examples discussed earlier in this volume are Evergreen State College, Prescott College and College of the Atlantic. They, and many other similar experiments of the time, adhered to the focus of earlier models on teacher-student interaction, small classes, experiential learning and student voices in governance. However, as if determined to march to their own time, they have flavored the curriculum with social and environmental consciousness and have even—in the case of Prescott and Evergreen—launched programs for off-campus and adult students. Undoubtedly, the experimental colleges of the future also will voice their own particular responses to educational needs and timely realities. These will signal new changes, but also will reflect some older ideals about educational purposes.

Reflections on College Life Cycles

Founding a distinctive college, whether a completely new institution or as a new initiative within an existing university, requires vision, courage and enormous energy. It appears that some combination of three primary factors are normally present when these colleges and programs are initiated.

One is a disruption in the larger social fabric—as was present in pre-Civil War America, the opening decades of this century, the Great Depression of the 1930s, the turbulent 1960s and, possibly, our emerging response to global-scale environmental perils. Ferment over fundamental issues of liberty, equality, and justice often produce passionate responses, and higher education is often seen as a primary arena for addressing social discontent.

Concern about failure in the educational system itself constitutes a second fertile ground for new departures in educational practice. Neglect of liberal education, faculty preoccupations with research,

excessive specialization in knowledge and inquiry and growing impersonalization of instruction continue to cause public and student distress. These social and academic trends have generally accelerated through the 20th century. Whatever their economic benefits, few educators contest the unfortunate consequences of these changes for undergraduate education.

Fiscal, management or academic crises constitute a third factor for nurturing the possibilities of distinctive colleges. When bankruptcy threatens, accreditation is lifted and colleges teeter on the brink, board members and faculty members alike become willing to entertain radical ideas and consider sweeping changes that wouldn't warrant their glance in good times.

Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan were utterly incapable of instituting their Neo-Classical curriculum at the confident and healthy University of Virginia, where their faculty colleagues would not dream of such a thing, but the dispirited professors at St. John's College (at least those who had not already left) took Barr and Buchanan's reform medicine in desperation. As we have seen, internal crises also stimulated additional reforms and renewed articulation of the missions of Antioch and Berea at various times in their long histories.

We should not, of course, conclude that internal crises always result in clear vision and new strength. But they do present opportunities that sometimes work out very well. Institutional crises, of course, have also led to the demise of distinctive colleges. Thus, Black Mountain College disintegrated after 23 important but stormy years, Meiklejohn's Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin lasted only a half-decade before being killed by the faculty of that university, and Robert Maynard Hutchins' reformist zeal required years to create "The College" at the University of Chicago—only to see it largely dismantled following his departure.

From the Yale Report in 1828 to the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862, and from Robert Hutchins to John Dewey in this century, most who have done battle over philosophy for undergraduate education seem to have worked from a common premise—that large classes, passive learning, standardized tests, and professional and vocational training are not acceptable practices for the education of college students. Thus, faculty specialization, disciplinary departmentalization, and the benign neglect of teaching—all of which have come with the research university movement in 20th century America—are the common targets of those who seek to revitalize undergraduate colleges and programs. Reformers like Meiklejohn, Hutchins, Dewey, Rice, Buchanan and Barr may have had bitter words for one another, but they also enjoyed an unspoken camaraderie in protesting what they all assumed to be an inadequate and immoral establishment. Together, they are proponents of what Gerald Grant and David Riesman describe in their landmark book The Perpetual Dream as "telic reforms," or reforms undergirded with a philosophy of undergraduate education (1978). Changes based simply on pragmatic considerations like student recruitment, or that merely tinker with existing conditions by adding new teaching incentives, are another matter. By putting educational considerations and values above fiscal considerations or faculty research productivity, telic reforms are inherently risky, even as they promise—and sometimes deliver—major advantages for students fortunate enough to experience them.

Burton Clark (1970) has written of the importance of an institutional saga—that is, a culture and tradition that provides identity and unifies faculty staff, and students in supporting a distinctive educational vision. Clearly, Deep Springs and St. John's have strong sagas that inform and even inspire successive generations of faculty and students. Deep Springs' continuing commitment to its founder's dream (L. L. Nunn died in 1926) has ridden largely on its students. Even though Deep Springs study at the College only 2 years, the weighty delegation of authority given them has resulted in an uncommon commitment to the ideals of the institution. St. John's, at least among colleges achieving telic reforms, ranks at the far end of the spectrum of student involvement in college governance. St. Johnnies come to enjoy a sense of community through common intellectual experiences, but the integration of the community at all levels—including governance and college labor—is modest by comparison with other telic institutions. So what sustains these two very different institutions in their original form? A powerful saga, a sense of who they

are and what they are about, and, no doubt, some degree of good fortune.

Another factor that helps to sustain many of the distinctive colleges to which we have devoted attention is the small scale of their operations. Most, but not all, make good on an interrelated set of philosophical commitments that include: student participation in college affairs, integration of work and life experience with academic study, an ethic of service to their surrounding communities and dedication to a cause larger than the self or the college.

The small size of many of the colleges we have considered, therefore, is an advantage in that students' participation in work and governance produces visible and often immediate results. Students can easily see that their actions, or inactions, make a difference. Not every prospective student wishes to be actively involved in the affairs of his or her institution, but a very small college needs to draw only a few students to its philosophy or program to create a unified community and make it work. They have the advantage of dealing primarily with students who had a distinct preference for their educational philosophy, their geographical location, or their cause.

The College of the Atlantic, therefore, can focus on human ecology and draw excellent students and faculty to that theme—so long as it is only looking for several hundred students and a score or two of faculty at any given time. Distinctive colleges at the larger end of the spectrum, like Evergreen State College with more than 3,000 students, have little difficulty attracting faculty who are committed to interdisciplinary teaching, but they also must offer a wide variety of themes around which their many students can choose to congregate. Evergreen, of necessity, must have a broader focus than oceanography and human ecology if it is to engender the same degree of student commitment and enthusiasm across its entire student body.

Telic reforms within major universities, such as Meiklejohn's Experimental College at Wisconsin and Hutchins' College at the University of Chicago, sometimes fare better than the two famous examples just cited. These two colleges are especially important, however, because they were grand designs envisioned and forged by two of the most influential reformers of higher education in 20th century America. Even so, truly distinctive colleges or programs within major research universities seldom endure beyond the inspiration of their founders. Too often they serve as a reminder for what the rest of the faculty is not doing, and their faculties' devotion to teaching seems to draw attention to the fact that they are not publishing at the rate other professors are. The dominance of departmental forces and research values characteristic of a university's faculty as a whole almost always holds sway eventually.

As we reflect on the life cycle of distinctive colleges and programs, we must recognize an option between the two poles demonstrated by the colleges considered here—between maintaining a distinctive character over a long period of years and experiencing the death of an experimental institution. The middle ground, not represented by any of the institutions discussed in this volume, is occupied by colleges that gradually forfeit their distinctive characteristics. It is quite possible, in other words, to start with a bold vision and plan, but to gradually adopt practices that are present in the larger higher education system until the distinctive characteristics have partially or largely washed out.

Finally, we should look at some of the important differences among distinctive colleges. While many of them grant students unusual freedom in selecting their course of study and designing their education, others have rejected the elective system and prescribed the curriculum in great detail. Experiential education and service learning may be common, but they are not universal characteristics of distinctive institutions.

There also is great variety among distinctive colleges with regard to the kinds of students they seek to educate. A few are highly selective, like Deep Springs, Reed and St. John's, while others are moderately selective, like the College of the Atlantic and Antioch. Still others pride themselves in being open to a much broader spectrum of reasonably qualified high school graduates. Degree of elitism or openness is related in some cases to a philosophical commitment while in others to practical conditions. Most colleges find it hard to resist the temptation to take increasingly highly qualified students if that option is available to them.

Another dimension along which our distinctive colleges displayed philosophical differences is in their

attitude toward research. Most of them show hostility not to research itself but to research as a mission of their institution or their faculty. Yet a few see research as a means to get students and faculty together in intellectual activity and even in physical work. Reed College and the College of the Atlantic diverge from the norm of most other distinctive colleges in their explicit efforts to integrate research with teaching, particularly with advanced students.

The degree to which distinctive colleges follow a “whole-person” approach to education as contrasted with a more intellectual or neoclassical philosophy, relates in some degree to the responsiveness of the school to the environment in which it is located. Many distinctive colleges have specifically tailored their educational processes, if not their educational principles, to the land and people of their region. Prescott College and Deep Springs capitalize on their wilderness locations to enable their students to experience much of what they study. The same is true of the College of the Atlantic, poised on the wild north Atlantic coast. Berea College has adapted its mission specifically to the Appalachian region—even more to its human ecology than to its natural ecology. On the other hand, Evergreen State College, and the notable experiments of Meiklejohn and Hutchins, were less anchored to (or tailored to) their particular geography. At the far extreme, again, is St. John’s College which seems not to have adapted its educational programs to fit the distinctive environments of its two vastly different campuses in Annapolis, Maryland and Santa Fe, New Mexico. With the neoclassical approach of St. John’s, education is primarily an educational endeavor and it can take place anywhere, irrespective of its setting. For institutions, however, who view education as involving a student’s total experience, as at Deep Springs, Prescott, or College of the Atlantic, the local environment is of the greatest importance.

Conclusions and Beginnings

Distinctive colleges, whether they be independent entities or major programs within existing universities, are often given life by moral insight. For a century and a half that vision has often been driven by ideals of American democracy—equality, justice and participation. More recently, for example, at the College of the Atlantic, human survival and global ecological consciousness have emerged as the moral ideal.

Some visionaries, like Hutchins, Barr and Buchanan, believed human dignity is served best by drawing from the wisdom of the past and projecting the students so educated toward the future. Others, like Dewey, Tussman and the eclectic founders of the College of the Atlantic, believed that immersion in contemporary problems and real experience call forth a kind of wisdom and creativity that best promises to strengthen the individual and address the problems of human dignity and survival. Almost all of them, however, agree that education needs to be more fully engaging of students’ intellect and values, more interdisciplinary in the embrace of ideas and in the application of concepts and more participatory in the sense that students and faculty are engaged together in teaching and learning. Most reformers seem to agree, too, that teaching of the kind that is required for optimal education is a full-time endeavor. While it demands serious scholarship, in the best and broadest sense, inspired teaching cannot be squeezed in and around a busy research agenda. They suggest, at least by implication, that Thorstein Veblen may have had a point back in 1918 when he suggested that universities should concentrate on graduate education and research, while undergraduates should be taught in colleges that devote their full energies to teaching (Veblen, 1918). In a book by the same name, *The Higher Learning in America*, Hutchins answered Veblen in 1936 by saying that universities should not give up the candle.

Distinctive colleges also seem to agree on the importance of overcoming other weaknesses in the established educational customs of colleges and universities. Almost all of them seek valiantly to achieve a measure of equality among faculty, to avoid departmental organization of the faculty, to prepare students for life primarily and for work secondarily and to subjugate grades and degrees to learning and personal

growth. They also strive to make the processes of learning and teaching intrinsically rewarding for students and faculty.

Philosophy, setting and size notwithstanding, distinctiveness in higher education often begins as a response to a crisis in the social order, in higher education as a whole or in the life of an institution. And it seldom moves forward without the galvanizing force of a moral or philosophical vision. It is intriguing to contemplate: Do the urban malaise and ecological crises of the 1990s, coupled with the increased public criticism of colleges and universities, offer opportunities for a new wave of experimentation in higher education? The examples reviewed in this volume suggest a positive response.

Appendix A

A Partial List of Additional Distinctive Colleges

Alverno College, Milwaukee, WI
Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH
Armand Hammer United World College, Montezuma, NM
Bank Street College of Education, New York, NY
Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
Bennington College, Bennington, VT
Black Mountain College, Black Mountain, NC*
Brooklyn College, New York, NY
California State University-San Marcos, San Marcos, CA
The College, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL*
College of the Atlantic, Mount Desert Island, ME
Commonwealth College, Mena, AR*
Deep Springs College, Deep Springs, CA
Earlham College, Richmond, IN
Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, FL
Eisenhower College, Seneca, NY*
Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA
The Experiment at Berkeley, U.C. Berkeley, CA*
The Experimental College, U. of Wisconsin, Madison, WI*

*R.I.P

Fairhaven College, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA
Franconia College, Franconia Notch, N.H.
Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C.
The General College at Michigan State U., East Lansing, MI*
Goddard College, Plainfield, VT
Hampshire College, Amherst, MA
Maharishi International University, Fairfield, IA
Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, FL
Monteith College at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI*
New College, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY
New College of California, San Francisco, CA
Olivet College, Olivet, MI
Prescott College, Prescott, AZ
Reed College, Portland, OR
Sangamon State University, Springfield, IL
Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY
Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka, AK
Shimer College, Waukegan, IL
Tusculum College, Greeneville, TN
University of California-Santa Cruz, CA
Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC
World College West, Petaluma, CA

Appendix B

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