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## IN MEMORIES OF A GLORIOUS PAST: TRANSYLVANIA COLLEGE AND THE LIBERAL ARTS IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION, 1945-1975

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IN MEMORIES OF A GLORIOUS PAST:  
TRANSYLVANIA COLLEGE AND THE LIBERAL ARTS  
IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION, 1945-1975

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the  
College of Arts and Sciences  
at the University of Kentucky

By

Jonathan Tyler Baker

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Melanie Beals Goan, Professor of History

Lexington, Kentucky

2017

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### IN MEMORIES OF A GLORIOUS PAST: TRANSYLVANIA COLLEGE AND THE LIBERAL ARTS IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION, 1945-1975

Located in Lexington, Kentucky, and known for its historic connection to the Disciples of Christ Church, Transylvania College furnishes the opportunity to analyze the recent history of American liberal arts colleges and the way they handled issues of enrollment, funding and curriculum in the immediate postwar era—a period of unprecedented growth in American higher education. Transylvania College acts as a microcosm for other, similar liberal arts colleges. A careful examination of architecture, enrollment, student activities, and the way the administration interacted with governing boards will provide a glimpse into the way certain liberal arts colleges addressed their religious and budgetary limitations in order to meet the new demands of higher education. The more scholars understand about the way liberal arts colleges survived one major modern change in higher education may influence answers for the second—the debate over the identity of the American liberal arts college.

**KEYWORDS:** Liberal Arts College, Curriculum, Fundraising,  
Transylvania, Higher Education

Jonathan Tyler Baker

May 1, 2017

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I've always enjoyed reading the acknowledgments, and I was saddened when I got to graduate school and found that a majority of people skipped over them. Authors are products of their culture and experiences, so a product of the author is undoubtedly tied to those things as well. But I found not all acknowledgements were the same. Some authors spoke affectionately about their family or thank those who worked tirelessly with them on editing a manuscript. I felt slightly cheated when authors breezed past the more intimate details of their life to thank their countless contributors, but nevertheless enjoyed knowing how their idea became a book. I hope there is there someone out there like me who also enjoys reading the acknowledgements, and that I've given them a glimpse into the thankful heart that wrote these words.

On the eve of college graduation, the history faculty at Transylvania University gave me John R. Thelin's *A History of American Higher Education*. At the time I didn't consider myself a historian of American higher education, nor was I familiar with John Thelin. Although I wrote my senior thesis on the changing role of the president at the church affiliated liberal arts colleges in post-war America, I majored in European history. I knew more about the French Revolution—which really wasn't all that much—than the history of American higher education. I shelved the book back home in Ohio and entered graduate school at the University of Kentucky the following fall.

Two years later, I rarely go a day without flipping the pages of *A History of American Higher Education* and I consider myself lucky to call John Thelin a colleague, mentor

and “coach.” His constant encouragement and wonderful feedback have made this project more than just a continuation of my undergraduate thesis. Few scholars have influenced my work and life like Dr. Thelin. I am grateful for his role in my past, present and the future.

On the day I received Dr. Thelin’s book I also got a letter from the Department of History at the University of Kentucky informing me I was paired with Dr. Melanie Beals Goan for my first semester as a teaching assistant. With little clue as to who Dr. Goan was, I sent her an email introducing myself and asked if she would send me a list of textbooks to prepare for the second half of the United States course we would be teaching together. Two years later, I rarely go a day without somehow interacting with Dr. Goan. Whether it be about my thesis, courses or the *New York Times* article I sent her the day before, she’s been the source of encouragement I needed to complete my degree. I sometimes think about where I would be if I had not been paired with her my first semester of graduate school. What I decided is that I would have missed out on precious time with one of the best mentors I’ve ever had. Dr. Goan embodies selflessness and never shies away from showing students how much she cares. My development as a scholar and instructor is directly tied to her dedication and constructive criticism. This thesis would not be possible without her.

There are other people who have played a supporting role long before my time at the University of Kentucky. My undergraduate advisor, Dr. Kenneth Slepyan, convinced me to take a history major after I showed more than the typical amount of enthusiasm in his

Western Civilization survey. His diligent care for student success and inspiring teaching are the main reasons I decided to apply to graduate programs in history. His faith in my abilities and constant encouragement is one of the reasons I was accepted into those programs. In a similar way, Dr. Gregg Bocketti still pushes me to think critically about material even when I think I've hit a dead end. He and Dr. Slepian taught me the skills that made writing this thesis possible. Lastly, I am indebted to Ms. BJ Gooch at Transylvania's Special Collections. Her gracious guidance and expert knowledge of the sources is on display in every chapter.

The group who matters most to my journey should not think anything of being mentioned last. My family is the foundation of my success. It is impossible to put into words the amount of appreciation I have in my heart for the way they never let me quit on my dream to help the Rust Belt bring back its shine. I'm the first in my family to come this far, but only because they sacrificed to get me here. My mom, Vicky, and step-father, Jerry, created opportunities for me that undoubtedly got me to where I am today. I never imagined I'd be so thankful that my mom refused to accept a "B" on a report card. In case I haven't said it enough: Thank you, Mom. Furthermore, I am, in a lot of ways, the spitting image of my dad, John. I will always be indebted to him for the work ethic he instilled in me. The Currier family—Angela, Pat, Tommy, Millie, Scarlet, Kelly and Sarah—adopted me into their home. The kindness and love they've shown me is emblematic of the God we both love, and I only pray I can one day return the favor.



The fact I am even completing a graduate degree in history is ultimately a product of the love I received from my grandmother and grandfather, Peggy and Owen Baker. My journey would have ended before it started if it weren't for their sacrificial care and servant-like dedication to me and my siblings. This project is ultimately dedicated to you. My grandma always told me the only way I could repay her is by making something of myself. I have a feeling this is what she meant.

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## Introduction: The Current Crisis

In 2010, the Association of American Colleges and Universities were tasked with answering what, exactly, is a 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal education. Along with the typical response about individual empowerment and the transfer of intellectual and practical skills, the AAC&U claimed the nature of a liberal education had changed from what it was in the twentieth century. A liberal education for the twenty-first century student was essential for “success in a global economy and for informed citizenship.”<sup>1</sup> And, according to the AAC&U, unlike a century before when a liberal education could only be found at a liberal arts college, the liberal education curriculum—through the implementation of general education courses in all fields of study—can now be found at most institutions of higher learning.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the liberal arts college no longer laid sole claim to a core of its identity.

But has it? American higher education continues to evolve as new occupations replace old and the workforce needs evermore specialized training. On more than one occasion scholars and economists have predicted the death of the liberal arts. As early as 1970 historian James Axell argued liberal arts colleges had tossed aside their religious

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<sup>1</sup> The National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, Association of American Colleges and Universities (Association of American Colleges and Universities: Washington D.C.), 18.

<sup>2</sup> The Association of American Colleges and Universities defines a liberal education as “An approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility; strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills; and the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world setting” from *Statement on Liberal Learning*, October 1, 1998.

and cultural identity to chase the economic success of public universities—only to lose their distinction and fail miserably.<sup>3</sup> which are typically considered the specific disciplines that constitute the liberal arts curriculum such as the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. The same is true for the liberal arts college, whose model of close relations between students and faculty grounded in the liberal arts curriculum has been higher education’s most documented victim of the Great Recession.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly enough, the current definitions of the liberal arts and liberal arts colleges were created during a similar financial crisis: The Great Depression.

Prior to the nation’s greatest financial collapse, the liberal arts and liberal arts colleges were anchored in the classics and a Protestant religious tradition. Most liberal arts colleges would focus primarily on religious studies through topics as “Judeo-Christian Heritage,” “The Great Literature of Western Civilization,” or “The History of the Latin Language,” which were meant to create a sense of moralism and historical knowledge for students and lack a focus on research or the scientific method. Most liberal arts colleges inculcated young men with a Protestant idea of virtue that helped

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<sup>3</sup> James Axtell, "The Death of the Liberal Arts College." *History of Education Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1971).

<sup>4</sup> See: J. Selingo, “Liberal-arts colleges, of all places, think big about helping alumni find jobs, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 58(39), June 22, 2012; J. Rogers and M.W. Jackson, “Are we who we think we are: Evaluating brand promise at a liberal-arts institution,” *Innovative Higher Education*, 37(2), 153-166, 2012; Mary Puglisi, “Advice to presidents of struggling colleges,” in *New Directions for Higher Education, Special Issue: Changing Course: Reinventing Colleges, Avoiding Closure* edited by A. W. Brown & S. L. Ballard, (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2012), 89-93; K.J. Chabotar, “What about the rest of us? Small colleges in financial crisis,” *Change*, 42(4), 6-13; Adam Brown, “Case study of reinvention: College of Charleston” in *New Directions for Higher Education, Special Issue: Changing Course: Reinventing Colleges, Avoiding Closure* edited by A. W. Brown & S. L. Ballard, (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2012), 41-47.

reinforce their identity as United States citizens in a classical republican sense without an emphasis on job training. These liberal arts would be almost unrecognizable to any current student of the liberal arts.

Like most American institutions during the Great Depression, higher education nearly went bankrupt. Of those liberal arts colleges that managed to survive the nearly two decades of instability, few could meet the challenges presented by higher education's new landscape. In what would later become known as the era of "mass higher education," millions of students returned to college at the end of World War II looking for specialized, vocational education. As a result, most institutions faced four specific problems from increased enrollment: curriculum, facilities, fundraising and student life. Students were looking for courses to meet their educational goals, and institutions needed new buildings to teach and house students, extra capital to make the expenditures and resources to deal with renewed interest in sports, organizations and clubs.

As one could expect, large, state-flagship institutions fared much better than liberal arts colleges in the post-war period. The federal government used tax dollars to fund research in science and mathematics, which allowed the creation of new courses and the hiring of fresh faculty members while low tuition made public universities more affordable for droves of students. Returning soldiers also benefited from federal funding vis-à-vis the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, or, the GI Bill, which provided payments for tuition and board to most colleges and universities. Buoyed by their relationship with state governments, public universities also struggled less than most private colleges during the 1930s and 1940s.

Without money to build, funding to hire and little ability to change their curriculum without years of planning, liberal arts colleges redefined their purpose and the nature of the liberal arts. The extent to which the liberal arts changed in the twentieth century cannot be over-emphasized. From 1901 to 2000, few elements of higher education underwent as much of a fundamental transformation as did the liberal arts. In many cases, the Classics were replaced by the humanities; the scientific method of inquiry took the place of hermeneutics and the social sciences became a core of curricula across the country. And the changes weren't simply isolated to curriculum. Administrators, particular liberal arts college presidents, went from being a symbolic leader with connections to the institution's denominational affiliation to a policy oriented fundraiser responsible for growing the endowment and paying for new facilities. Financial crisis catalyzed the modern liberal arts.

Today, many liberal arts colleges are in the midst of an identity crisis. The price-tag of a liberal arts education is becoming harder to rationalize under the strain of a still-depressed economy and the growth of community colleges, branch campuses and for-profit education. In the same vein, job preparation, online courses and STEM courses are the rallying cry of most public institutions and the largest topics of criticism against the liberal arts. Similarly, colleges and universities are in a bidding war. As many institutions try to keep up with the pace of academic change in American higher education, they are also competing against one another for students through the construction of fitness centers, apartments rather than dorms, coffee shops and other

facilities meant for leisure rather than studying—all the while more administrators attempt to run their college like a business.<sup>5</sup>

But a study of past crises provides hope and understanding for the present crisis facing liberal arts colleges. The depth and scope of the issues facing liberal arts colleges today are in some ways more complex than those of the past, but in many ways the problems are similar. For instance, the nature of a liberal education is not a static. Like higher education, the identity and purpose of a liberal education has changed with the needs of students. Specialization created by occupational education did not destroy the core of a liberal arts experience: students gaining specialized attention from faculty to guide them through a degree program. Yet an aura of uncertainty exists around whether or not the growth of STEM programs will be the final blow to the liberal arts college as mechanization and on-the-job training jeopardize the traditional classroom. Even if they do, a growing chorus across the nation is calling for students to steer away from the liberal arts all together and head towards, as one columnist recently noted, “more job-friendly subjects like electrical engineering.”<sup>6</sup>

It is important for scholars and the public alike to know the specific challenges and pathways to success taken by liberal arts colleges in past era in order to take a similar assessment of current issues. The rapid development of curriculum, private donor

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<sup>5</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 391. For more on the attacks against liberal arts colleges see: Robert Weisbuch, “The Liberal Arts are at War,” *Inside Higher Ed*, May 5, 2016; Bill Spellman, “College for the Marketplace,” *The Huffington Post*, January 12, 2016; Michael Brenner, “Reinventing the Liberal Arts,” *The Huffington Post*, April 20, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Patricia Cohen, “A Rising Call to Promote STEM Education and Cut Liberal Arts Funding,” *The New York Times*, February 21, 2016.

fundraising apparatuses and physical facilities to meet the demands of post-war higher education are topics widely covered by scholars through anthologies, book, articles or case-studies—all of which are heavily focused on the growth of the public research institutions. The catalogs of major university presses and shelves of libraries are bound to have titles such as *Uses of the University* by then-University of California system President, Clark Kerr; *The History of American Higher Education*, a narration of United States through the lens of colleges and universities, by education policy expert John R. Thelin; or, most recent textbook anthologies by education historians such as by Roget Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II*.

The same wealth of literature cannot be found for the liberal arts college, particularly the Protestant-affiliated liberal arts college in the American South. Most, if not all, liberal arts colleges have published their own history featured in coffee-table publications about the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics or the Associated Colleges of the South. An examination of how liberal arts colleges confronted and solved the problems of identity and purpose in the mid-twentieth century has yet to be published.

The value of exploring this topic certainly means another addition to the narrative of higher education's "Golden Age" in the decades following World War II, but it also creates a much needed vehicle to explore the modern issues of identity facing the liberal arts. There may not be a solution for today's issues in the past, but understanding the evolving nature of the liberal arts may prompt further discussions about how to adapt a liberal education to meet the specific needs of the world's population. Such an idea is not



unfounded. Administrators of liberal arts colleges were thinking the same things fifty-years ago as they sought to “make their colleges become alive to the world of the present time.”<sup>7</sup>

Curating a study on the entirety of liberal arts colleges would be logistically impossible, but a case study of one institution can provide the necessary insight needed to make sense of this particular episode in the history of higher education. A detailed examination of one institution can accomplish two important tasks. Foremost, it serves as an entry point to examine the challenges facing higher education in postwar America while simultaneously detailing the way liberal arts colleges and the liberal arts underwent a decades-long transformation. Equally important, focusing on one institution allows for an in-depth analysis of students, curriculum, architecture and administrators to show how they collectively produce a picture of the way a religiously affiliated liberal arts college traversed the challenges of postwar American higher education. One institution in particular, Transylvania College, found success in postwar American higher education.

Located in Lexington, Kentucky, Transylvania became the first college west of the Allegheny Mountains when it was established in 1780. Initially burdened by its location on the frontier, by 1820 Transylvania was considered one of the top institutions in the nation.<sup>8</sup> Heralded for its law and medical schools, Transylvania influenced the

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<sup>7</sup> Report of the Planning Committee of Transylvania University’s Board of Trustees, February 26, 1957, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Alvin F. Lewis, “History of Higher Education in Kentucky” in *Contributions to American Education*, ed. Herbert B. Adams (Washington: Government Printing Office: 1899), 14.

growth of Lexington and served as the crown-jewel of frontier intellectualism and an incubator for Baptist ministers.

The prestige, however, didn't last. A series of financial blunders and a lack of leadership before and after the Civil War caused Transylvania's star to fade fast in the elite of American higher education. One scholar described Transylvania's decline as "dreary," "dark," caused by "prophets of doom" who led the college "to the graveyard of institutional failures."<sup>9</sup> Nearly bankrupted by the turn of the twentieth century, Transylvania's future was ensured by its connection the Disciples of Christ Church—an arrangement that was both financial and instructional. Limited in enrollment and by then known primarily for its seminary, Transylvania had several presidents who tried to expand the college's curriculum to include research focused courses and new courses in the hard sciences and humanities, but the attempts were unsuccessful. By the time the Great Depression hit Kentucky, Transylvania's enrollment had not grown since the 1870s.

If not for the United States Army using Transylvania as a training outpost, the college would have assuredly collapsed like many other liberal arts colleges in South during the Depression and World War II. Like most institutions in the United States, Transylvania had to undergo a transformation to attract students through new courses and modern facilities. By 1965, Transylvania's leaders had tripled enrollment, reformed its curriculum while simultaneously creating an endowment so impressive that the buildings constructed from it attracted the President of the United States to dedicate their existence.

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<sup>9</sup> John D. Wright, *Transylvania: Tutor to the West*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975), 172.

Transylvania's success was unusual in that the college exceeded expectations, but the process taken to change the college from being, as one of its president's said, a "little, struggling, debt-ridden, academically inferior, church controlled southern school – living in the memories of a glorious past" is emblematic of the experiences had by other liberal arts colleges.<sup>10</sup>

Also key to Transylvania's growth were its presidents Dr. Frank Rose and Dr. Irvin E. Lunger. In the same mold as presidents of successful state-flagship institutions, Rose, a Transylvania graduate and minister from Danville, Kentucky, became president in November 1951 at the age of thirty-one—the youngest president of Transylvania College and the youngest president of any college in the nation. For his part, Lunger oversaw the largest architectural expansion in the college's history while working to create a graduate school and labs for scientific research.



A careful examination of architecture, enrollment, student activities and the way the administration interacted with governing boards will provide a glimpse into the way liberal arts colleges addressed their religious and budgetary limitations in the three decades following World War II. New academic buildings and residential halls made college campuses more aesthetically pleasing, but the goings-on inside the structures provide more clues to understand the character of southern liberal arts colleges. That is to say, changes in curriculum and the majors taken by students reveal structural as well as cultural transformations at the school as well as in the region. The extra-curricular

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<sup>10</sup> "Report to the Board of Curators, December 10, 1960," Irvin Lunger Collection, Special Transylvania University Special Collections (hereafter: TUSC), 4.

activities of the college student reveal changing priorities of the student body and administration.

However, not all of the changes in the postwar era were beneficial to liberal arts colleges. An arms race began across American higher education that led to an unintended form of mutually assured destruction. And Transylvania was no exception. Prior to World War II, the liberal arts curriculum could be distinguished by a clear influence of religion and emphasis on the classics. The liberal arts college also had a clear distinction earned by modest faculty-student ratios, small campuses and a financial connection to a Christian denomination. When World War II ended, the tidal wave of transformation swept higher education into a frenzy towards specialization. Public institutions—aided by a funding bonanza vis-à-vis the United States government—had an easy advantage over liberal arts colleges. To compensate, liberal arts colleges reformed their curriculum to accommodate new courses in subjects such as political science, economics, chemistry, business administration and physics. As early as 1950, the clear distinct between public and private, university and college, liberal arts and specialization was blurred.

The trend of being everything to everyone soon dismantled any distinction between the once stark segments of American higher education. Transylvania, like most liberal arts colleges, tried to do everything for everybody, and in the process lost its hold on the liberal arts curriculum—a key pillar of its identity. In sum, studying the liberal arts college in the thirty years following World War II not only tracks the development of American higher education in the twentieth century, but it also provides an origin story for the current identity crisis facing liberal arts colleges.

# Chapter One:

## Transylvania, 1780 to 1945

Upon his election as Governor of Virginia in 1780, Thomas Jefferson began to consider settlement in the territory west of his commonwealth. The land past the Alleghany mountains, known as Kentucky, needed settlers, but more important to Jefferson, it needed an institution to educate the population. But Kentucky had long been a territory known primarily for the Cherokee Indians and the wild game they and white Virginian's hunted, not for education, and especially not a seminary. Nonetheless, the wilderness of Kentucky was populated by settlers from Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio near around the new fort constructed in Lexington. Of the many concerns settlers had on the frontier, cultural transference was among the most important. As the territory of the United States moved westward, intellectuals as well as religious and community leaders feared the important values of community, family and the church would be lost in the distance between civilization in the east and the frontier in the west.<sup>11</sup>

Despite several initial setbacks, the assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia granted a charter for the first seminary west of the Alleghenies in 1780 and officially opened Transylvania Seminary in 1783. Of the twenty-five original trustees, most came from a Presbyterian background, and the degrees they conferred would be given based on a student's "virtue and erudition."<sup>12</sup> One of the most prominent trustees, Caleb Wallace, did more than other founder of Transylvania Seminary to outline the purpose of the

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<sup>11</sup> Bernard Bailyn and Philip Morgan, *Strangers within the Realm*, (Chapel Hill, 1991); Bernard Bailyn, *Education in The Forming of American Society* (Chapel Hill, 1960).

<sup>12</sup> John D. Wright, *Tutor to the West*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press: 1975), 8.

institution. Along with inviting members of all denominations to preach and teach at the school, students would be led by ministers in daily prayer, hymns and biblical instruction. Morals, according to Wallace, could not be taught without theology, and the citizens of the new republic needed to learn virtue, which was built on morality. In other words, Wallace believed education could not be separated from Christianity.<sup>13</sup> Wallace was not alone in his beliefs. The character of education in the early republic was built on the relationship between Christianity and enlightenment thought. Transylvania Seminary's curriculum and structure did not waiver from the character of American higher education. If anything, it exemplified the trend of religious education that swept through the new nation at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Transylvania also benefited from the growth of Lexington as a cultural and economic hub on the frontier. Trade and agriculture were the primary industries for a city that became a gate to the West and a center for one of country's most popular products: hemp. Lexington grew rapidly with an economically and culturally diverse population who found Transylvania to be a suitable choice for educating their children. The seminary may have specialized in religious training, but soon the college added departments in medicine and law. New trustees slowly replaced the old as the Presbyterian orthodoxy of Transylvania's beginning gave way to men of Lexington's new wealthy merchant and agricultural elite, which lessened the college's tie with the Presbyterian church but eventually became one of the most substantial events in the

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<sup>13</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 14.

institution's early history.<sup>14</sup> Transylvania's curriculum took nearly twenty years to fully revise, but the completed version reflected a nationwide overhaul of the liberal arts college as courses in law and medicine were available to study in conjunction with literature and ancient languages.

By 1820 Transylvania had a separate college for law, seminary and medicine that students graduated into after completing a rigorous undergraduate curriculum. A typical stint at Transylvania looked identical for every student as the college only offered one bachelor's degree. Once a student completed the undergraduate curriculum, they could specialize in a particular field. A first year at Transylvania would include courses in geometry, trigonometry, algebra and navigational calculations complimented by several courses in English literature and composition. Students would then spend their second year studying the basics of physics and chemistry as they learned natural philosophy, a precursor to natural science and a dominant school of thought taught before the development of modern sciences. Students also studied history, logic and rhetoric mixed with a heavy emphasis on the classical languages.<sup>15</sup>

Like colleges on the east coast, Transylvania's curriculum worked to teach students about their abilities to understand the natural world and the meaning of the universe, but creating a Christian gentleman was the ultimate objective for all American colleges. In time, higher education's leaders would begin to question the role of Greek

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<sup>14</sup> Davidson, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky*, 291; see also Trustee's Committee, "Recommendations on Curriculum," October, 1794, TUSC. (Hereafter: TUSC).

<sup>15</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 35.

and Latin in achieving these goals, but American higher education emphasized the collective goal of intellectualism and Christianity through the Civil War. In the nineteenth century, liberal arts colleges and the liberal arts curriculum worked to make students “in the highest attainable perfection, the scholar, the citizen, the good man and the Christian gentleman.”<sup>16</sup>

As war does to most societies, the Civil War and its aftermath transformed American society, and with it, the character of American higher education. Most scholars agree that a revolution of sorts took place in higher education in the years following the Civil War. Similar to Bailyn’s groundbreaking treatment of the revolutions in higher education prior to the Civil War, Laurence Veysey’s *The Emergence of the American University* is also an example of intellectual and cultural history. Veysey argues that the evolution of higher education in the period following the Civil War transformed the American university by introducing research courses in the areas of social and hard sciences. Veysey writes, “By the end of the Civil War the traditional philosophy of higher education, had already been under long and gathering attack” was susceptible to methodological changes like never before.<sup>17</sup> To prove the extent of the change, Veysey uses hundreds of sources to show how religious conviction in higher education dwindled, which provided an opportunity for scientific study to gain a foothold in the American university. Whereas higher education in the early nineteenth-century was rigid and its leaders were “self-conscious absolutists,” the change following the Civil War introduced,

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<sup>16</sup> George P. Schmidt, *The Liberal Arts College* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1957), 44.

<sup>17</sup> Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 21.



in a limited way, social sciences and natural sciences to the curriculum to institutions in New England before spread to other colleges.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, a majority of colleges and universities moved away from religious instruction as more institutions introduced research-based courses and graduate degree programs in specialized numbers. Veysey maintains, “In retrospect it is easy enough to see that the disciplinary regime of the nineteenth-century American college was bound to disappear,” and when “the disciplinary outlook finally died, its passing reflected an important shift in American thought.”<sup>19</sup> By disciplinary,” Veysey is not talking about academic disciplines, but rather the way curriculum created behaviorally “disciplined” men through religion, piety, and moral training. The United States’ link with religious tradition in higher education began to crumble, but plenty of institutions still relied on the disciplinary model and refused to create graduate programs or adopt research-based courses possibly due to the financial cost associated with the changes, or an unwillingness to follow what may have seemed like a fringe idea.

Yet the ideas of graduate and specialized education continued to gain traction. In 1890, colleges and universities conferred less than 20,000 bachelor’s degrees, which naturally limited the number of students who could pursue a graduate degree.<sup>20</sup> In other words, institutions reluctant to create graduate programs or research-based courses had

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<sup>18</sup> Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, 42.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 54, 55

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*; and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, various issues.

little to lose. However, in less than twenty-years, students seeking a Ph.D. in a specialized subject began to climb into the thousands as the number of bachelor's degrees conferred jumped five-fold to 100,000 and more institutions created graduate degree programs to accommodate the change.<sup>21</sup> In particular, Presidents of larger, elite institutions in the United States took notice and made changes—sometimes against the will of the faculty and students—to remain competitive. Schools, such as Columbia, Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins and Yale, created multiple graduate programs in areas such as medicine, mathematics, history and economics taught by faculty involved in researching, writing, and heading academic associations devoted to graduate and specialized education in the social and hard sciences.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, this was not the case for every institution. Smaller colleges, including religiously-affiliated institutions such as Transylvania, and other land-grant universities further splintered higher education because they did not undergo significant curricular changes. The move away from religious instruction in American higher education began with elite institutions and eventually trickled down to the rest of the nation's colleges for the next 100 years.



For the final decades of the nineteenth century, Transylvania was embroiled in a battle over denominational control that influenced every aspect of the college. By 1865, the cultural and economic success of Lexington's early years had faded with continued

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<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*; and U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>22</sup> Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, 443.

westward expansion. With the death of Henry Clay, the end of slavery and the collapse of the hemp market, Kentucky's prestige faded. In a similar way, the prestige and financial security of Transylvania faded throughout the nineteenth century. Writing on this period of Transylvania's history, John D. Wright called the middle decades of the nineteenth century the "nadir of the college's long and fluctuating history, and the prophets of doom who consigned the school to the graveyard of institutional failures were numerous."<sup>23</sup> Of the group responsible for Transylvania's fall, none were more responsible than the college's advisory Board of Curators—who were now primarily members of Disciples of Christ Church—and decided to cut Transylvania from any form of state funding and instead rely on support from the Disciples of Christ and turn the college into a seminary.<sup>24</sup>

The decision to establish a seminary at Transylvania in the 1870s meant closing the college's programs in law and medicine while reforming the curriculum to include courses that focused on ministerial training. While the trend of scientific-based research gained steam in nation's best institutions, Transylvania literally took a step backwards. Courses in science and math were soon replaced with courses on classical philosophy and

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<sup>23</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 172.

<sup>24</sup> Intertwined the sectionalism of the Civil War were the Churches of Christ. Disciples churches in the North enjoyed cultural acceptance and prosperity while congregations in the South were struggling to rebuild in the face of poverty and hunger. Several scholars contend the Disciples of Christ and the Church of Christ became two entities in 1906 when official documents lamented the sever. In just over seventy years the unity movement was over. The cause is still undetermined, but scholars contend the key issues were music in Northern churches and their support of congregation member James A. Garfield for President of the United States.<sup>24</sup> Rather than sending money to help their Southern churches, the Northern churches seemed to have other priorities.

how to create literal translations of the Bible.<sup>25</sup> One would think doubling down on religious instruction would bolster Transylvania's identity, but not every member of the college's faculty found the new curriculum agreeable. By the mid-1880's, disagreements over Transylvania's curriculum became public knowledge as the faculty ran headlong into the national debate over science and religion. Few colleges and universities were left untouched by the introduction of Darwinian thought—those in agreement went the way of scientific research while others doubled-down on their commitment to religious instruction.

The development of new methods of informational exchange and the growing prominence of scientific study introduced millions of Americans to revolutionary ideas about understanding the natural world that shook the foundation of Christian creationism. Accepted values and concrete understandings of human life based on biblical and Christian orthodox beliefs were directly challenged. The arena of battle between church and science was not bifurcated down the middle—clergies were not wholly against Darwinian thought and the scientific community did not entirely dismiss intelligent design—but the American college and university became center-stage for the debate.

The significance of Darwinian thought in the history of American higher education is well-documented. Most historians agree that evolutionary sciences played a large role in transforming curriculum at newly-established public research institutions while simultaneously pushing church-affiliated liberal arts colleges to dismiss the scientific method in their courses. The crisis created by Darwin's theories were most

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<sup>25</sup> William Thomas Moore, *A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ Church* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), 662, 663.

heavily felt in southern Protestant colleges as well as most other institutions across the South, and the same is true for Transylvania.<sup>26</sup> Like many other schools in South—and in-particular, church-affiliated liberal arts colleges—Darwinist theories were not tolerated in the classroom. Richard Hofstadter and W.P. Metzger contend the war over evolution created clear divides in the future of higher education based on the choice of curricular freedom presented in the debate over teaching scientific theories. Higher education, at the turn of the twentieth century, had two kinds of knowledge—clerical and scientific—that determined the future of each institution.<sup>27</sup> Colleges that adopted the newly developed ideas of scientific inquiry into their curriculum would go on to attract more students and create successful graduate degree programs, but the same could not be said for institutions that ignored the changing landscape of American higher education.<sup>28</sup>

For Transylvania, the period following the Civil War would come to define the college as a religiously orthodox private college that specialized in training ministers. The loss of institution control to the Disciples of Chrstit church characterized the college's instructional and institutional goals for the next eighty years. John D. Wright, a former Transylvania College professor of history and a historian of Transylvania, holds the decision to combine the College of the Bible with the University as turning point for Transylvania. Soon, the number of faculty and students dedicated to ministerial work

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<sup>26</sup> Hofstadter and Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*, 326.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 348-375.

would reinforce “the religious and educational orthodoxy” of Transylvania—the anti-Darwin position prevailed as the institution headed towards a new century.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the course anti-Darwinism set for Transylvania cannot be overlooked. Yet the consequences of such a decision are far more significant than a continued adherence to orthodox, Christian instruction at Transylvania. The aftermath is also far more contentious than what Wright contends. Although the Transylvania made an administrative decision to side with anti-Darwinian forces, the decision was not universally accepted across campus, nor did it go unchallenged. What can be said, however, is that the evolutionary debate lamented Transylvania’s relationship with the Disciples church and created an uncertain future for the college that went into the twentieth century.

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Transylvania began a search for a new president in 1901 after two brief presidencies in the span of four years. Reuben Lin Cave, a former Confederate soldier and member of the Disciples of Christ, began his tenure in 1897 but resigned with little notice and evidence as to why. The Curators then appointed Alexander Milligan as acting-president in the summer of 1899 while the college searched for a new president who could also serve in the ministerial program. Possibly due to the embarrassment of a terrible typhoid outbreak in 1899 that tore through the water supply of the men’s dormitory, Milligan decided the stress of losing four students—all of whom were

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<sup>29</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 242.

students at the College of the Bible—was too much to continue in his post and resigned before the college found his replacement.<sup>30</sup>

In May 1901 Transylvania hired Reverend Boris Jenkins from Buffalo, New York. Jenkins considered himself to be a deeply religious man whose education at Harvard and Yale were complimentary to his fascination in public speaking and the performing arts. Prior to taking the post at Transylvania, Jenkins served as a professor of ministry at Bethany College, also his alma mater, where he became disillusioned with orthodox religious education. In his memoir, *Where My Caravan Has Rested*, Jenkins told readers a typical education in a religious curriculum “squeezed the originality” out of students and professors stray away from teaching new ideas they are “fossilized along conventional lines.”<sup>31</sup> Of his experience as student, Jenkins claimed his instructors were guilty of not opening his mind “to an inrush of enthusiasm for any subject” and the college itself, along with most others like it, were “dry as dust.”<sup>32</sup> Jenkins felt the same way about Transylvania’s education program when he took over as president. His number one priority would be to infuse Transylvania’s curriculum with faculty and courses that would make the college less “stationary and conventional,” which could be done by giving students “liberty of choice in [their] course of study.”<sup>33</sup>

At the turn of the century, most liberal arts colleges had one universal curriculum where students took the same courses for a single degree, but some institutions began

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<sup>30</sup> Report of Acting-President A. R. Milligan, June 13, 1900, TUSC.

<sup>31</sup> Burriss Jenkins, *Where My Caravan Has Rested* (New York, 1939), 60, 69.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Burriss Jenkins, “Inaugural Address,” TUSC.

experimenting with an education program that allowed for more student choice in what courses they took. Unlike the rigid curriculum based on the classics and religious instruction infused with basic understandings of hard sciences found at institutions such as Transylvania, the “modern ideal” of degree requirements included the “principle of election” such as the model Jenkins witnessed during his time at Harvard.<sup>34</sup> Yet the challenge Jenkins presented to Transylvania’s outdated A.B. degree was only the beginning of his intended reforms.

The carefully laid plans Jenkins introduced at Transylvania during his tenure represent the first act of resistance to the college’s traditional, orthodox curriculum. Transylvania’s previous presidents gave more institutional control over curriculum and enrollment to J.W. McGarvey—the Dean of the college’s ministerial training. Most of Transylvania’s post-Civil War students came to the college for ministerial training, and the program was the most successful aspect of the college. In order to support the program, the Curators provided McGarvey with the financial resources he needed to ensure the program would remain successful.

By 1903, however, enrollment in the ministerial program began to drop, and Jenkins believed Transylvania needed to develop a curriculum program that didn’t rely so much on training ministers. As expected, McGarvey disagreed with Jenkins’ proposed changes to the college’s curriculum and the two found little common ground on the vision of Transylvania’s future. W.C. Morro, McGarvey’s biographer, describes McGarvey’s educational philosophy as one with an emphasis on traditional instruction infused with

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<sup>34</sup> Burriss Jenkins, “Inaugural Address,” TUSC.



biblical foundations, an unyielding commitment to cultural traditionalism and a staunch belief in admitting only men into the seminary.<sup>35</sup> In comparison, Jenkins adhered to theological liberalism and an independent curriculum, which would separate the ministerial program from Transylvania's curriculum and create a separate college to train ministers that students would apply to after their sophomore year. Aside from putting the faculty in an uproar over a proposition for a new science building and endowment, Jenkins also called for emphasis on political science and other social sciences and a university-wide commitment to the instruction of women.<sup>36</sup>

Jenkins was ultimately unsuccessful in his attempt to reform Transylvania's degree program, but the foundation of Transylvania's orthodox curriculum was cracking. Although much of the available evidence says little on the opinion of administrative officials and faculty regarding Jenkins' attempt for curricular innovation, the plethora of new faculty members hired in the 1910s provides a glimpse into Jenkins' pathway to successes. It will most likely remain unknown what made Burriss Jenkins give up on his push for curricular innovations and instead focused on hiring young, unorthodox faculty members, but the plan ushered in unprecedented changes at Transylvania.

Upon reflecting on his tenure at Transylvania, Jenkins admitted at first the faculty looked upon him with "some suspicion," but his new faculty hires "made enemies among the wide circle of friends" of the retiring professors he replaced.<sup>37</sup> Foremost, Jenkins

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<sup>35</sup> Author Unknown, *Brother McGarvey: The Life of President J.W. McGarvey of the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky*, 50, 67.

<sup>36</sup> Jenkins, *Where My Caravan Has Rested*, 157-165.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

needed accomplished and diverse faculty members to bolster his new vision for Transylvania that included growth in every area but biblical studies. It seems Jenkins received very little blow-black from student as the yearbooks and pages of other student publications show little antagonism towards Jenkins plans. There is also little evidence of faculty revolt again Jenkins' plans for a new law school, a science center and creating a junior college for women.

Yet Jenkins' leadership cannot be overlooked for the significant groundwork it laid for Transylvania. Prior to Jenkins' arrival, few Transylvania presidents wielded their power to transform the College. Those who did eventually lost their battles and their job. Jenkins could not reform Transylvania's curriculum, but he could add on to it. The two most emblematic accomplishments of Jenkins' career were the creation annexation of Hamilton College and the construction of the new Carnegie Science Center.

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Hamilton College eventually became a two-year junior college for women looking to take an A.B. at Transylvania and should be counted as one of the most progressive accomplishments in Transylvania's history. Hamilton began as Hocker Female College in 1869 and, after changing hands several times over the following twenty-years, came under Transylvania's control. Once integrated into Transylvania, Jenkins hired Luella Wilcox St. Clair, the then-president of The Christian College, in 1903 as the dean and overseer of Hamilton College as a two-year women's junior college—the first in the state of Kentucky. Under the control of St. Clair, Hamilton College grew at an unprecedented rate. By 1910, St. Clair hired faculty for music, art

and the domestic sciences while introducing sports such as basketball and hockey.<sup>38</sup> Hamilton College's mission, much like Transylvania's, was "distinctly Christian in its influences, discipline and instruction," while being under the "direction of Transylvania's president."<sup>39</sup> The connection with Transylvania, however, would be the source of Hamilton College's best achievements and biggest downfall.

Women's colleges such as Hamilton were not rare in the Progressive Era, but Hamilton's commitment to the domestic sciences illustrates not only Jenkins' forward thinking, but the success of Hamilton College as a whole. While Hamilton's education policy directed students "from the dangers incident to co-education," the students were exposed to a curriculum with heavy emphasis on scientific study. Hamilton College's success also allowed for over \$100,000 to be invested in facilities, equipment and residential halls, which was made possible by a 47% increase in enrollment every year between 1903 and 1917—leveling the student body out at 266 in the 1918 academic year.<sup>40</sup>

After two years of studying Hamilton's particular curriculum, students could choose to continue their education at Transylvania and complete a four-year degree. During their years at Hamilton, students had to complete year-long units of mathematics—algebra, plane geometry and solid geometry—and complete the curriculum in the School of Domestic Arts and Sciences.<sup>41</sup> Building on their training in

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<sup>38</sup> *The Hamiltonian*, Vol. 4, 1918, 12, TUSC.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Hamilton College Course Catalogue, 1920, 48.

mathematics, students in Hamilton's Domestic Arts program took two progressive years in chemistry along with two years of cooking, sewing and "practical work in preparing and serving luncheons and light refreshments."<sup>42</sup> Hamilton's curriculum may seem out of dated, but the School of Domestic Arts and Sciences highlights a powerful moment in women's higher education.

Most colleges and universities across the country excluded women from serious academic study other than work in the domestic sciences. Historian Maresi Nerad argues co-education is emblematic of higher education's progress in the twentieth century. As women were initially included into co-educational settings, their curriculum consisted namely of sewing, cooking and other skills that prepared women "for their destined occupations as wives and mothers."<sup>43</sup> Institutions that finally decided to integrate women into traditionally male dominated academic divisions came to the forefront of academic success in the United States. Mostly isolated in the American West and North, these colleges led the way for co-education by the 1920s. Their curriculum expanded to include more hard sciences and research-based majors as more students were coming to college than ever.

The same could not said for Transylvania. Jenkins' prized accomplishment of integrating Hamilton College into Transylvania further angered his detractors in the faculty, and his push for curricular innovations was halted indefinitely in 1906 when

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<sup>42</sup> Hamilton College Course Catalogue, 1920, 53.

<sup>43</sup> Maresi Nerad, *The Academic Kitchen*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 14.

Jenkins announced his retirement due to a bone ailment. Jenkins informed the Board of Curators of his decision to vacate the presidency, but expressed a desire to “remain with the University long enough to assist in solving some of its difficult problems,” which included changes to the college’s ministerial program<sup>44</sup> Prior to his announcement, Jenkins made the decision that the college’s ministerial program would use the newest texts on biblical historical criticism published by Charles Foster Kent, a leading liberal theologian. McGarvey, on the other hand, did not share Jenkins’ enthusiasm and denounced the decision because he believed Kent’s interpretation of the Bible was too scientifically influenced. Further, McGarvey argued using the new texts in the classroom would be to “teach that the Bible’s account of creation is not true is a proposition too absurd to argue,” and that it is impossible to believe the Bible’s historical accounts are “unhistorical” and “legends, myths, or romances” is a “danger to anyone.”<sup>45</sup>

In the end, Jenkins’ retirement brought with it a return to traditionalism for Transylvania and McGarvey regained some of the control he lost when Jenkins first arrived at the college. Still, the curricular progress made under Jenkins was undeniable, and his most vocal ally, Transylvania’s student body, believed their departing president brought “life back into the student body,” garnered “alumni support” for his proposed changes and helped the College get back to a firm “financial standing”—three things Transylvania would struggle with for the next thirty years.<sup>46</sup> Jenkins’ time at Transylvania represents the first attempt of an administrator to reform the college’s

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<sup>44</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, November 2, 1906, TUSC.

<sup>45</sup> Stevenson, *Lexington Theological Seminary*, 133.

<sup>46</sup> The Transylvanian, XVI, November 1906, TUSC.

program. As institutions across the nation adopted new courses in hard sciences and hired faculty familiar with research and the scientific method, many of Transylvania's faculty and administrators continued to ignore the signs of change. Nonetheless, Jenkins influenced other key figures at Transylvania who would continue to push the college in a new direction.



Transylvania's faculty continued to grow older and the rate of new hires had slowed by 1915, but the innovations introduced by Jenkins' were slowly fading away. Transylvania's president, Samuel Jefferson, passed away from a heart attack in 1914 and many other Jenkins appointees were either taking posts elsewhere or retiring. The window of opportunity for change at Transylvania did not end when Jenkins left. In fact, several changes in administrative positions made it possible for Transylvania to reform major elements of its curriculum, especially within the College of the Bible. The decision to revise the college's curriculum ultimately fell to Transylvania's new president, Richard Crossfield. An 1892 graduate of Transylvania's College of the Bible, Crossfield served as a Disciples minister in Owensboro. Crossfield's first order of business was to find a suitable candidate to teach the primary courses in the ministerial program—church history, New Testament Theology and biblical pedagogy—after longtime instructor, John McGarvey passed away.<sup>47</sup> In less than a month Crossfield hired Alonzo Fortune and William Clayton Bower in 1912.

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<sup>47</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 322.

Their arrival highlights Transylvania's groundswell of struggles. The two new hires, however, were more theologically progressive than some of the traditional faculty than board members realized. Fortune received his Ph.D. from Chicago at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School—a program seen as entirely too liberal and unorthodox for Transylvania.<sup>48</sup> Almost immediately after Crossfield announced Fortunes' new position, the Disciples Church blasted Transylvania for its decision. The best documented instances of the backlash detail the way conservative factions in the Disciples Church handled the news. S.S. Lappin, the editor of the Disciples' national publication, *The Christian Standard*, called Fortune's hire a "calamity for the school" and informed Crossfield that Fortune should not educate young minds because his Christology and belief in social justice seemed incompatible with tradition Disciples' teaching.<sup>49</sup> Transylvania's Board also struggled to project a confident tone about Fortune. They believed the issue about Fortunes' hiring revealed "two opposing sets of assumptions within Christianity, one conservative, the other progressive" and Transylvania was in the middle of that debate.<sup>50</sup>

The Board could not have been more exact. The issue of Fortunes' hiring illuminates a deep divide within the Disciples church as well as Protestant Christian education that grew more intense as the twentieth century wore on. Scientific discoveries and the creation of new, non-biblical knowledge in the natural world crept into higher

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>49</sup> Stevenson, *The Lexington Theological Seminary*, 140.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

education's traditional curriculum. Historians of higher education continue to debate the timetable and extent to which the natural sciences became a core subject in American higher education.<sup>51</sup> What is clear, however, is that many state-flagship institutions integrated science into their curriculums much faster than private, religiously affiliated schools. Schools in the North moved rather quickly to adopt the natural sciences and make necessary curricular innovations. Among these schools, Catholic institutions as well as Lutheran, Methodist and Episcopal colleges made transitions with little issue.

The same was not true for Christian schools in the South. On the whole, Southern education typically lagged behind benchmark schools in the North in terms of enrollment and funding.<sup>52</sup> Sources of funding, available high school educated populations and remote locations played a role in the success and failures of all Southern schools, but private institutions felt the most pressure. Typically, a college's advisory board, faculty, alumni and, most important, the church affiliated with the institution challenged innovations to curriculum. Although most institutions affiliated with a Christian church did not have a legal obligation to listen to their sects' leadership, the administrators at schools such as Transylvania did have an obligation to pay the bills—typically with money from the church associated with the school to balance the budget in addition to money received from tuition, which continually fluctuated in the 1920s and 1930s.

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<sup>51</sup> Allan Pfnister, "The Role of the Liberal Arts College: A Historical Overview of the Debates," *The Journal of Higher Education*, 55, no. 2, 147.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*, U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Education, 1993), 56-78.



Throughout much of American higher education's past, enrollment rarely received attention from college administrators. Few Americans could actually afford college, and those who did attend were typically came from a wealthy family, and it wasn't until the 1920s before more Americans began attending college as more than one million students entered American colleges and universities for the first time.<sup>53</sup> Before then, college mostly served as a one-to-two-year academic experiment where qualifying students would take courses but finished without a degree. There were plenty of students who did complete four-year degree programs, but the numbers of degrees earned, institutions accredited to give a degrees and number Americans enrolled in some form of higher education increased rapidly in the 1920s when the number of bachelor's conferred reached 100,000.<sup>54</sup>

Success in growing enrollments varied from institution to institution. Despite the relative success of certain Southern institutions, geography was, and still is, an independent variable in higher education. Divides between the North and South are the most noticeable distinction. Historians of higher education have debated exactly why Northern institutions, on the whole, had more success during the enrollment boom of the twentieth century. The prevailing theory involves population and colleges-per-capita.

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<sup>53</sup> John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 205.

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Figure 16, "Bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by institutions of higher education: 1869-70 to 1989-90;" and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, various issues.

Compared to the South, the North is more densely populated and home to large, industrialized cities. Census data reveals the North had over 5,000,000 more college-aged residents in 1920 than the South. Furthermore, Northern colleges and universities outnumbered Southern schools 3:1. Following that line of thinking, it would seem plausible the Northern growth in enrollment can be explained by sheer population density, but the preponderance of schools in the North should negate larger enrollment numbers.

Geography provides other possible explanations for unbalanced enrollment. A more in-depth look at census records from the 1920s reveals a concentration of wealth in the North. One of the earliest authorities on American higher education, Frederick Rudolph, explained the enrollment misalignment through a social-class analysis. According to Rudolph, the North's level of wealth after the Civil War outmatched the former Confederacy in every way. Available capital, number of industries, available jobs and land prices were all in the North's favor. The per-capita income of Northerners was almost two times what it was for Southerners, which may have translated into opportunities for college education.<sup>55</sup>

Geography was also emblematic of ethnic and religious diversity. The push from rural homesteads to urban cities characterized the first two decades of the twentieth-century. Yet rural Americans weren't the only ones moving to Northern cities. Immigration and Americans moving from rural areas to urban centers also radically transformed the urban identity of Northern cities. Millions of immigrants from Eastern

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<sup>55</sup> Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press; Reissue Edition, 1990), 190-213.

and Southern Europe made the United States their home in a period of unmatched growth and diverse expansion. Various immigrant populations created their own communities within cities on the East coast such as New York and Boston while other groups moved inland to Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Buffalo, Minneapolis and Chicago. To accommodate their communities' educational needs, the newly settled immigrant populations created their own secondary institutions and colleges. These schools catered specifically to their specific populations stemming from Irish Catholics to a growing African American population that arrived from a wave of Northern migration from the South in search of work.<sup>56</sup>

Transylvania, however, had traditionally struggled to bring in students outside of the Disciples Church—a trend that began to change in the 1920s. By 1916, the United States housed 200 religious denominations made up of 226,718 churches. Ten years later the splintering of religion continued—232,154 churches represented 212 denominations.<sup>57</sup> In total, over 54,000,000 Americans were affiliated with a church by 1926. The Disciples of Christ was the eighth leading denomination with 1,377, 595 members, but a trend had been developing in the church over the last decade that would come to diminish the Disciples' standing.<sup>58</sup> Although the Disciples was one of the ten

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<sup>56</sup> H.M.J. Klein, *History of Franklin & Marshall College, 1787-1948*, (Lancaster, PA, 1952), 60; Charles Widmayer, *Hopkins of Dartmouth: The Story of Ernest Martin Hopkins and his Presidency of Dartmouth College*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1977), 267.

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Census of Religious Bodies Summary and Detailed Tables: Since 1926," 12.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

most popular denominations, over 80% of their membership was centralized in the North—primarily New York, Maine and Vermont—and their congregants were aging fast: roughly 9% of their members were under the age of 13.<sup>59</sup> The religious census of 1926 seems to suggest that the Disciples sent fewer students to their colleges than the other denominations in the country because they had fewer students in their membership.

The Disciples were also struggling financially across the country, but even more so in Kentucky. To make matters more interesting, the Disciples church had the 10<sup>th</sup> largest population in the United States, but its wealth had declined drastically since 1916 while its expenditures rose steadily over the same ten year period because of declining membership in the South.<sup>60</sup> In particular, Disciples membership in Kentucky was 10<sup>th</sup> lowest in the nation and was one of the lowest rates of memberships of any church in the state and seeing a twelve-spot decrease since the last census.<sup>61</sup> Amidst these conditions, the reasons for Transylvania’s stumble in enrollment come into focus.

In other words, the bleak forecast for Transylvania’s future at the turn of the 1920s has less to do with the traditional problems faced by most colleges at the time and more to do with specific questions surrounding the Disciples of Christ’s finances and membership. There certainly were other issues Transylvania had to overcome in the 1920s, but nothing seems to have complicated the College’s future like its relationship with the Disciples of Christ. Although Transylvania had only been tied to the Disciples

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<sup>59</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Census of Religious Bodies Summary and Detailed Tables: Since 1926,” 16.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

since the 1870s, the number of students coming to the college for ministerial training had decreased since the turn of the century.<sup>62</sup> In terms of enrollment, the connection could not be more pronounced. Transylvania's student population in the 1920s revealed several disturbing trends.

Administrators and students alike boasted of the large incoming class of 1924. Unlike any other class before it, the students who composed the class of 1924 came from twenty-two states and four foreign countries—just over 60 all together.<sup>63</sup> Upon further examination, the class of 1924 also broke another record for Transylvania: 75% of the class were members of the Disciples church. One year later Transylvania welcomed their largest class in the school's history with just over 70 students, which included almost 50 Disciples.<sup>64</sup> By the end of the decade, Transylvania's enrollment topped 300—a clear victory for the college.

Yet the issue of enrollment was further complicated by the generous amount of scholarships Transylvania gave to incoming students. In 1924 the Board of Trustees decided to lower Transylvania's tuition from \$300 to \$212 while offering partial tuition scholarships to any student affiliated with the Disciples church in order to boost enrollments. The Board offset subsidizing the scholarships by lowering faculty pay by 15%.<sup>65</sup> The Board's decision to lower tuition and cut faculty pay was one of the only

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<sup>62</sup> Ernest Delcamp, "Statement Regarding the Campus Situation," 1928, TUSC, 2.

<sup>63</sup> President Crossfield Address to the Board of Trustees, June 4, 1920, TUSC.

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the Board, August 1924, TUSC.

<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the Board, June 1925, TUSC.

ways to quickly boost enrollment and revenue. Evidence suggests Transylvania had been running an annual deficit of at least \$25,000 for several years when Crossfield finally addressed the situation in 1921. On top of the crippling deficit, Transylvania was in debt by nearly \$122,000—most of which came from the nearly continuous deficit of running the College of the Bible.<sup>66</sup> Very little evidence from 1921 explains how the Board or Crossfield addressed Transylvania’s growing financial crisis, but an internal review from 1928 suggests they could not reach a conclusive decision about the future of its ministerial program.

Crossfield and the Board of Trustees had plenty to celebrate with the number of registered students in 1924, but the details tell a different story. Transylvania claimed enrollments of 335, 313 and 308 in 1925, 1926 and 1927 respectively, but the number of freshmen in those enrollments declined in the same three-year period. Between 1925 and 1927, Transylvania actually lost 10% of its student population due to a declining rate of freshmen enrollment—101 freshmen registered in 1925 while only 79 registered in 1927.<sup>67</sup> In other words, enrollment was bolstered by a larger class in 1925, but the subsequent classes weren’t as large and the class of 1925 slowly shrank. Of the 101 freshmen who enrolled in 1925, only 56 remained in 1927.<sup>68</sup> The class of 1924 lost 15% of its members by 1925, and of the 72 that remained, only 46 graduated in 1928.<sup>69</sup> It

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<sup>66</sup> Report to the Board of Curators, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1921, TUSC.

<sup>67</sup> Report of Committee on Survey for Transylvania College, Table II, TUSC.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

seems Transylvania's enrollment only remained consistent throughout the 1920s because of increased enrollment in two-year programs—namely, students entering the ministerial training program in the College of the Bible—that Transylvania prioritized to maintain steady enrollments.

In the 1920s, colleges and universities began pouring money into student promotion—the precursor to the office of admissions—despite the program's short existence in American higher education. However, Transylvania's administrators showed little regard for bolstering enrollment. In the 1920s colleges and universities began to earmark money in their budgets for events to attract prospective students to campus as most institutions began competing for student enrollment.<sup>70</sup> Several scholars note the historical development of entrenchment plans and recruitment to retain enrollment numbers, but very little has been written about the role of student promotion at church related liberal arts colleges.<sup>71</sup> One of the largest indicators of Transylvania's failure to find success with student promotion is in the way faculty responded to the issue. Typically colleges and universities hired a coordinator and staff to handle student promotion, but Transylvania assigned a full professor to handle the responsibilities—on top of his/her teaching assignments—and provided no funds for the endeavor.<sup>72</sup> Not until

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<sup>70</sup> J.H. Miller & D.V.N. Brooks, *The Role of Higher Education in War and After*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), 8.; Roger Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900 – 1940*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publications, 2004), 271.

<sup>71</sup> David Breneman, *Public Policy and Private Higher Education* (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1978), 17.

<sup>72</sup> Report of Committee on Survey for Transylvania College, Table II, TUSC.

1928 did Transylvania devote \$5,000 to bolster student promotion and admissions, but evidence of an admissions staff does not surface until 1951.

Transylvania wasn't the only church affiliated college in Kentucky struggling to make ends meet in the 1920s. Across the state, colleges affiliated with the Baptist and Methodist churches that offered multiple majors either shared financial concerns similar to Transylvania's, or they failed to make it through the decade. Marvin College, an auspice of the Methodist-Episcopal Church, shuttered in 1922. Marvin College enrolled students from all denominations to study for an A.B. or B.S. at a lower-than-average tuition rate and, like Transylvania, graduated several politically famous alumni—Vice President Alben W. Barkley among them.<sup>73</sup> Yet, the opening of Murray State—a flagship, state-funded university—proved financially destructive to Marvin's already bare-bones tuition rates.

Church-related colleges primarily focused on the training of future church leaders also saw their numbers plummet. McGarvey Bible College began on the second floor of Ambuhl Piano Company in Louisville, Kentucky in 1923 before failing to meet enrollment in 1924.<sup>74</sup> Upon news of the school's lack of funding and students, another seminary reached out to McGarvey and proposed a merger. The Cincinnati Bible Institute formally merged with McGarvey Bible College to form Cincinnati Bible Seminary—the precursor to Cincinnati Christian University. The Cincinnati Bible Institute, however, created a clearly defined identity based on the training of ministers,

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<sup>73</sup> Course Catalog, 1918, Marvin University Special Collection, Murray State University Special Collections.

<sup>74</sup> McGarvey Bible College Quarterly Bulletin, v. 1, no. 1, 1923, Cincinnati Christian University Special Collections.



bible scholars and missionaries. Transylvania's administration, on the other hand, continued to struggle to figure out an identity. Yet the point was clear: institutions like Transylvania either had to accept a role in creating future church leaders or compete with state universities by recreating their identity.

Transylvania did neither. At least not immediately. Also exposed by the end of the decade was the College's growing division among students between the ministerial and pre-med programs. Although it remains uncertain as to why, students were interested in studying medicine at Transylvania. By 1925 those students formed a biology club to discuss developments in science and petition the college to hire a Biologist, but the administration refused. Although student interests were clearly changing, the college did little to address it. Transylvania's number one program was ministerial training, but the number of students enrolling in the College of the Bible for the program—which began their junior year—had steadily decreased. In 1927 32% of Transylvania seniors graduated from the ministerial program while 27% graduated the following year—almost half of total a decade prior.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the true decline in the ministerial program can be seen in the overall percentage of students in 1927 studying for an A.B. in the College of the Bible—14%, which was the last year the number would be over 10%.<sup>76</sup> Still, more faculty were hired to teach the general education curriculum for the A.B. program at the College of the Bible than were hired to teach zoology or chemistry.

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<sup>75</sup> Report of Committee on Survey for Transylvania College, Table II, TUSC.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

But why? An internal review conducted by an outside committee as well as a review undertaken by the school's chemistry professor, Ernest Delcamp, explain the lack of progress Transylvania made in the 1920s. Transylvania considered ending all other academic programs to focus solely on training ministers, and hired an outside committee to review whether or not the college would only admit accredited juniors and above to study in a two-year program at the College of the Bible.<sup>77</sup> The report strongly urged Transylvania to abandon these plans and instead focus on the growing number of students interested in botany, zoology and chemistry, which would grow enrollment and, over time, secure the budget. Although the reason for Transylvania's desired change isn't immediately clear, the extent of the college's debt provides a possible explanation. Lowering operating expenses with faculty layoffs and an increased concentration in one subject may have solved the budgetary crisis, but those leading the review made their conclusions explicit: few students actually enrolled in the ministerial program, and if the college did not have a recruitment program to attract students for the program, then it cannot go forward with the project to make the ministerial program the institution's identity.

Transylvania's administrators accepted the committee's advice, but the damage from a stagnant decade was noticeable across the college. When in 1922 President Crossfield unexpectedly resigned after failing to bring the College out of a \$122,000 deficit, the Board turned to another Disciples minister—Andrew D. Harmon, the president of Cotner College in Nebraska.<sup>78</sup> Deeply committed to his faith, Harmon

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<sup>77</sup> Report of Committee on Survey for Transylvania College, Table II, 2.

<sup>78</sup> *The Rambler*, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1926, TUSC.

compared his role as Transylvania's president to that of a pastor leading a congregation, noting that he planned to act as "The Father to His Group."<sup>79</sup> More than anything, Transylvania wanted a president committed to its academic mission, which, for the most part, was training ministers for the Disciples of Christ. Harmon did not waste a moment implementing his plans, but the faculty seemed to think Harmon's plans were indeed a waste.

Previous studies on Transylvania in the 1920s question whether Harmon's policies were met with stiff resistance from the students and faculty, but recent evidence suggests the faculty responded to Harmon's policies with nothing short of a mutiny. Harmon ushered in a period of traditionalism and orthodoxy at Transylvania that represented a rapid departure from his successors' policies. Harmon not only called for Transylvania to look to the Church for funding, but demanded a level of religious commitment from the faculty whose "moral and Christian character is [to be] unquestioned."<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, Harmon decided Transylvania could not fall into the trap that plagued other Christian colleges in recent years. "In the search for faculty members of high scholarship in recent years," said Harmon, "many church colleges have sacrificed real Christian culture for academic standardization."<sup>81</sup> From this, Harmon derived his plans for Transylvania to be a church affiliated college through a singular program in the College of the Bible and return the college to the earlier proposed plan.

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<sup>79</sup> Report of Committee on Survey for Transylvania College, Table II, TUSC.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, November 2, 1923, TUSC.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, January 4, 1924, TUSC.

But the faculty could not agree less. The stagnation and malaise of the 1920s was particularly unsettling for Ernest Delcamp, a Latin professor whose time at the University of Chicago exposed him to new developments in undergraduate curriculum that included courses in science and the scientific method. After the internal review of Transylvania ended, Delcamp prepared his own remarks for the Board of Trustees entitled “Statement Regarding the Campus Situation,” which cited shifting academic policies, a general lack of cooperation between the faculty and administration as well as a general lack of leadership in campus programs. Although it was not unusual for a faculty member to offer suggestions or speak out against administrative policies, Delcamp’s remarks are unique for Transylvania. Most of the conclusions from the college’s internal review indicated Transylvania’s leadership had little interest in changing their curricular programs or institutional direction. Little evidence remained of Burris Jenkins’ proposed reforms and the decision to end all other education outside of ministerial training must have to come as little surprise for those familiar with the direction Transylvania was heading in the fall of 1928. Yet Delcamp did all he could to give the administration a clear picture of Transylvania’s impending failure if key transformations were not undertaken.

Even though the college decided to not cut down on its academic program, the message had been clear: sciences were not a priority. For Delcamp, not moving the curriculum towards courses in science was the most profound error Transylvania could make. Channeling the opinions of his fellow faculty members and pupils, Delcamp alerted the Board to a “rapidly diminishing morale” leading students to become “cynical”

and put Transylvania into a time of “gravest perils.”<sup>82</sup> Delcamp believed the perils were primarily caused by the “continually shifting academic policy.” For decades Transylvania’s administrators struggled with the decision to make the College of the Bible an academic department rather than an independent ministerial program. Delcamp’s solution called for a move away from ministerial training and developing new areas of study in the hard sciences to attract more students.<sup>83</sup> Yet a lack of commitment to that claim meant Transylvania had “no future” and the College of the Bible stood “as the college’s only hope.”<sup>84</sup>

What did this mean for Transylvania? According to Delcamp, the college ran the risk of losing accreditation and the interest of future students. Apparently the academic program put in place in 1928 was put together quickly and Transylvania lacked the resources to make departments outside of the College of the Bible little more than a “skeleton organisation which will be recognized by no standardizing agent as a college.”<sup>85</sup> Aside from anger at the possibility that Transylvania could be stripped of accreditation, Delcamp had little sympathy for Transylvania’s continuous issues in debt and enrollment. “We were informed professors should cut majors in departments where only a few students took classes,” wrote Delcamp, “but this policy keeps us from future

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<sup>82</sup> Ernest Delcamp, “Statement Regarding the Campus Situation,” 1928, TUSC, 2.

<sup>83</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 351.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>85</sup> Delcamp, “Statement Regarding the Campus Situation,” 3.

expansion in those fields...it tends to decrease the list of prospective students” because a student won’t come to a school “where he is not permitted to major in his chosen field.”<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore, Delcamp said many faculty were on the brink of leaving Transylvania because they felt their opinions about the college’s future were being ignored by Harmon. “This shifting policy in academic program has led to an increasing unrest and dissatisfaction among professors,” wrote Delcamp.<sup>87</sup> The faculty felt so ignored that they increasingly felt “like hirelings holding jobs simply to make a livelihood” rather than “enthusiastic participants in the glorious service of helping young people live more abundant lives.”<sup>88</sup> Delcamp’s tone cannot be mistaken. Transylvania had to find an identity or fail without one. But Delcamp’s critique also reveals a deep divide between president Harmon and the faculty—one that seems to have grown over the decade and reached a boiling point at the end of 1928.

But the question remains as to why president Harmon wanted Transylvania to only focus on creating church leaders. The prevailing theory is that Harmon—a dedicated Disciples minister and believer in Christian education—simply imposed his views on Transylvania and wanted to build on the success of the College of the Bible. Intersecting with Harmon’s philosophical views was his sincere belief that Kentucky’s Disciples of Christ was Transylvania’s best source of funding, but Transylvania’s funding depended on the college’s dedication to training future church leaders. A commitment to

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<sup>86</sup> Delcamp, “Statement Regarding the Campus Situation,” 3.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*,4.

church related curricular developments correlated into a commitment from the church for funding. This trend was not unusual, especially for Transylvania's benchmarks.

Harmon may have also surveyed the changing landscape of higher education in Kentucky and found little room for Transylvania to compete. Delcamp's claims that Transylvania would not survive as a bible college were not unfounded. To president Harmon, Transylvania's academic program of ministerial education was the best use of the college's resources and location while also providing the college with a distinct identity. Ten other colleges were within fifty-miles of Lexington, but the University of Kentucky was less than two miles away and offered cheaper classes with more experienced faculty.<sup>89</sup> But they didn't have a ministerial program. And that is the advantage president Harmon believed would distinguish Transylvania in Kentucky's competitive landscape of higher education. Transylvania's state-flagship neighbor also had a secure line of funding—sometimes. Like many other state universities, the University of Kentucky received tax-support from the state government. But even with the tenuous source of funding, the University of Kentucky struggled to grow in the 1920s due to an ongoing battle with the state government over the amount of funding needed to ensure educational success at the college.<sup>90</sup>

Still, Harmon was uncertain about Transylvania's future. In an era when funding, identity and enrollment were all but unassured for church related colleges, Harmon seems to have advocated an approach that made the most sense for Transylvania.

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<sup>89</sup> William Ellis, *A History of Education in Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2011), 115-132.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 143-156.

Speaking to the *Lexington Leader* about Transylvania's future, Harmon revealed his intentions. "The place that Transylvania is to occupy educationally in the future is uncertain," said Harmon, "The trend in education today puts the small college in a precarious position."<sup>91</sup> In one quote Harmon summed up an entire decade for Transylvania. Without a clear direction, Transylvania drifted without an identity in the 1920s. Harmon soon realized, however, his vision for the college's identity would not be accepted by the faculty nor the board, the latter of which rejected any plans to only focus on a ministerial program and teaching the Bible.<sup>92</sup> On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1928, Harmon ended his tenure as Transylvania's president. If one thing was certain, Transylvania's faculty had formally rejected Harmon's plan to turn their college into training ground for the Disciples church.

Although it may seem like another minor episode in the history of a church related liberal arts college, the decision to break with Andrew Harmon represents a larger episode in the history of American higher education. Years of continuous delay on plans for curricular innovation brought many liberal arts colleges to a crossroads where budgetary crisis and calls for innovation collided with the desire for keeping with tradition and relying on what the institutions did best—training ministers. Transylvania's situation was emblematic of the larger turbulence in higher education on the eve of the Great Depression, and the path Transylvania took in the 1930s represented the alternative future of church affiliated colleges as hundreds of benchmark institutions began closing their doors.

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<sup>91</sup> *Lexington Leader*, April 24, 1928, TUSC.

<sup>92</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 363.



Transylvania's faculty, staff and students could not have known about the impending collapse of the economy that threatened the existence of American higher education, much less the economic crisis facing church related colleges before the Great Depression. The fate of church related colleges in American higher education has yet to be analyzed enough to fully understand why so many failed during the Great Depression. Scholars cannot simply blame a lack of capital, students and luck. Disciples affiliated colleges still exist today because of their ability to weather the turbulence of the 1920s and then the cataclysmic events of the 1930s. Other church affiliated institutions made it through the darkest night of American higher education to now be the one of the brightest gems on the crown of contemporary colleges and universities.<sup>93</sup>

The answer to this mystery involves several elements. Foremost, connection to a financially stable state church network and existing institutional programs seem to be the largest indicator of whether or not a church affiliated institution survived the Great Depression. Of the fourteen remaining institutions associated with the Disciples of Christ, more than half are located in Kentucky, Texas and Missouri. Of particular importance is that the Disciples of Christ congregations in these states historically devoted a substantial amount of funding to their educational auspices—especially in Missouri, the state with the most Disciples churches and members in the country.<sup>94</sup> Chapman University, located in California, escaped the crushing blow of financial

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<sup>93</sup> Eugene Griffith, "Another Dartmouth College Case," *The Chicago Tribune*, October 22, 1948; Swarthmore College Committee on Size of the College, Tentative Report on Size of College, May 10, 1949, 1.

<sup>94</sup> Lester McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, (New York: Chalice, 1975), 307-319.

instability during the 1930s because of a shared endowment with California Christian College and high enrollments based around numerous majors and several graduate programs.<sup>95</sup> Bethany College, Barton College and Lynchburg College were the sole Disciples' affiliated institution in their states, which may have helped their issues of funding and enrollment.



The Great Depression shook the landscape of higher education for better and for worse. Across the country colleges closed their doors while others began a process of fundamental transformation to ride out the nation's bleak economic forecast. Not all responses were the same nor were all of them successful. Most colleges and universities lost any benefit of foresight, which stalled campus planning and redirected the budget to keep their institution open one semester at a time.<sup>96</sup> Even the state-funded flagship universities hobbled from each academic year to the next. The high enrollment and economic prosperity they experienced in the 1920s gave way to a flood of doubt and concern, but state budgets—for the most part—kept these institutions from failing entirely, despite budgetary cuts that gutted some departments.

Private colleges were not so lucky. The most elite and well-endowed institutions lost their fortunes literally overnight. In one of the most famous cases, Yale University administrators awoke the day after the stock market crash of October 24, 1929 to find

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<sup>95</sup> McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, 335.

<sup>96</sup> John Nason, "What Have We Learned?," *Journal of Higher Education*, 15(6), June 1944, 287-298.

nearly their entire endowment had been lost in the frenzy. After a decade of investing gifts, debt and bonds into the stock market—and making quite a handsome profit—Yale, home to some of the most brilliant economists in the world, did not have the wherewithal to predict the impending collapse of global markets. Similar situations were not hard to find. The most prestigious liberal arts colleges—including Amherst, Oberlin, Pomona, Williams, Middlebury and Swathmore—had little else than tuition and the liquid capital left in their endowments.<sup>97</sup> Enrollment numbers dipped to levels not matched since the turn of the eighteenth century when most of the colleges in question were beginning. Still, these institutions had means of engineering a fiscal comeback that most other private colleges in the country did not.

Colleges attached to the coffers of America's fledgling churches seemingly had the most to fear. The damage inflicted upon churches by the Great Depression varies by region and the socio-economic make-up of the church and number of members nationwide. Several Christian denominations had the vast membership and geographic advantage to keep their churches and educational institutions afloat. Catholicism, with its strength of a worldwide budget and millions of members, salvaged every one of their affiliated institutions in higher education. The Church of the Nazarene, Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ also made gains in membership during the

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<sup>97</sup> Committee on Objectives, Swarthmore College: A Statement of Purpose and Policy, May 20, 1948; Swarthmore College Committee on the Curriculum for the First Two Years, Report to the Faculty, May 27, 1946, 3.

Depression while other “sects” of Protestantism experienced unbelievable financial difficulty—including the Disciples of Christ churches in the United States South.<sup>98</sup>

Prior to the Depression, most Southern states were already in economic distress. While the North enjoyed a renaissance in urban development and industrialization, the South witnessed lagged behind. The sum of the South’s problems was on full display in Kentucky. Prior to the global collapse of extractive industries in the wake of the Great Depression, Kentucky’s economy gave scholars a hint of the impending financial crisis. Historians have noted Kentucky’s four main industries—coal, timber, bourbon and the railroad—were considered “sick” throughout the 1920s. Major technological developments such as the automobile and combustible gas engine led to a steep decline in the price of coal and the influence of the railroad. Urban centers were turning to steel-enforced buildings and roadways and the population was drinking less alcohol than ever before, thanks in large part to prohibition. As such, Kentucky’s economy, already in the midst of a recession, nearly came to a screeching halt at the turn of the 1930s. As a result, churches in the state—including the Disciples of Christ and other Churches of Christ—could barely afford day-to-day operations—much less supporting a college.

And so, this was the world Transylvania administrators inherited on the morning of October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1929. At the dawn of a new decade Transylvania faced the same three unrelenting problems: low enrollment, a divide within the faculty, and lagging endowment. But another problem soon emerged. The only attempt at building new physical facilities on campus came in the form of an unfinished, barely occupied men’s

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<sup>98</sup> Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, 1929), 22-24.

dorm on the academic side of campus. Ewing Hall, which housed the entirety of Transylvania's male student population, also housed a dining hall, the offices of several professors and study rooms. Built with high-interest loans in the 1920s, funding for Ewing Hall did not account for such luxuries as a finished plumbing system, insulation, heating and air and overhead lights, but it was still considered a "spacious, modern" building and immediately to put to use.<sup>99</sup>

Most of the other buildings around campus weren't in much better shape. The College of the Bible served as a de facto library, office building, classroom and ministerial training program. The main focus of Transylvania's campus, Morrison College, lacked most modern amenities and had not undergone major renovations in almost a century. Hamilton College, which by 1930 was defunct as a women's school, served as a dorm for upper-class women. Ella Jones Hall, a property purchased by Transylvania in the 1910s housed the college's underclass women, and shared many of Morrison's internal flaws. The state of Transylvania's facilities was emblematic of the college's woes: barely standing, underfunded and in desperate need of repairs.

And the administration knew it. After Harmon's departure, Transylvania's Board and faculty seemed to recognize the urgency for good leadership and a vision for the college. The search to replace Harmon took nearly two years, but in January, 1930, the Board announced Dr. Arthur Braden as the new president of Transylvania and the College of the Bible. Braden, a native of England holding a Ph.D. in Theology from Syracuse University, had served as president of Chapman College since 1922 and brought with him progressive ideas on how to lead church affiliated colleges. Along with

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<sup>99</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 283.

an unyielding belief in the ability of a strong fine arts program to buoy Transylvania's enrollment, Braden also championed fund raising and campus planning that should be considered revolutionary.

In less than three months, Braden introduced a ten-year plan for Transylvania. Above all else, Braden demanded enrollment had to surpass 500 students if the college were to remain open. In order to meet the academic needs of the students, Transylvania's faculty would be entirely overhauled and new hires would be brought in to help develop programs in the fine arts, music, humanities and natural sciences. Braden also saw the growing popularity of college athletics as a way to increase revenue and enrollment, which meant the planning of a new gymnasium. The need for a library and a new women's dorm also took high priority, but Braden planned instead a drive to raise a million-dollars for the endowment. Without a massive effort to replenish the endowment, Transylvania would be unable to pay off the debt accrued by the college's annual deficit of \$25,000 and the loans taken out to fund Ewing Hall. The nation's financial climate surrounding the country made this most important project seem highly unlikely to succeed.

Braden's decision to raise a million-dollars for the endowment may seem like a minor detail in today's world of billion-dollar endowments and annual multi million-dollar gifts, but the goal reveals much about Transylvania's position within the context of 1930s American higher education. At a time when most endowments had been completely destroyed by the Great Depression, few schools had the ability to rebuild. Years of investing, saving and gaining boosts from annual capital campaign drives made endowment building for church affiliated colleges a painful slog. Although little

evidence exists to disclose the exact budgetary numbers, Braden's goal of one-million dollars possibly reveals the endowment of Transylvania's benchmarks. The number also reveals the extent to which Transylvania had mismanaged its funds and struggled over the last three decades. Cutting the cost of tuition to nearly \$200 ravaged Transylvania's budget for nearly fifteen years, and the money coming in from the Disciples' Church seems to only have paid the operating cost of the colleges and did little to pay outstanding debts or save for the future.

As such, Braden's capital campaign drive is the first evidence of Transylvania actively fundraising outside of the auspices of the Disciples Church. This is not to say Transylvania and Braden broke their ties with the Churches of Christ, but the ravaged economic state of the Kentucky Disciples meant Transylvania had to rely on other forms of funding if Braden's plans were to be realized. It would be impossible to understand at the time, but Braden's foray into fundraising became a lynchpin in Transylvania's history.<sup>100</sup> For the first time, Transylvania's president took on the role of fundraiser. Although Braden's efforts do not meet the contemporary idea of a college president fundraising for private donations, the very fact that Transylvania's Board and faculty placed the power to fundraise into Braden's hands would become the single biggest event in the college's recent history.

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<sup>100</sup> Braden's decision to engage in fundraising came at a time when presidents at religiously-affiliated institutions worked closely with their board members and other administrators to seek funding from local churches or national chapters of their denominational tie. For more, see: Jordan R. Humphrey, "Liberal Arts Colleges in the Tumultuous 1940s: Institutional Identity and the Challenges of War and Peace" (dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 2010), 267.

## Chapter Two: Curricular Development, 1946-1950

World War II did more to change Transylvania than any other event of the twentieth century. The loss of students and revenue certainly had an influence on extra-curricular activities, but the most noticeable changes took place in the classroom. Students previously filled their spare moments on campus with Greek life, sports and clubs, most were now dedicated, as one student put it, to “the library, the lab, and the midnight oil” as all other activities had been put aside.<sup>101</sup> Based on student accounts, the most popular classes during the war—especially for the Class of 1948—were English and Literature. Of the 28 men and 87 women enrolled at Transylvania in 1944, the editor of Transylvania’s Crimson claims over half were enrolled in a literature course.<sup>102</sup> Such a concentration on classes devoted to language and the classics would not come as a surprise if they were bookended by courses in theology or religion—two courses typically highlighted in the annual yearbook.

Indeed, the last four years of World War II seems to have entirely upended Transylvania’s curriculum. Such a change could possibly stem from low enrollments or students’ changing interests, but other clues suggest the United States Air Force and Transylvania’s administration had more to do with the changes than originally understood. A majority of the men enrolled at Transylvania were simultaneously a part of army detachments living at the college in the almost-vacant men’s dorm, Ewing Hall.

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<sup>101</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1944 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1944, 1937), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 5.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.



The material taught to GIs blended into the curriculum enough for students to take notice. One bystander noted the cadets would “study, go to class, drill, go to class, go to class, drill, drill,” which meant going to “physics to math, and from math to physics, to geography; from geography to English...”<sup>103</sup> Transylvania’s president, Raymond McLain, had enlisted to serve in the Army in 1941 leaving Dr. Leland A. Brown, a long-time Professor of Biology as interim-President and coordinator of the College Training Detachment—a program responsible for training hundreds of cadets in science and math.

In fact, most of the classes taught during the war were focused on teaching GI’s rather than the desires of the faculty. Lists of offered courses and the faculty accompanying them reveal a clear contrast between the academic program of 1944 and 1941. Aside from Transylvania’s pre-war faculty mostly specialized in the classics, history, readings in western civilizations and theology, but eight professors were hired or reassigned to teach courses designated by the armed forces by 1944 to teach Mathematics, Chemistry, English and non-western History. Each subject was taught by one professor, but Physics received three, which brought Transylvania’s number of Physicists up to five—more than any other subject at the college.<sup>104</sup> On the surface it seems World War II’s most distinct effect on Transylvania was the depleted enrollment, but the largest change came slowly and without warning the in the form of curricular transformations. Unlike other times in the institution’s past, the new-found emphasis on the natural sciences was uncontested by the dissenters in the faculty. In the midst of World War II, a swirl of patriotism and dwindling enrollment probably curtailed any

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<sup>103</sup> Crimson 1944 Yearbook, 9.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

criticism of the college's new academic direction, which was the case for hundreds of liberal arts colleges across the country.<sup>105</sup>

Transylvania was not in financial position to ignore requests from the United States Armed Forces to use the college as a location to train GIs. Housing and training GIs meant a new source of much needed revenue that Transylvania could not turn down. Indeed, students enrolled in the College Training Detachment became the majority of students enrolled at the college during the war by a 2:1 ratio. As a result, Transylvania's curriculum was no longer an in-house matter. What the GIs needed to learn was a decision of the United States government that translated into a heavily doctored course catalog filled with courses and disciplines foreign to Transylvania only four years earlier.

Although the war would eventually come to an end, the seeds of academic diversification could not be kept from becoming weeds in the garden of Transylvania's garden of religious instruction. Peace meant a return to normalcy across the nation, but few could deny the profound changes in higher education. The end of the Second World War marked a return to business-as-usual for higher education in the United States. The inter-war period of the 1920's and 1930's brought colleges and universities across the country unprecedented growth in popularity and unexpected financial agony. Business, it seemed for every institution, was finding a way to pay the bills of the past as well as the present. It did not take long for the wave of returning GIs and newly minted high school

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<sup>105</sup> For more information on the relationship between the United States Armed Forces and American higher education see: Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons, *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995); J.H. Miller and D.V.N. Brooks, *The Role of Higher Education in War and After*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944); Willis Rudy, *Total War and Twentieth-century Higher Learning*, (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1991).

graduates to make their way to the local college. As tuition receipts and enrollment reached their pre-war levels, higher education took a collective sigh of relief before new problems materialized across the nation.

Students had come back to college so rapidly that it took only a year to again attain pre-war enrollment, but rather than stabilizing, the numbers soon skyrocketed. Many state-flagship colleges and universities—with the help of alumni “booster-ism” and new-found funding from the state and federal government—had anticipated the growth in enrollment, or at least had the resources available to rapidly confront the growing tide of students. Liberal arts colleges, on the other hand—especially in the enrollment-poor South—had hopes of nourishing their ailing budgets and near-bankrupt endowment with the renewed flow of tuition receipts, but were soon over-crowded and still staggeringly underfunded.

To make matters more perplexing, the post-war mission of education in the United States reflected the growing need for students in applied math and sciences. Liberal arts colleges in the South had a tradition of simply applying their students to the curriculum of manhood and religion. On the cusp of the Cold War, the United States government, checkbook in-hand, turned to the colleges and universities dotted across its landscape and called for new leaders in science and civics. On the eve of the Cold War, however, liberal arts colleges dotted across the South, Bible in-hand, had neither the programs nor the resources to answer the call like their flagship rivals.

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By 1946, Transylvania’s administrators sought to grow upon the academic programs created by the war. After being relieved of his duties overseeing the GIs,

Transylvania's interim-president, Leland A. Brown, returned to his position of academic dean and head of the faculty once Raymond F. McLain returned to his post as president after serving in the Pacific Theatre. Many of the wartime faculty in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics were retained, but Transylvania's Bachelors of Arts program—with its heavy reliance on the classics, literature and religious instruction—had no room for new courses in natural sciences, much less a pathway for college to grant degrees in the subject.

Yet, change wasn't too far away. Most of Transylvania's faculty wanted the program overhauled, but struggled to decide on how the program would look. Brown, however, had a plan. In a memorandum to the college's administrators, Brown connected Transylvania's academic woes with those of most liberal arts colleges. "It is the judgement of many scholars," writes Brown, "that present courses at the college level are no longer adequate for students seeking a liberal education."<sup>106</sup> Rather than staking his claim on benchmark evidence, Brown turned towards the Carnegie Foundation's October 1946 report for the Advancement of Teaching that emphasized the role of citizenship, social responsibility and understanding the science behind the atomic age. To ensure the faculty didn't miss his point—that Transylvania needed to incorporate more science courses into their curriculum—Brown used the rest of his report to explain "the need for new courses in science springing from the character of scientific research" built into a "wave of courses in general education."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Draft of the Report of the Committee on Academic Life, June 4, 1946, Leland A. Brown Papers, TUSC.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges across the nation struggled with the same question: how does an institution completely transform its curriculum without harming the institution's identity? The preceding two decades put liberal arts colleges in a state of academic paralysis, and returning to business-as-usual would be harder than expected. Whereas public research universities and Ivy League institutions continued evolving their curriculum with the developments in science, a whole strata of institutions did not. Whether they simply did not have large enough enrollments to merit new classes, or their lack of funding prohibited the pricey development of new courses and the hiring of new faculty, colleges like Transylvania were confronted with a stark reality: the curricular standards of the past would not fit for the present.

Education scholars in the 1940s believed religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges were mainly identified by their unwillingness to change and their sudden scramble to innovate after World War II exposed how chronically behind they were. In a 1946 issue of *The Journal of Higher Education*, education historian Robert Shaw asked if religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges could change to meet the demands of GIs, which led him to respond with an abrupt "No."<sup>108</sup> Shaw continued, "[liberal arts] Colleges are conservative, slow-moving, deliberate. They run twenty years, some say two hundred, behind the educational frontier...The veteran students may take it or leave it – conform or go."<sup>109</sup> In other words, change had to take place, but historical precedent proved change was the last option for most liberal arts colleges.

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<sup>108</sup> Robert Shaw, "The G.I. Challenge to the Colleges" *The Journal of Higher Education*, 10, no. 1 (January 1947), 20.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

But the situation in the fall of 1946 was quite different than anything else to confront higher education in the previous two-hundred years. The millions of college-aged GIs who came home from war were greeted with a sticky economic recession that plunge the value of the dollar and contracted job growth. Fighting a war had put the American economy on a steroidal dose of production for six-years. Although most economists forecasted a minor recession to account for the shift to a peace-time economy, few predicted the wave of uncertainty that reached it crest when those war-time factory workers met GIs in the unemployment line. The economy could withstand a few months of lull while factories went from making guns to refrigerators, but enough jobs simply did not exist to account for the GIs.

Congress predicted GIs might have trouble finding jobs in an economy that hadn't transitioned from wartime to peacetime so the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, which is also known as the G.I. Bill. Although the legislation provided a wide range of benefits for servicemen, college tuition became the bill's most common use. Until it was readjusted in 1952 to pay a monthly stipend, the G.I. Bill essentially covered the cost of tuition for any serviceman wanting to seek an education. Not limited to state-funded institutions, servicemen could literally choose any school willing to accept them, and most studies indicate they chose whatever school was closest to their homes. But the lack of discretion ended there.

Most studies undertaken to examine the majors and career paths of servicemen indicate a large preference for pre-professional programs rather than the liberal arts; the present issues facing democracy rather than historical debates over Western literature. Such a change seemed most salient, especially when one considers how President

Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted the GI Bill to be used. In his message to Congress on the purpose of the GI Bill, Roosevelt stated, “We must replenish our supply of persons qualified to discharge the heavy responsibilities of the postwar world. We have taught our youth how to wage war; we must also teach them how to live useful and happy lives in freedom, justice, and democracy.”<sup>110</sup>

For Transylvania, Roosevelt’s wishes meant retooling the college’s entire curriculum. Most religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges were left to sort out the problem of curricular innovation with two equally undesirable options. If resources were limited but enrollments needed to rise in order to keep the college open, administrators had the option to rename traditional introductory courses in a vain attempt to meet the needs of pre-professional general education requirements using existing, if not exactly qualified, faculty. If such an approach were taken, colleges ran the risk of being “exposed” for their “many half-hearted gestures toward general education.”<sup>111</sup> The other option was equally—if not more—risky for colleges struggling to increase enrollment: developing a general education curriculum from scratch. Although an institution would be without a complete general education curriculum for several years, administrators could introduce their program incrementally.

Although Brown eventually decided on the incremental approach, the question of how to install such a massive curricular overhaul without bankrupting the college loomed

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<sup>110</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt as cited in Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation*, 17.

<sup>111</sup> Draft of the Report of the Committee on Academic Life, June 4, 1946, Leland A. Brown Papers, TUSC, 3.

over the college. Administrators and faculty alike came to a tentative agreement that Biology courses should be the first stage in the general education overhaul due to the reserve of scientifically trained faculty left over from the war. Moreover, Brown argued the course should be constructed as a foundation to understanding “Western Culture” and describe the connections of “scientific discovery” to other vectors of knowledge.<sup>112</sup> In other words, the foundation of Transylvania’s general education curriculum had to, at the very least, acknowledge the cultural world of human existence, and, at its fullest function, work as a bridge to courses that didn’t exist.

Luckily for Brown, Transylvania was not rebuilding blind. There were numerous successful models for installing a general education program. In the most famous case, Harvard College built a general education before World War II, and shared their results—along with studies of other programs—for the rest of American higher education. In a tone that foreshadowed Brown’s own beliefs on general education, Harvard’s president, Abbot Lawrence Lowell, spoke of the need for rearranging the undergraduate course of study as early as 1909. “It is absurd to suppose that a list of electives alone will furnish him with the required knowledge,” said Lowell, “or that the sense of responsibility which always sits lightly upon the undergraduate will inspire him with wisdom in arranging his course of study.”<sup>113</sup> The subjects, according to Lowell, would become the core subjects

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<sup>112</sup> Draft of the Report of the Committee on Academic Life, June 4, 1946, 4.

<sup>113</sup> Kenneth Boning, “Coherence in General Education: A Historical Look,” *New Directions in Higher Education*, 2004, 1.



that every undergraduate would have to take to receive a degree: biology, physical science, the humanities and social sciences.<sup>114</sup>

In order to mirror Harvard's success, financially stable institutions across the country began adopting their own forms of the general education curricula, which eventually turned into the new practice of "majoring." Among the new approaches were interdisciplinary courses and senior seminars. Columbia College introduced an interdisciplinary course, "Contemporary Civilization," which focused primarily on citizenship.<sup>115</sup> The University of Chicago also developed interdisciplinary courses, including "The Nature of the World of Man," "The Meaning and Value of the Arts," and "Man and Society" that worked to reinforce citizenship and the value of democracy.<sup>116</sup> Although interdisciplinary courses represented the premise of general education courses in American higher education, they typically did not replace pre-existing courses.

Instead, they created what would soon become known as the elective system—courses students chose based on interest to complete their degree program.<sup>117</sup> In the case of liberal arts colleges, capstone courses were designed to combine knowledge and skill in budding areas of natural and social sciences. Reed College's senior seminars provided opportunities for seniors to conduct research and write their findings in a senior thesis

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<sup>114</sup> Boning, "Coherence in General Education: A Historical Look," 13.

<sup>115</sup> N.H. Farnham & A. Yarmolinsky, *Rethinking Liberal Education* (New York: Oxford University Press), 3-9.

<sup>116</sup> D.N. Levine, "Where Are Our Educational Traditions Now That We Need Them?" *Liberal Education*, 86(1), 6-15.

<sup>117</sup> Russell Brown Thomas, *The Search for a Common Learning: General Education, 1800-1960*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co).

while Antioch College also designed a program that provided scientific laboratories for their students to conduct research with their professors.<sup>118</sup> In the same vein, other educators worried too much specialization would undermine the value of a general education program. had an alternate view of how best to integrate general education.

In one famous case during the 1930s, the University of Chicago's president, Robert Maynard Hutchins, criticized the rampant push for vocational training in private colleges, especially when it put research above the overall education of undergraduates. Instead, Hutchins believed an undergraduate education should continue to emphasize the best literature of the Western world in order to develop a student's intellectual and analytical abilities alongside electives that allowed for specialization—both of which would then prepare students for specialization at the graduate level.<sup>119</sup>

Yet the debates over the characteristics of a general education program found areas of agreement on several matters. Even in the years following World War II, leaders in general education reform had not yet reached a point of unity despite years of trying. There was, however, one area of agreement: the courses that should be included in all general education programs. Most institutions agreed in the 1930s that the structure of all general education programs should include the subject areas of humanities, sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and fine arts.<sup>120</sup> The most important step for a coherent,

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<sup>118</sup> Ernest Boyer & Arthur Levine, *A Quest for Common Learning: The Aims of General Education*, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1983).

<sup>119</sup> F. C. Ward, *The Idea and Practice of General Education: An Account of the College of the University of Chicago*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 4-21.

<sup>120</sup> Russell Brown Thomas, *The Search for a Common Learning: General Education, 1800–1960*; Guy Whipple, *The Thirty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the*

national general education program, however, came with the release of the report *General Education in a Free Society* in 1945 from Harvard, which outlined a shared general education program—with an emphasis on liberal arts colleges. In much the same way Franklin Roosevelt promoted the GI Bill as a step in the fight for democracy, many elements of Harvard’s handbook for general education carried the themes of democracy and citizenship.<sup>121</sup>

Although Harvard’s report didn’t specify which subjects should be taught in general education programs, it did explain how freedom of choice in an academic program reflected the essence of higher education in a free society. In order to remain free and maintain a healthy democracy, college administrators should give students an academic program that emphasizes Western literature and thought through required courses, electives and, in its most unique way, a path to a specialized major that should constitute one-third of students’ courses.<sup>122</sup> The Harvard report also seemed to be speaking to administrators who weren’t fond of specialization—particularly Chicago’s president Hutchins, who shared the same concerns as Transylvania’s faculty. Despite the move away from a classic, religiously infused curriculum, the authors of the report maintained that the march towards a collective general education program would give

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*Study of Education, Part II: General Education in the American College*, (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Co, 1939), 351-370.

<sup>121</sup> J. L. Ratcliff, *Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Comprehensive Guide to Purposes, Structures, Practices, and Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 90-98.

<sup>122</sup> Anne H. Stevens, “The Philosophy of General Education and its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins,” *Journal of General Education*, 2001, 50(3), 165–191.

American higher education a much needed “unifying purpose and idea” that created the unity and outlook on which any democratic society depends.<sup>123</sup>

Furthermore, Harvard’s report did more to shape Transylvania’s general education proposal than anything else. Taking the Harvard report under deep consideration, Brown and the rest of Transylvania’s Committee on Academic Life created specific goals for their new program. Outlined in a memo to the faculty in June 1946, the committee reported that the college’s transition to a general education curriculum relied as much on the college admitting students who could achieve a “high caliber” of performance as it did the college providing them the courses to make such achievements.<sup>124</sup> The committee decided on several non-negotiable criteria that Transylvania’s admission’s counselors should seek out in potential future applications. Above all, the committee recommended prospective students follow a similar pattern of academic performance. The first criterion was competence in English composition, which the committee considered “essential.”<sup>125</sup> Prospective students also had to show an interest in taking courses in the essential topics of general education, which included pre-professional training. “It is wise,” the committee wrote, for students to desire courses dealing “with each of the three divisions of knowledge, namely the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities.”<sup>126</sup> Finally, prospective students would also be

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<sup>123</sup> Harvard University, “Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society,” 1945, 43.

<sup>124</sup> Report of the Committee on Academic Life, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1946, TUSC, 1.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

encouraged to take a number of courses “logically grouped around a particular field or interest,” which would come to be the student’s major that they would create centering their “studies around a particular department.”<sup>127</sup>

In other words, the Committee on Academic Life suggested a curricular plan of study that mirrored the exact program outlined in the Harvard report. Such a decision may seem typical in today’s academic environment of specialization and intense focus on a primary subject, but Transylvania’s intentions represent a stark departure from the religion infused, Classics-based program that made up their one degree, the Bachelor of Arts. To ensure the transition’s success, the committee decided Brown should undertake an intensive plan of study at Harvard, which was also Brown’s alma mater.



Brown planned his trip to study Harvard’s general education program with the help of Harvard’s Provost, Dr. Paul H. Buck. Known primarily for his work on sectional reconciliation in the years following the Civil War—which earned him a Pulitzer Prize in History in 1938—Buck became the Dean of the Faculty at Harvard in 1942 before the college made him its first provost in 1945 to manage the growing complexities of undergraduate education. It was under Buck’s tutelage that Harvard produced the *Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society*, and attracted the attention of colleges and universities across the nation captivated by Harvard’s successes in academic reform. In

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<sup>127</sup> Report of the Committee on Academic Life, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1946, 1.

October 1946, Brown contacted Buck with the hope of arranging a visit in early 1947 so he could prepare courses for a major in biological sciences at Transylvania.<sup>128</sup>

By all accounts, Brown's trip was a success. He returned to Transylvania with a plan to create a general education program that focused on citizenship, science, research and critical thinking.<sup>129</sup> To make room for the new courses, Transylvania's faculty made the decision to end instruction in home economics, journalism and secretarial sciences—all courses carried over from Hamilton College—while ending graduation credit for specialized applied music education.<sup>130</sup> At first glance the changes seem insignificant, but the development of new programs in science and citizenship in place of secretarial sciences and home economics seems like a deliberate attempt to attract more men to the college as nearly 80% of Transylvania's students were women.<sup>131</sup>

Since the college offered fewer courses, and faced a growing need for specialization, the faculty and administration instituted a quarter system where students could take up to three five-hour units. According to Brown, the new system permitted a “more rapid ‘turnover’ and increased flexibility in course offerings,” which put an emphasis on the type of courses students had to take in order to receive a degree rather

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<sup>128</sup> Leland A. Brown to Paul H. Buck, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1947, TUSC.

<sup>129</sup> Leland A. Brown to Fred McCuistion, November 13, 1947, TUSC.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> “Report to the Educational Program Committee and the Faculty from the Subcommittee on Admissions, Table I: Summary of Enrollment Data since 1950,” Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

than focusing solely on the number of required courses.<sup>132</sup> In order to offer the new courses, however, Transylvania's faculty had to undergo their own transformation.

Despite the presence of specialists in the natural sciences and the humanities, members of Transylvania's faculty were dispatched across the country to study the general education programs Harvard included in their report. The exact number of trips taken by the faculty between 1947 and 1950 remains unclear, but the character of each trip is fairly identical. Faculty members received a three month leave of absence wherein they would travel to multiple public and private universities with an established general education program. The faculty would then collect syllabi and course catalogs while conducting extensive interviews with department chairs about the how they structured academic programs and courses in specialized areas. In order to fund the trips, Brown solicited grants from the General Education Board—a higher education auxiliary created by the Rockefeller Foundation—and the Carnegie Foundation, which provided Transylvania with grants for a faculty member to take a sabbatical for research in general education programs.<sup>133</sup>

But what exactly did the trips reveal? On one hand, the faculty received a bountiful dose of knowledge about how to create Transylvania's general education program. On the other hand, Transylvania's faculty and administrators came to terms with the fact that creating a general education program from scratch would take years to complete, but came with no guarantee that their changes would be successful or attract students. At least that much became clear during a trip taken by one of Transylvania's

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<sup>132</sup> Leland A. Brown to Fred McCuiston, November 13, 1947, TUSC.

<sup>133</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 238-239.

newest faculty members, Dr. Monroe Moosnick, to several institutions with existing general education programs. Wanting to develop his own program in Chemistry, Moosnick spent three months studying general education programs along the East coast to gain an understanding of what exactly went into creating a curriculum from scratch.

Although he quickly found answers, it did not take long for Moosnick to see how difficult developing a general education would be. At the start of his travels, Brown encouraged Moosnick to take extensive note of how Transylvania could institute a general education program based on the institution's particular needs for courses in the natural sciences. Brown told Moosnick to talk "in general way with the men in order to clarify your own ideas rather than to copy [their ideas]."<sup>134</sup> Moosnick followed Brown's orders by the letter, but also expressed his doubts about the task ahead of him. After trips to Colgate College, the Massachusetts Institution of Technology and Harvard, Moosnick wrote Brown to compare his experiences.

On the topic of creating more courses in Chemistry and Physical Science, Moosnick noted he found "everyplace that committees have worked and considered" the implementation of general education programs "for years before it was put into the curriculum," which might be too long for Transylvania to wait if the institution were to survive.<sup>135</sup> To show his point—and a bit of sarcasm—Moosnick referenced his time at Columbia where the committee had considered "the problem of physical sciences for four years and still the course is not being offered. So there, now!"<sup>136</sup> If anything, Moosnick

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<sup>134</sup> Leland Brown to Monroe Moosnick, April 5, 1949, TUSC.

<sup>135</sup> Monroe Moosnick to Leland Brown, May 6, 1949, TUSC.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*



understood Transylvania's need for a general education program and the lack of time to institute it as the college was already five-years into reforming its curriculum.

Moosnick's reports from the road also offer a rare glimpse into the process of how liberal arts colleges created their general education program. At the end of each visit Moosnick sent Brown and president McLain a detailed report of the physical science programs at each institutions and how they compared to his previous experiences. It is probably not too surprising, then, that Moosnick's time at Harvard came with a glowing evaluation. The evaluation, however, had little to do with the content of the courses. Instead, Moosnick explained how the instructors intended "to develop the proper attitude towards science by presenting case histories of scientific episodes."<sup>137</sup> Rather than simply directing students to recite information, the new form of general education infused the methodological approaches found in new the social and nature sciences with the content-based learning of a classical education.

By the 1950s, content of the curriculum at most liberal arts colleges were quickly changing. Academic programs "encompassed the greatest possible variety of subject matters" and as such drastically differed from the liberal arts college of the prewar period.<sup>138</sup> Most liberal arts colleges had to "redefine themselves for a new era" because students needed to be educated to face "the problems of the modern world."<sup>139</sup> As a

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<sup>137</sup> Monroe Moosnick to Leland Brown, April 25, 1949.

<sup>138</sup> Willis Rudy, *The Evolving Liberal Arts Curriculum; A Historical Review of the Basic Themes*, (New York: Institute of Higher Education, 1960), 38.

<sup>139</sup> Logan Wilson, *Emerging Patterns in American Higher Education*, (Washington D.C.: American Council on Education), 46.

result, the newly developed curriculum at liberal arts colleges focused on helping students understand and solve problems in the contemporary world that combined “vocational preparation with the knowledge of social foundations from the vantage of point of multiple perspectives.”<sup>140</sup> In specific, old methods of incorporating a strictly religious curriculum did not fit the need for “modern Humanistic and societal studies that focused beyond the social institutions of Western man” and that incorporated the “tools and method of science.”<sup>141</sup>

Above all else, Moosnick’s experiences provide a window into how religiously affiliated liberal arts institutions colleges confronted the growing national uniformity of curriculum in American higher education. In particular, liberal arts colleges were faced with a task of reforming their classrooms and academic policy if they were to meet the growing chorus of specialization in subjects outside of the old curriculum. In many cases, liberal arts colleges continued their uniform academic program by simply changing what was studied rather than how students studied. Known as the “great-books curriculum,” which was pioneered by St. John’s University, this approach required students to spend their four years studying one-hundred of the most influential books in the Western tradition complimented by rigorous study in mathematics and the biological sciences.<sup>142</sup>

Unlike other pioneering general education programs, St. John’s curriculum offered

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<sup>140</sup> Rudy, *The Evolving Liberal Arts Curriculum*, 132.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Harvard University, “Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society,” 1945, 187-190.

relatively little choice, but still included an emphasis on experimentation and scientific reasoning.

St. John's model became a popular choice for faculty unwilling to hand control of the curriculum over to student choice. Prior to the reforms in general education, the courses students took were strictly guided by the professors, and the prospect of moving to a system with student choice and control seemed to be the future of American higher education. Indeed, the most common characteristic for general education programs created during the 1940s and 1950s followed a system the Harvard report called "individual guidance." Beginning at Sarah Lawrence College in the 1930s, "individual guidance" allowed students to choose a number of elective courses during their first two years of schooling rather than following a plan of study created by the faculty or chosen each semester by a faculty member for a student.<sup>143</sup> In theory, students would find their academic interest amongst the electives and then use the last two years of study to concentrate on a specific subject or discipline.

Brown found "individual guidance" to be the best fit for Transylvania despite objections from the faculty. Although the system would need some modifications, Brown imagined "individual guidance" at Transylvania could encourage students to do similar sampling even after they were in their concentration.<sup>144</sup> To ensure such a transition would work, Brown invited architect of "individual guidance," Dr. Esther Raushenbush, the Dean of Sarah Lawrence College, to campus in an attempt to explain

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<sup>143</sup> Harvard University, "Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society," 1945, 187-190.

<sup>144</sup> Esther Raushenbush to Leland Brown, November 21, 1949, TUSC.

the merits of the system to Transylvania's faculty. Rather than allowing students to choose which courses they wanted to take in their first two years, Brown's plan required each student to take a required general education courses in mathematics, social science, humanities, fine arts and natural sciences during their first two years before choosing the program—with the counselling of a specific faculty member—that would lead to their specialized degree.

Students within specific concentrations took similar courses, but the path to a degree in a specific subject depended on what each student decided to take each quarter. In other words, the birth of individual education programs meant the faculty would be responsible for counselling students on what courses to take while keeping up their teaching responsibilities, which included the same teaching load but meant preparing and teaching a larger variety of courses in their area of specialization. In the same way Harvard predicted some faculty would resent the influx of student control in the system of "individual guidance," a majority of Transylvania's faculty were unsettled by their new general education program.

Interestingly enough, Transylvania's faculty didn't mind teaching more courses, but had a difficult time understanding why they were expected to play the role of academic counsellor. Speaking on behalf of other faculty members, Delcamp told Brown he thought it was a waste of time for faculty to deal with the general welfare of students when such a responsibility should fall to the Dean of Students.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, some faculty didn't like the prospect of more student interaction. Brown suggested faculty

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<sup>145</sup> Esther Raushenbush to Leland Brown, November 21, 1949, TUSC, 2.

members should keep holding office hours, but also work to create a time when they could schedule conferences with each student to track their academic progress and plan for future courses. In response, a faculty member told Brown “ a good deal of conferring goes on casually in the halls or as faculty meet students around the campus, and this is the way it should be.”<sup>146</sup> Others were angered by the program’s emphasis on courses in new academic fields. Brown believed the Psychology Department would play an important role in “educating students to understand the nature of human behavior and personality, and ways of dealing with human relations,” but such a plan would work better if the other faculty stopped being overtly critical of the psychologists and accept their work as legitimate.<sup>147</sup>

A number of Transylvania’s faculty also thought the college should stay with the old degree program. Some professors wanted to avoid student control over courses while others feared the time they put into teaching would be overtaken by the time they had to spend advising students and coming up with new courses. Rather than helping students choose from an array of courses, some of the faculty wanted to keep their set number of never-changing courses. The faculty could then devote all of their time helping students through courses rather than divide their time between instruction and advising for future courses. In a way, they were right. Brown admitted he saw the faculty largely giving academic advice after a student’s required courses were completed during their Freshman

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<sup>146</sup> Esther Raushenbush to Leland Brown, November 21, 1949, 2.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

year, but that didn't mean faculty still couldn't invest as much time into helping students do well in their coursework.<sup>148</sup>

But Brown also believed a student changed and developed during their college years, and such changes influence how a student functions. What interested a student during his or her first-year may be completely different by the time they're a Junior, and forcing students to take courses in which they have no interest wouldn't be beneficial to the student or the instructor. As a result, Brown argued that students could be guided by faculty to take courses and explore the academic possibilities that went along with a student's development to ensure the student found the right concentration.<sup>149</sup> After nearly a century of focusing on a curriculum based around the classics, Transylvania chose to abandon their academic model for a new general education program. Indeed, the choice seems almost unthinkable in the years following financial uncertainty and chronically low enrollment. Yet, Transylvania emerged into the landscape of post-war higher education facing a threat that was both distant and near.



From afar, the changes in curriculum were a threat to all religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges. Most of the institutions were facing the same problems: low enrollment, a lack of funding, outdated curricula and an aging faculty. Comparatively, Transylvania seemed to benefit from World War II because of the Army's role in filling the classrooms and, in some ways, paying the bills. But the college's decision to rethink how its faculty would educate students to deal with their contemporary world

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<sup>148</sup> Esther Raushenbush to Leland Brown, November 21, 1949, 1.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

environment would help bring Transylvania into a new era in American higher education—student control over their degree program.

In what may seem obvious in the current milieu of higher education, the role of student input in matters of academic policy is a recent change. General education programs infused with “individual guidance” naturally allocated some control over curriculum to the students because a plan of study rested more on choice than requirement. In other words, a direct correlation exists between student choice and faculty control in higher education’s academic policy. Transylvania’s students had the choice to decide what courses they wanted to take, but faculty still exerted the same amount of control because they created the courses from which students chose.

The movement towards general education and student control went smoothly for some liberal arts colleges whose faculty and curriculum included hard and social sciences, which made the change seem like a transition. Conversely, institutions without any general education courses had to transform their curriculum in a process that took years rather than months. Such was the case at Transylvania. Moreover, students gaining some control over academic policy should not be seen as a zero-sum win. As students were granted access into the discussion of curriculum at Transylvania, faculty influence did not decline, but the voices in the conversation about academic policy increased.

According to Dean Raushenbush, if Transylvania changed its curriculum to accommodate student needs then the college should institutionalize a way for student needs to be expressed. “It seems to me that introducing some means by which the students could discuss among themselves what the college is doing educationally,” wrote

Rausenbush, “and report back their ideas to some faculty group would help morale a great deal.”<sup>150</sup> Interestingly, Brown nor any of the other faculty had alerted students to the movement towards general education, and Rausenbush believed—after three years of development—it time to include students in a system built on faculty-student relationships because the decision not only influence Transylvania’s academic life, but campus life as well.

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<sup>150</sup> Esther Rausenbush to Leland Brown, November 21, 1949, TUSC, 4.



## Chapter Three: Presidents and Fundraising, 1945 to 1960

Education historian Alan Pfnister contends liberal arts colleges faced three points of crisis regarding institutional identity. The second occurred during the early-nineteenth century when the administrators of liberal arts colleges had to differentiate their institutions from the growing number of institutions across the nation.<sup>151</sup> Later in the century, land-grant institutions and the public research university grew out of the coffers of public funds and offered courses that made the liberal arts college seem anachronistic.<sup>152</sup> The last crisis, Pfnister argues, began in the 1950s because of the need for adaptation after the implementation of the GI Bill, which increased the demand for vocational training and left single-purpose institutions—such as the ministerial-based Transylvania—without an advantage.<sup>153</sup>

Indeed, how Transylvania's presidents responded to the issue of vocational training can serve as a way to explain mid-twentieth century liberal arts colleges' institutional identity building. Scholars agree the liberal arts college continues to adapt to meet the changing nature of American higher education, but few studies exist to show what the change looked like at the micro-level.<sup>154</sup> Those who have studied liberal arts

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<sup>151</sup> Allan Pfnister, "The Role of the Liberal Arts College: A Historical Overview of the Debates," *The Journal of Higher Education*, 55, no. 2, 147.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Martin Finkelstein, David Farrar, & Allan Pfnister, "The Adaptation of Liberal Arts Colleges to the 1970s: An Analysis of Critical Events," *The Journal of Higher Education*,

colleges during crisis contend it is “possible at once to preserve the context- specific meaning of particular events on a given campus and generalize processes across campuses.”<sup>155</sup> In other words, the process by which administrators at one college handled the crisis of vocational training serves as a model, or a generalized explanation, for the way liberal arts colleges handled the crisis.

Most of the liberal arts colleges in the United States are rooted in a Christian tradition that influenced curriculum, enrollment and the choice for president. Extensive studies of liberal arts colleges such as Swathmore, Reed, Antioch, Earlham, Franklin and Marshall and Gettysburg reveal a similar pattern where religious affiliation created in the nineteenth century was unbound from the institution’s policies in the mid-twentieth century.<sup>156</sup> The liberal arts college president made the most substantial changes in the area of fundraising and endowment building through transformations in academic policy, enrollment and campus planning—all of which were used to build a new institutional identity.

At Transylvania, president Raymond McLain understood the connection between World War II and the challenges facing religiously affiliated colleges better than most. McLain began his tenure at Transylvania in 1939 before taking a leave of absence to

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55, no. 2 (March/April 1984), 265; David Breneman, *Liberal Arts Colleges: Thriving, Surviving, or Endangered?* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994).

<sup>155</sup> Finkelstein, Farrar, Pfnister, “The Adaptation of Liberal Arts Colleges to the 1970s: An Analysis of Critical Events,” 265.

<sup>156</sup> Burton Clark, *The Distinctive College*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), vii-viv.

serve as a Lieutenant General in the final two years of the war. Prior to his departure, Transylvania's enrollment and liquid capital were rapidly dwindling. The number of faculty had been cut by a third, men leaving for war had dropped the enrollment by nearly 30% and the college needed \$40,000 to balance the budget for the 1943-1944 academic year.<sup>157</sup> Solutions for the budgetary crisis came from members of Transylvania's Board of Curators who held varying opinions as to the future of the college.

Hume Logan, the chairman of the Board who, by 1942, had served for twenty-seven years, believed Transylvania's budgetary issues stemmed directly from the college's unwillingness to fully embrace an identity of training ministers.<sup>158</sup>

Transylvania's Curators historically played an outsized role in college's economic and curricular decisions, which stemmed in large part from the number of Curators affiliated with the Methodist and Disciples of Christ churches.<sup>159</sup> Transylvania's Curators worked closely with McLain to solve the economic and curricular issues facing the college, but the Board's influence had been slowly decreasing as older, more traditional members were replaced by younger members who were concerned more with the economic health of the college than the extent to which the curriculum reflected the college's relationship with the Disciples of Christ.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 383.

<sup>158</sup> Minutes of the Board of Curators, May 26, 1942, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>159</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 171-184.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 383-388.

The relationship between Transylvania's Curators and the president illustrate how the level of influence and responsibility of advisory boards at religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges changed as presidents became more active in fundraising and campus planning. Although the transformation was less pronounced for liberal arts colleges, the changing responsibilities of collegiate advisory boards reflects one of the largest organizational shifts in postwar American higher education. Most of the individuals who joined college advisory boards after World War II were connected to the institution because of financial donations instead of being an alumnus—or, in the case of liberal arts colleges, being a member of the affiliated church.<sup>161</sup> Towards that end, a large portion of the postwar college advisory board members were initially made familiar to the college by the institution's president who sought them out for a financial donation, which led them to take a role as a financial advisor for the college.<sup>162</sup>

Prior to the changes, however, advisory board at liberal arts colleges were heavily involved with issues of curriculum—as was the case at Transylvania where Hume Logan and president McLain debated the future of Transylvania's seminary program. Since the turn of the century Transylvania's faculty, administrators and board members debated whether or not to keep the college's ministerial program separate from Transylvania. To Hume, funding from the Disciples of Christ could be more—and more consistent—if McLain would devote the college's resources to the College of the Bible

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<sup>161</sup> Ordway Tead, *Trustees, Teachers, Students: Their Role in Higher Education*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1951), 3.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

program by integrating it into Transylvania's curriculum and rededicating the college to focusing primarily on ministerial training.<sup>163</sup>

McLain, however, believed combining the two programs would be disaster to the future of Transylvania. He informed Logan that his proposal was preposterous because it was "an absolute negation of the liberal principles on which [the faculty and administrators] are trying to build the college."<sup>164</sup> Transylvania and other religiously-affiliated liberal arts colleges had long been beholden to a curriculum that emphasized religion, the classics and some scientific learning, which was also known as "book learning," and included the history of Protestant religious traditions and instilling in students the need to put godly behavior above all else.<sup>165</sup> McLain saw little need to take the Christian element out of the college's curriculum, and believed Transylvania acted as the "necessary arm of the Church" in the "never ending battle against the secularization of life."<sup>166</sup>

McLain believed Transylvania should uphold its relationship with the Disciples Church, but he also understood Transylvania would not prosper if it focused solely on training ministers. McLain also had reservations against becoming a science-heavy

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<sup>163</sup> "Minutes of the Board of Curators, May 26, 1942," Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>164</sup> Raymond McLain to Clinton Harbison, December 8, 1941, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>165</sup> The Harvard Report on General Education, 1945, in *American Higher Education: A Documentary History*, ed. Richard Hofstadter et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 954.

<sup>166</sup> Howard V. Hong, *Integration in the Christian Liberal Arts College*, (Northfield: St. Olaf College Press, 1956), 83.

institution where research was prompted by funding from the federal government. On the topic of becoming beholden to public research in science, McLain said, “This is not the way of freedom, as has been abundantly proved. That would be a major step, in my judgment, *the* major step, toward the loss of all free institutions in America. Among them is the Disciples’ Church.”<sup>167</sup> However, McLain did not hold reservations against science being included in the curriculum while upholding the Christian character of a liberal arts education. He believed any institution of higher education should be “a college of liberal education with a Christian philosophy radiating from its center.”<sup>168</sup>

Still, McLain had to address the budgetary crisis, and his work to do so continued after the war. Too much reliance on the Disciples of Christ would pull the college back towards ministerial training while too little reliance risked plunging Transylvania into bankruptcy. In 1946 McLain made several initial efforts to balance yet another struggling budget. He presented three solutions to cover the funding shortage to the Board of Curators at their spring meeting in 1946. McLain argued Transylvania needed, foremost, increased income from students, a campaign to increase the quantity of individual gifts from donors and the elimination of unnecessary costs, which included shutting down the ministerial training program entirely.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Raymond McLain, *Friends of Transylvania College*, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>168</sup> Hong, *Integration of Christian Liberal Arts College*, 82.

<sup>169</sup> Executive Committee of the Board of Curators, March 12, 1946, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

McLain was not the only Transylvania administrator convinced the college's heavy financial reliance on the Disciples church could hurt the college's future growth. While McLain was temporarily away from his post, Transylvania's academic dean, Leland A. Brown, who served as the interim-president, expressed his dismay with the church relationship. Speaking to the Executive Committee of the Board of Curators on November 12, 1944, Brown said, "Transylvania will not remain a standard accredited college in the decade after the war in its present anomalous relationship to the public on one hand and the church on the other."<sup>170</sup> Brown had a point. Most of the donations made to Transylvania were made by the Disciples church, which typically totaled \$10,000 a year in the 1940s.<sup>171</sup>

Furthermore, McLain believed Transylvania's financial stability could only be possible if the college did not rely solely on the Disciples of Christ for non-tuition funding. As a result, McLain began a plan to fundraise from Transylvania's alumni in an attempt to balance the budget through private donations. McLain planned to raise "gifts for underwriting shift to the new [academic] program" by soliciting "amounts of \$5,000, or more, from Board of Curators members and their friends" with the hope of raising \$25,00 for the 1946-1947 academic year despite a debt of nearly \$400,000.<sup>172</sup> Yet McLain and Transylvania were not alone in recognizing the extent to which liberal arts colleges had limited budgetary ties to their church affiliate and questioned how to

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<sup>170</sup> Executive Committee of the Board of Curators, November 12, 1944, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>171</sup> Report of the President, March 12, 1946, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC, 2.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

diversify and increase non-tuition revenue. In 1946, the president of Franklin and Marshall college, another church-affiliated liberal arts college, instituted a similar plan. In a request to alumni for donations to balance the budget, President Martin Distler wrote, “By contributing to the College Fund now, in whatever measure you are able, you will therefore be expressing...loyalty. You will be helping your Alma Mater through a critical period.”<sup>173</sup>

McLain’s plea to the alumni may not have covered Transylvania’s debt, but it did represent a step in a new direction for fundraising at liberal arts colleges. Cultivating a fundraising network separate from their church affiliate would prove difficult for most liberal arts college presidents as the process would take years to fully develop. It would be impossible to replace revenue from a historic church connection with alumni donations in the span of a year—especially with fluctuating enrollment. Some leading liberal arts colleges created an active alumni fundraising network during World War II to offset low enrollment, as was the case for Swathmore, whose president created a successful donation program netting nearly \$20,000 a year.<sup>174</sup> The money Transylvania received from the Disciple of Christ wasn’t enough to offset the ten-year decline in enrollment and need for capital to invest in new facilities.

As such, McLain had to rely on support from the Disciple church while searching for new sources of funding and dealing with a growing student population.

Transylvania’s class of 1950 gave enrollment a boost when it entered the college in the

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<sup>173</sup> Humphrey, “Liberal Arts Colleges in the Tumultuous 1940s: Institutional Identity and the Challenges of War and Peace,” 162.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.



spring of 1946 with 325 members—representing nearly 64% of Transylvania entire student body.<sup>175</sup> The sudden growth in enrollment created a new stream of revenue, but it also presented a new challenge: housing the students. To make matters more complex, the class of 1950 included more women than men. Transylvania’s student housing was composed of boarding houses or small dorms with a capacity of 50 students with the exception of Ewing Hall, which housed 150, but served as the men’s dormitory and housed the 256 veterans on campus. McLain recognized the need for new housing, but balancing the budget took priority. So also was his desire for new academic and athletic facilities. Along with bolstering enrollment, paying off the debt and building a new dorm, McLain also felt it necessary to continue on with the pre-War plans to build a library and gymnasium to attract students to Transylvania.

In order to achieve these goals, McLain first had to come up with the capital. Realizing Transylvania could never balance the budget and invest in facilities from the Disciples’ revenue alone, McLain mixed his desire for fundraising with the college’s Christian tradition. Along with twelve other religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges in the South, Transylvania joined a multi-denominational fundraising campaign called the “Crusade for a Christian World,” which sought to raise a collective total of \$14 million dollars, offering each institution would receive “its proportionate share of the income from the total Church Crusade effort.”<sup>176</sup> McLain and Transylvania’s Chief Financial

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<sup>175</sup> Executive Committee of the Board of Curators, October 8, 1946, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>176</sup> Executive Committee of the Board of Curators, September 17, 1946,” Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

Officer, Spencer Carrick, thought the plan to be a possible successful remedy for the college's debt, but the drive would take three years to complete and the total of \$14 million was a goal, not a guarantee.

In the end, Transylvania received far less than expected because the drive failed to attract enough donors. The "Crusade for a Christian World Campaign" raised \$421,000, which was immediately spent to cover the college's operating expenses for the 1950-1951 academic year.<sup>177</sup> To make matters worse, enrollment continued to wildly fluctuate. The class of 1950 was the only one of its size, and the subsequent classes were so small that Transylvania's enrollment was cut in half after commencement in May, 1950—leaving 250 upperclassmen and less than 100 students committed to begin their studies as freshmen in the fall of 1950.<sup>178</sup> Publically, McLain continued to express belief in Transylvania and claimed the college was "at its strongest point in the last half-century of its history."<sup>179</sup> To his closest friends, however, McLain's optimism faded. In a letter to a close confidant, Clinton Harbison, McLain noted that he thought 1952 and 1953 were going to be the worst postwar years for Transylvania—especially if the college's academic program suffered from faculty cuts.<sup>180</sup> Despite the burst of growth in the three years following World War II, 1950 and 1951 brought more financial agony as the loss of

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<sup>177</sup> Report of the President of Transylvania College to the Board of Curators, Dec. 1 1951, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>178</sup> Raymond McLain to Clinton Harbison, March 6, 1951, TUSC.

<sup>179</sup> Raymond McLain to Malcolm Watt, February 12, 1951, TUSC.

<sup>180</sup> Raymond McLain to Clinton Harbison, March 6, 1951.

enrollment and rising operating expenses put Transylvania more than \$351,057 in total debt.<sup>181</sup>

Without a firm fundraising network established, McLain returned to Transylvania's financial connection with the Disciples of Christ to balance the budget for yet another year. Operating costs doubled since 1939 as the college hired more faculty, had to pay interest on the debt and light dorms and classrooms across campus despite the fact they sat half empty.<sup>182</sup> McLain set out to barnstorm the state by going to Disciples churches and asking for money from the congregations.<sup>183</sup> Moreover, McLain sent out a three thousand-word letter of appeal to the ministers of Disciples churches he couldn't see in person. The letter recounted Transylvania's "deep Christian roots," which were now in jeopardy, but which could be saved if it received "one dollar from every Disciple's Church member in Kentucky to meet all of the college's financial problems."<sup>184</sup>

McLain's effort to fundraise within the Disciples church was a mixture of old sources and new methods. Recent scholarship suggests presidents from religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges developed private fundraising plans before or during World War II. In a study of four church-based liberal arts colleges with equivocal enrollments to Transylvania, Jordan Humphrey found all four institutions built fundraising models

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<sup>181</sup> Report of the President of Transylvania College to the Board of Curators, June 11, 1951, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>182</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 400.

<sup>183</sup> McLain, *Friends of Transylvania College*, TUSC.

<sup>184</sup> Report from Transylvania College, 1951, Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

around alumni to offset low enrollments during World War II.<sup>185</sup> Other studies, including V.R. Cardozier's *Colleges and Universities During World War II* explores the role of American higher education during World War II. Cardozier maintains many liberal arts colleges invited the United States Armed Forces to train on their campuses in order to keep the college open during the war.<sup>186</sup> McLain took on the role of fundraiser, but failed to establish a network of reliable donors quickly enough to replace—or, at the very least, match—funding from the Disciples of Christ. His persistence at fundraising, however, cannot go unnoticed. The modern liberal arts president was evolving, and McLain's actions illustrate such a change. It would be his successor, however, Dr. Frank Rose, who would match the developments in private fundraising taking place at liberal arts colleges across the nation.



A Transylvania graduate and minister from Danville, Kentucky, Dr. Frank A. Rose was selected as McLain's successor less than three months after he announced his intentions to resign in the summer of 1951. Described by Transylvania historian John D. Wright as “of the most handsome, energetic and popular presidents the college ever had,” Rose arrived at Transylvania with much fanfare.<sup>187</sup> Born in Meridian, Mississippi and

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<sup>185</sup> Humphrey, “Liberal Arts Colleges in the Tumultuous 1940s: Institutional Identity and the Challenges of War and Peace” 1-7.

<sup>186</sup> V.R. Cardozier, *Colleges and Universities in World War II*, (Westpoint: Praeger, 1993), 215.

<sup>187</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 400.

raised in the Disciples church, Rose attended Transylvania and the school's seminary, The College of the Bible where he graduated with degrees in philosophy and divinity. Rose embarked on a career as a minister and eventually moved back to Lexington to work in a local church while teaching philosophy at Transylvania in 1946. Rose was hired by the Board in June of 1951 and, at age thirty-one, became the youngest college president in the country.

As much as his youth and connection attracted the Board to Rose, McLain and other commenters were more impressed with his connection to the Disciples of Christ. In a memo introducing Rose to the student body, McLain called Rose's ministry "one of the most inspiring in the state."<sup>188</sup> Rose's preaching may have been inspirational, but the Board of Curators and McLain were more impressed with his ability to grow congregations—as he did both in Danville and Lexington—and how such a skill could transfer to bolstering Transylvania's enrollment.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, Wright contends Rose was one of the most recognizable figures in Kentucky's Disciples of Christ.

As a result, Transylvania's Board believed Rose could use his connections to construct a fundraising network throughout Kentucky's Disciples of Christ congregation where his message would be clear: Transylvania needs larger donations to remain open and provide the moral and spiritual leadership for Kentucky's youth.<sup>190</sup> "He preached in scores of church across the state," wrote Wright, "No church was too obscure, no

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<sup>188</sup> Raymond McLain, "Memo to the students of Transylvania, July 27, 1951," Raymond McLain Papers, TUSC.

<sup>189</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 401.

<sup>190</sup> *Lexington Leader*, June 8, 1953, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

congregation too small for him to visit and discuss the problems of the world in general and those of Transylvania in particular.”<sup>191</sup> Rose was a unique combination of orator, organizer and preacher who could use his skills to fundraise within Transylvania’s established connection to the Disciples church while creating a larger fundraising apparatus for the college.

Still, Rose had to ensure others shared his vision for Transylvania’s financial future. In his inaugural speech, Rose believed Transylvania had to rethink its role within the changing landscape of higher education. Moreover, Rose advocated that the small liberal arts college needed to do more in order to meet the challenges created by the post-war economy, which created information-based middle-class occupations such as business administration and engineering that called for students to specialize in a topic.<sup>192</sup> Transylvania had to reshape its educational philosophy in order to combine “the cultural heritage of Western Civilization” with the “contributions of empirical knowledge by the scientific method of experimentation.”<sup>193</sup> Rose embodied the changing world of the liberal arts within higher education in the post-war period. Liberal arts had to diversify their programs in order to offer subjects that the modern world made necessary.<sup>194</sup>

Transylvania’s finances were a significant concern to Rose. In his first address to the Board of Curators, Rose said, “I see some dangerous days ahead of us if something is

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<sup>191</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 401.

<sup>192</sup> Frank Rose, “Inaugural Address,” Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> Lewis B Mayhew, *The Smaller Liberal Arts College* (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1962), 96.

not done in in regards to our operational budget,” insisting each Curator has “a responsibility toward the elimination of this debt.”<sup>195</sup> In reference to the prospect of a new library and gymnasium, Rose told the Board of Curators, “Your speaking to your friends in our behalf and making annual gifts to this fund will bring this hope into reality.”<sup>196</sup> Presidents at other liberal arts colleges had been fundraising from alumni and other private donors since World War II to offset revenue loss from their religious connections brought on by declining church membership. Revenue from churches depended solely on the number of congregants and financial health of the church statewide, which meant donations would reach a natural limitation if church membership stagnated, therefore liberal arts colleges would have to seek new sources of funding to survive.<sup>197</sup> Membership in the Kentucky Disciples of Christ Church continued to decline in the 1950s as membership had nearly halved since the 1920s, which prompted Rose to search elsewhere to fund new campus facilities.<sup>198</sup>

Rose’s emphasis on building new campus facilities underscored the ability of quality buildings to represent the overall quality of a college campus. “Our new library building,” said Rose, “will help tremendously...to compete with the physical equipment

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<sup>195</sup> Report of the President of Transylvania College to the Board of Curators, December 1, 1951, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>196</sup> Report of the President of Transylvania College to the Board of Curators, June 9, 1952, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>197</sup> Mayhew, *The Smaller Liberal Arts College*, 77.

<sup>198</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Census of Religious Bodies Summary and Detailed Tables: Since 1926,” 16.

of other private colleges in the state.”<sup>199</sup> Other liberal arts colleges in Kentucky—Campbellsville University, Georgetown College, and College of the Cumberlands—finished new facilities in the early-1950s, and Rose argued for the connection between growing enrollments and new facilities.<sup>200</sup> The decision to build a new library had already been made twenty-five years before Rose took over as president. Transylvania planned to build a library in 1927 and the original Greek Revival design was kept by Rose. At a reported cost of \$225,000, Rose wanted to subsidize the library’s cost with as much of a down-payment as possible, which he believed could be accomplished by soliciting the “Board of Curators and friends for additional gifts.”<sup>201</sup>

The call ended almost as soon as it began. Transylvania received \$50,000 from Eli Lilly, the grandson of Eli Lilly, the pharmaceutical millionaire, whose family was friends with Mrs. Francis Thomas, the wife of a Transylvania Curator.<sup>202</sup> With Mr.

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<sup>199</sup> Report of the President of Transylvania College to the Board of Curators, June 2 1952, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>200</sup> William E. Ellis, *A History of Education in Kentucky*, (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), 355; Report of the President of Transylvania College to the Board of Curators, June 2 1952, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>201</sup> Report of the President of Transylvania College to the Board of Curators, June 2 1952, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>202</sup> James Madison, *Eli Lilly, a Life, 1885-1977*, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1989), 214, 134. Eli Lilly formed a foundation in 1937 to support the Christian education of ministers. Independent of his foundation, Eli Lilly made his donation to Transylvania College based on his early research on the Walam Olum—the historical scribe of the Delaware Indian tribe painted on flat sticks. Constantine S. Rafinesque claimed to purchase the Walam Olum from the “late Dr. Ward of Indiana.” The Walam Olum—according to Rafinesque’s interpretation—told the story of how the Delaware came to inhabit what is now known as Indiana—the home state of Eli Lilly. Because of his interest in pre-history, the Walam Olum became a topic of interest for Lilly who referred to Rafinesque’s translation of the Walam Olum as the “Hooiser Iliad.”



Lilly's gift as a starting point, Rose pushed the Board of Curators to match that amount in order to entirely complete the library by the beginning of the 1954 school year without accruing anymore debt.<sup>203</sup> The original bid for the library came in at \$286,000 for a complete building, but this amount proved to be too much for Transylvania to finance in 1952. The Library Committee had originally asked for a two-story structure, but the rising costs of the library forced them to revise their requests to bring the cost down to \$225,000, which could only be done by leaving the top story of the library unfinished when the structure opened in 1954.



Opening Transylvania's first library was a large accomplishment for Rose, but other structures around campus also remained unfinished and needed attention. The location for the library put it directly across the campus's front lawn from the college's unfinished, dilapidated gymnasium, which was in such disrepair the students referred to it as "The Barn." As was the case for the library, Transylvania's Board planned to construct an auditorium/gymnasium in the 1920s, but the project lost traction in the quagmire of the Great Depression. The Board of Curators devoted \$25,000 in 1929 to construct the first phase of a multi-phase auditorium project. The new facility would include seating for 3,500 with a playing floor below ground level. Referenced as a "building of beauty that shall add to the campus another Doric Temple," the new auditorium did not get past the first phase of construction.<sup>204</sup> As a result, the half-

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<sup>203</sup> "Report of the President to the Board of Curators, June 9, 1953," Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>204</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1929 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1929, 1929), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University.

finished auditorium became a blemish on campus and a source of embarrassment for Transylvania and subject of playful ridicule for the students.<sup>205</sup>

Bolstered by the successful library campaign, Rose moved ahead with the project to build an entirely new auditorium in 1956, which quickly ended when Transylvania received a \$200,000 donation. The bequest came from a long-time friend of the institution and a personal friend of Frank Rose, Amelie McAlister Upshur. Dedicated to the memory of Upshur's father, William McAlister, the money provided the leading gift to complete construction and provided a name for the dilapidated "barn."<sup>206</sup> Soon, a publication sent out to alumni, members of the Board of Curators, and friends of Transylvania detailed all of this information and credited McAlister Auditorium as being an "exemplary milestone for Transylvania." In less than two years the campaign raised a new auditorium.

But the college's prosperity was connected to growing prosperity in the United States after World War II. Historian Lizabeth Cohen argues postwar American prosperity led to extensive spending and consumer habits, which extended to higher education through philanthropy and the desire to express a civic identity. The economic recovery after a decade and a half of depression and war depended on Americans spending their disposable income, but more Americans were also making more money

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<sup>205</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1937 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1937, 1937), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University.

<sup>206</sup> William A. Bowden, "A Fond Farewell," (Transylvania University Magazine, Spring 2000), Transylvania University Special Collections, 5; Alfred S. Reid, *Furman University: Toward a New Identity, 1925-1975*, (Durham, North Carolina.: Duke University Press, 1976), 54.

through a growing industrial and globalized economy, which indicated a higher standard of living for many Americans.<sup>207</sup> Within the context of growing prosperity, wealthy individuals and foundations—such as the Eli Lilly Foundation—began donating to institutions of higher education across the nation, especially liberal arts colleges not receiving federal research grants going to public research institutions.<sup>208</sup>

And it was through the accumulation of private donations that Rose worked to meet Transylvania's growing needs. By 1956 students had a place to study, they had a place for recreation, but they still needed a place to live. Despite the initial enrollment slump after the war, enrollment at liberal arts colleges grew in the mid-1950s and nearly 50% of all students enrolled in college were enrolled at a liberal arts colleges by 1960.<sup>209</sup> Larger enrollment provided a two-fold problem for private institutions such as Transylvania. The problem of enrollment growth without adequate facilities stifled most liberal arts colleges, and scholars described the lack of facilities as the “most pressing” concern as institutions suffered from “overcrowding” in their “classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and dormitories.”<sup>210</sup> Frank Rose spoke of similar challenges in 1953 when he told the Board of Curators enrollment was “the crisis of all colleges and universities

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<sup>207</sup> Liz Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 9.

<sup>208</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 281-285.

<sup>209</sup> Morris T. Keeton, *Models and Mavericks: A Profile of Private Liberal Arts Colleges*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 3.

<sup>210</sup> George Schmidt, *The Liberal Arts College*, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 230.

today.”<sup>211</sup> The most outdated residence halls were the women’s dormitories. Not expecting women’s enrollment to double in the early-1950s, Transylvania literally had nowhere to house women except for Ella Jones Hall and Lyons-Hamilton Hall, which were built during Teddy Roosevelt’s administration, and lacked adequate indoor plumbing, heating, cooling, lighting and an adequate number of beds.<sup>212</sup>

Rather than immediately devising a plan to solve the problem, Rose instead turned to his pen to convey his concerns to Dr. Samuel Forrer, a Transylvania alumnus. Rose originally contacted Forrer in late 1951 to thank him for recent stock donations, but continued his correspondence with Forrer throughout the rest of the decade. Eventually Forrer expressed a desire to create an institutional scholarship fund, but the topic of discussion changed abruptly in late spring of 1957. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1957, Rose wrote, “We are getting the plans together for our new dormitory completed, and we will start construction on this million dollar building the first week of July. I hope that you and Mrs. Forrer will find it possible to help us furnish this beautiful building as you check through some of your additional stocks which you talked to me about.”<sup>213</sup>

More than anything else, Rose’s ability to create and maintain relationships are what made him so effective at fundraising. And other institutions took notice.

Transylvania’s first post-war president was rapidly becoming one of the most sought after

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<sup>211</sup> Report to the Board of Curators, June 9, 1953, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>212</sup> For more information on Ella Jones Hall see Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 319. Built in 1908 to the east of Morrison, the Academy building—known as East Hall and later renamed Ella Jones Hall.

<sup>213</sup> Frank Rose to Samuel Forrer, May 28, 1957, Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

college presidents in the country. And Rose probably did not mind the attention. From his days as an admissions ambassador at Transylvania to leading his own congregation, Rose's career choices always seemed to point towards an upward trajectory. After landing a job on Transylvania's faculty and then becoming president, Rose had to take another step forward to continue the pattern.

That is why it probably came as no surprise when he caught the attention of the University of Alabama. In October 1957, Rose informed the Board of Curators he would be resigning to take the same role at the University of Alabama—an opportunity few small college presidents could decline. Rose had made a name for himself nationally as one of the pre-eminent leaders in higher education due to his efforts that brought Transylvania out of debt and the fundraising programs that provided funds for new campus facilities. It was this experience that made him a fit for the University of Alabama but left Transylvania without leadership in the midst of a transformation.<sup>214</sup>



Rose's departure put Transylvania on the search for a new president. In the same way McLain had a hand in Rose's hiring, Rose also had his say about who would fill his position. Invited by Frank Rose to be the Dean of Morrison Chapel and Professor of Religion in 1955, Dr. Irvin Lunger quickly rose up the administrative ladder by becoming academic dean after the previous dean suffered a heart attack.<sup>215</sup> Unlike

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<sup>214</sup> Tilford, *Turning the Tide*, 3. Fundraising and administrating are what Rose would be most remembered for at Transylvania and Alabama – places where Rose “excelled as an administrator, fund-raiser and university spokesman rather than as an academician.”

<sup>215</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 408.

Rose—who was from the South and attended Transylvania—Lunger graduated from Bethany College in his home state of Pennsylvania before receiving his Ph.D. in divinity from the University of Chicago where he graduated in record time before serving as a pastor and community activist through the Disciples of Christ Church at the University of Chicago.<sup>216</sup> Upon his departure for Alabama, Rose informed the Board of Curators Lungner was man who possessed “all those abilities necessary” including a strong “academic background” to succeed him at Transylvania.<sup>217</sup> The Board of Curators granted Rose’s request and Lungner officially became president of Transylvania College in April 1958.

Eventually Lungner’s tenure took on its own identity, but the character of Lungner’s first years in office were distinctly influenced by the weight of Frank Rose’s plans. It is fair to claim Lungner and Rose were cut from a similar mold. Both men were Disciples’ ministers, roughly the same age, and shared similar views about the role of a college president. It is not clear, however, whether or not Rose knew Lungner held indistinguishable—if not identical—methods and goals for Transylvania. Lungner’s loyalty to Rose’s plans for Transylvania are well documented. So too is Rose and Lungner’s friendship, but little evidence exists to determine whether Lungner continued with Rose’s policies out of deference to well-laid plans or Lungner simply thought in much the same way as Frank Rose. Either way, Lungner moved forward with Rose’s

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<sup>216</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 407.

<sup>217</sup> “Transylvania Names Dr. Irvin Lungner President,” *Transylvania College Bulletin*, Vol. 30. No. 4, Irvin Lungner Papers, TUSC.

established programs of ensuring high enrollment and raising money to build new facilities by further severing the college's financial ties with the Disciple's of Christ.

Lunger believed the era of Disciple's funding met an informal end after Transylvania participated in the "Crusade for a Christian World" campaign and McLain's resignation. Rose did not solicit any financial help from the Disciples of Christ, and the largest donations under his tenure came in the form of private, individual gifts. The same turned out to be true for Lunger. Shortly after his inauguration, Lunger sent a report to students, faculty, and alumni to announce to them Transylvania "is moving into tomorrow with carefully laid plans."<sup>218</sup> These plans included "the responsibility for the education of more youth" and to provide "the best education for those who seek the best."<sup>219</sup> In other words, Transylvania needed more students and a better education program to meet the needs of students and match the progress of other liberal arts colleges.

Of great importance to the future of Transylvania, Lunger's ideas about education illustrate a larger shift in the curriculum at liberal arts colleges during the late 1950s. In 1950 the average liberal arts college housed 13 departments and offered 129 semester courses—numbers that grew to twenty-five and 400, respectively, by 1956.<sup>220</sup> In comparison, Transylvania housed fifteen departments and offered just over 200 courses a

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<sup>218</sup> Irvin Lunger, "Transylvania College: Its History and Its Future," Irvin Lunger Papers, TUSC.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>220</sup> Rudy, *The Evolving Liberal Arts Curriculum; A Historical Review of the Basic Themes*, 40.

decade earlier.<sup>221</sup> To an extent, Transylvania's curriculum had been influenced by its connection to the Disciples of Christ, which helped fund the ministerial program at the College of the Bible. As the college moved away from training ministers and found new sources of funding outside of the Disciples of Christ, fewer elements of Transylvania reflected the connection. The progression towards private funding came out of financial necessity, but the march away from ministerial training was a choice clearly made by the institution.

In a report to the Board of Curators, Lunger stated liberal arts colleges with "mediocre academic programs" relied too heavily on the "evangelistic concerns for the spiritual life of the student."<sup>222</sup> Lunger also argued that liberal arts colleges should cultivate both "moral responsibilities" of the student and provide "intellectual development" because the "college is not a church and its role, while related to a church, must be collegiate."<sup>223</sup> Despite his request to further secularize the curriculum, Lunger still believed Transylvania should be "in the Christian tradition," but only through Transylvania acting as an institution that "strives for excellence in academic endeavor and achievement."<sup>224</sup>

That is to say, the faith of Transylvania's students was more on display in their success in the classroom—not what they studied while they were in there. Nearly 90% of

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<sup>221</sup> Report of the President to the Board of Curators, June, 1959, Irvin Lunger Papers, TUSC.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*



Transylvania's students identified with a Christian denomination in 1958 and over 50% were members of the Disciples of Christ, which suggests the church still had some connections to Transylvania.<sup>225</sup> In the push to secularize their curriculum to emphasize pre-professional training, hundreds of liberal arts colleges reformed their institutional identity to meet the demands of a changing economy and set aside, as one scholar notes, "their historic missions," which was typically religious training or to act as an academic arm of their Christian denomination.<sup>226</sup>

Nonetheless, Lunger, like Rose, turned to soliciting donations from "alumni and friends along with industry and foundations."<sup>227</sup> Lunger already had one alumnus in mind. Before his departure, Rose made sure to hand Lunger copies of correspondence with Samuel Forrer, and Lunger picked up where Rose left off: brokering a possible donation for a new dormitory. In a letter dated January 24, 1958, Lunger told Forrer and his wife, "I can readily understand your wish to wait for a couple of months before making a commitment... Perhaps you will find the enclosed article which appeared in the Sunday issue of the *Lexington Leader* of interest in connection with your proposed gift."<sup>228</sup> The article included a full sketch of the proposed building and included the fact that the building remained unfurnished and nameless. Before receiving a response from

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<sup>225</sup> "Report to the Educational Program Committee and the Faculty from the Subcommittee on Admissions, Table I: Summary of Enrollment Data since 1950," Frank Rose Papers, TUSC.

<sup>226</sup> Humphrey, "Liberal Arts Colleges in the Tumultuous 1940s: Institutional Identity and the Challenges of War and Peace," 5.

<sup>227</sup> Lunger, "Transylvania College: Its History and Its Future," TUSC.

<sup>228</sup> Irvin Lunger to Samuel Forrer, January 24, 1958, Forrer Hall Collection, TUSC.

the Forrers, Lunger wrote again, noting, “I believe you would find lasting satisfaction in making possible the equipping of this outstanding one-million-dollar dormitory... I will certainly be inviting gifts from others.”<sup>229</sup> Twelve days later, Lunger received a letter with a check from the Forrers. Two years later, the Forrers received a dormitory dedicated in their name.

With the future of the new dormitory settled, Lunger used the rest of 1958 to focus on expanding academic facilities. By 1958, Transylvania’s academic facilities—namely, the College of the Bible building was one of the most outdated structures on campus and home to the fastest growing academic division on campus: the social sciences. While discussing his plans to demolish the structure and replace it with a newer facility, Lunger described The College of the Bible as “most inadequate for the present needs of the college” because of it was architecturally “out of harmony with the new library, the new auditorium, and the new women’s dormitory, which, with it, form the new focus of the campus on Broadway Avenue.”<sup>230</sup>

Support for the new project came shortly after Lunger’s announcement. Dr. William Haupt, a medical doctor from New York City who became a member of the Board of Curators through the influence of his friend, then Kentucky Governor, Transylvania graduate, and former Commissioner of Major League Baseball, A.B. “Happy” Chandler—before dying in 1956.<sup>231</sup> Haupt’s estate was left to his wife, Mrs.

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<sup>229</sup> Irvin Lunger to Samuel Forrer, January 24, 1958.

<sup>230</sup> Irvin Lunger to Laura Christianson, February 5, 1958, Haupt Humanities Collection, TUSC.

<sup>231</sup> Tyler Baker, "Historical Fundraising Question," e-mail message to Charles Shearer, November 24, 2014.

Jean Amaden, and the curator of the Haupt's estate, Ms. Laura C. Christianson. During his short stint on the Board of Curators, Dr. Haupt made an oral agreement with then-president Frank Rose regarding a gift for Transylvania. Due to his unexpected death, the arrangement of the gift was left to Haupt's widow, who honored her late husband's commitment.

Mrs. Haupt and Ms. Christianson traveled to Transylvania from New York City to tour the campus for the first time in May, 1958. Haupt informed Lunger of her ability to gift \$250,000 to start the construction on a building to replace the College of the Bible. On September 17, 1958, Dr. Lunger announced the William Haupt Humanities Building would soon be constructed. Haupt Humanities opened its door to students in January, 1960. Directly responding to Lunger's main complaint that the College of the Bible building was "out of harmony" with campus, the *Herald-Leader* reported that "The Haupt Humanities Building, completed the new Broadway "face" of the campus, stands at the center... flanked by the Francis Carrick Library and the McAlister Auditorium."<sup>232</sup>

Some attention should be given to the word "humanities" being in the building's title. The content of the curriculum at most liberal arts colleges "now encompassed the greatest possible variety of subject matters" and therefore drastically differed from the liberal arts college of the prewar period.<sup>233</sup> Developments in the postwar economy caused most liberal arts colleges to redefine themselves for a new era because students needed to be educated to face the problems of the modern world.<sup>234</sup> The curriculum and

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<sup>232</sup> Becky Farnsworth, "The Buildings of Transylvania University," TUSC, 23.

<sup>233</sup> Rudy, *The Evolving Liberal Arts Curriculum*, 38.

<sup>234</sup> Wilson, *Emerging Patterns in American Higher Education*, 46.

degree programs at liberal arts colleges focused on helping students understand and solve problems in the contemporary world that combined “vocational preparation with the knowledge of social foundations from the vantage of point of multiple perspectives.”<sup>235</sup> In specific, historian Willis Rudy argues old methods of incorporating a strictly religious curriculum did not fit the need for “societal studies that focused beyond the social institutions of Western man,” and did not incorporate the “tools and method of science,” which isolated the hard sciences from a college’s curriculum.<sup>236</sup>

In totality, the Haupt Humanities building illustrates the incorporation of the classical humanities – philosophy, religion, ancient languages, and literature – with social sciences, such as the rapidly growing fields of political science and sociology.<sup>237</sup> It seemed Transylvania had finally met its goal initially realized nearly four decades prior: a new system of fundraising to meet the changing nature of curriculum, enrollment and new buildings to show the progress.



The decades following the Second World War represents a period of change for all of American higher education. The inter-war period of the 1920’s and 1930’s brought colleges and universities across the country unprecedented growth in popularity and unexpected financial agony. Business, it seemed for every institution, was finding a way to pay the bills of the past as well as the present—an area where Transylvania eventually

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<sup>235</sup> Rudy, *The Evolving Liberal Arts Curriculum*, 132.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>237</sup> Irvin Lunger to Laura Christianson, February 5, 1958.

succeeded. From the presidency of Raymond McLain through Frank Rose and his successor, Irvin Lunger, Transylvania grew at an unprecedented rate. A careful examination of facilities, enrollment and fundraising provides a glimpse into the way Disciples affiliated liberal arts colleges in the region addressed their religious and budgetary limitations in order to meet the new demands of higher education. Of primary interest to the study of academic development is the impetus behind the decisions of what new facilities were built as enrollment grew.

New academic buildings and residential halls made college campuses more aesthetically pleasing, but the goings-on inside the structures provide more clues to understand the character of southern liberal arts colleges. Changes in curriculum and the majors taken by students reveal structural as well as cultural transformations at Transylvania.<sup>238</sup> The proliferation of new buildings on Transylvania's campus coupled with fundamental transformations in the College's curriculum and changes to fundraising during the post-war period are tied directly to the development of the liberal arts college president.

The evolution in the liberal arts curriculum and the development of new facilities to house new academic subjects also exemplifies changes that took place across the United States in the form of academic campus planning. Colleges and Universities—not just liberal arts colleges—began a physical transformation in the immediate postwar period. As curriculum changed, administrators were “motivated by the complexity and unpredictability of the modern institution” to build with the understanding that due to the

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<sup>238</sup> “Survey of Graduating Classes, 1951 to 1974,” Miscellaneous Folder, Irvin Lunger Collection, TUSC.

changing nature of higher education, campus plans and designs “would never be complete.”<sup>239</sup>

A story of change and identity exists within Transylvania’s narrative that offers readers a glimpse into a relatively unexplored area of higher education’s recent past. Transylvania’s presidents tell the important story of how a small liberal arts college dealt with the transitions of higher education during a period of profound change. McLain, Rose and Lunger all moved Transylvania towards a model of modern fundraising to ensure the college would no longer be the “little, struggling, debt-ridden, academically inferior, church controlled southern school—living in the memories of a glorious past.”<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Turner, *An American Planning Tradition*, 261.

<sup>240</sup> Report to the Board of Curators, December 10, 1960, Irvin Lunger Papers, 1958-1963, TUSC.

## Chapter Four: Student Life, 1945 to 1975

When the Planning Committee of Transylvania University's Board of Curators ended their meeting on February 26, 1957, the issue of student enrollment was considered a problem of the past. Five-years prior, the same committee rated low enrollment—and the accompanying budget deficit—as Transylvania's primary obstacle. The new library and gymnasium were lynchpins in what the college's administrators hoped to be a great leap forward for Transylvania and the new academic divisions created as a part of college's general education was attracting plenty of students who wished to study education, chemistry and economics. If the new facilities represented a symbolic beginning, the changes made to the college's curriculum signaled a subtler metamorphosis from a focus on tradition to “the world of the present time.”<sup>241</sup>

Students entering colleges and universities in the years following World War II were the catalyst for the wave of change that swept through American higher education. Prompted by a fundamental transformation of the United States economy, the issues of pre-professional training and specialization molded institutions in similar ways. As a result, most colleges and universities had relatively indistinguishable academic programs and students shared common experiences. While students poured into college classrooms to receive an education suited to their particular needs, the purpose of a college education in the United States also had a new requirement. The federal government and leading universities declared a need for students to use their education for bettering the citizenry

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<sup>241</sup> Report of the Planning Committee of Transylvania University's Board of Trustees, February 26, 1957, TUSC, 1.

of the nation through a study of human cultures and natural sciences. Despite the fact that students had more control over their academic experience, the purpose of American higher education was more non-negotiable than ever before.

Institutions offered two distinct forms of a what is commonly known as the “college experience.” The arrival of general education in American higher education has been well documented. The shelves of academic libraries are full of books examining the academic experience of students, but the same litany of titles cannot be found for the student experiences in campus life—especially for church affiliated liberal arts colleges. Details of the classroom and curricular experience offer invaluable insights into the post-war changes to academic policy, but the study of American higher education is incomplete without insight into the space students created outside of the watchful eye of administrators and professors.

Indeed, the study of any college has to account for the dual lives of students. Results of change, particularly in the case of higher education, are multi-layered and deserve careful analysis. The record left behind by Transylvania’s student body in the thirty years following World War II indicate that their academic priorities changed with the evolving economy as more students left behind religious study for careers in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. As Transylvania’s longstanding connection with the Disciples Church faded in the classroom, the change also influenced student activity. With the loss of church-related student activities, students began investing in athletics and Greek organizations while reflecting the character of campus life across the United State. One distinct phenomena, however, is the fact that women sustained the growth of Transylvania’s student body, and the organizations created after



World War II were unmistakably tied to the academic and extra-curricular success of Transylvania's female students. One must include all students for the picture of campus life at Transylvania to come into focus.

Despite the pace of change in American higher education, college life for students has remained remarkably consistent. The anchor of campus life has typically been clubs and organizations as they have generally been a way for students to define themselves and find an identity amongst their peers.<sup>242</sup> In a way, the history American higher education reflects the narrative of United States history when analyzed through a lens of accessibility and expanding freedom—especially in the decades after World War II. It is important to note, however, that access was not equal for all students. In the context of de facto segregation in the United States South, Transylvania's enrollment remained ethnically homogenous until 1963 when the first African American students were admitted to the college. As a result, the development of campus life at Transylvania unfolds in distinct waves that include gender and race as well as a direct connection between national cultural changes and the character of student life on American campuses. As issues involving gender, religion and citizenship permeated America's political and cultural consciousness, campus life was influenced in distinctly similar ways that tie Transylvania's narrative into the fold of other Southern institutions.

For Transylvania, the influence of cultural changes was clear but not always rapid in its development. The most apparent effects were tied to the redefinition of American citizenship in the Cold War and gains made by women for equality in the private sector—

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<sup>242</sup> Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Culture from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), ix.

both of which will be discussed at length. Some student populations were swept along wave of activism stemming from the civil rights movement and Beatnik counter-culturalism, but Transylvania's student body showed little signs of engagement. The demography of Transylvania's student body also represents the underrepresentation of blacks on college campuses while reaffirming more students from lower-middle and working-class backgrounds attending private, religiously-affiliated liberal arts colleges than ever before.



The religious character of Transylvania's campus culture in the 1940s was not unusual, especially for a Christian affiliated liberal arts college. Historian Frederick Rudolph maintains undergraduates have always created a world of their own, but the scope and range of their activities are colored by their institution's identity.<sup>243</sup> In the case of liberal arts colleges with a history of Christian affiliation, campus life reflected the denominational ties as religiously affiliated clubs were the main source of student activity and events such as dances were found to be controversial. Transylvania's pre-war curriculum and administrators had clear connections to the Disciples of Christ, which would make it no surprise that the student body did as well. Arthur Braden, Transylvania's interim-President during World War II told students he made no decision

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<sup>243</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 164; See also: Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History*, 70; Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 156; A. Lawrence Lowell, "Competition in College," *Atlantic Monthly* 103 (1909): 823; Burton R. Clark, *The Distinctive College: Antioch, Reed & Swathmore* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), 99-152.

about campus life without “fear and trembling over the expected repercussion from the Christian Churches of Kentucky and students and their parents.”<sup>244</sup> Coming out of the war, however, students at Transylvania—like their counterparts at Williams, Centre, Andover and Harvard—would soon create a campus life that reflected the loosening ties of denominations with liberal arts colleges.<sup>245</sup>

Nevertheless, change came slowly. Similar to the way the Disciples of Christ incrementally lost influence over Transylvania’s curriculum and finances, the character of Transylvania’s student population also changed gradually. It is a hard to qualify what makes a particular student population Christian and to separate those metrics from the overall wave of conservatism that swept college campuses in the decade following World War II. Nearly every student in Transylvania’s incoming classes between 1946 and 1951 identified with a sect of Christianity—an identification that heavily influenced campus activities. Some historians of higher education assert college campuses across the board took on a more conservative tone in the years following World War II.<sup>246</sup> Both John R. Thelin and Helen Leftkowitz Horowitz agree campus culture was abuzz with returning GI’s who saw the world in a more conservative tone because of their older age and desire to take college seriously in search of a career.<sup>247</sup> Transylvania’s class of 1950

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<sup>244</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1938 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1938, 1929), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 8.

<sup>245</sup> Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 7.

<sup>246</sup> Table III, Summary of Enrollment Data since 1945, Transylvania University Planning Committee, February 26, 1957, TUSC, 4.

<sup>247</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 266; Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 168.

consisted of more than 100 GI's and 200 women when they officially enrolled in fall of 1946. Most of Transylvania's men were married GIs who came to Transylvania with their families while a majority of the women—unrelated to the GIS—were unmarried and nearly a decade younger than their male classmates.<sup>248</sup>

Due to the high amount of married men and larger number of women, post-war campus life at Transylvania revolved primarily around studying and academic clubs while social events were few and far between. Few students leave behind a written record of their time in college and a complete collection of weekly publications such as newspapers or magazines rarely withstand the test of time, which presents a difficult task for scholars to understand the full student experience. Even so, most colleges and universities document their academic year through a yearbook that includes student voices and a helpful guide to understanding the success of clubs, sports and organizations on campus. In the case of Transylvania, the most helpful metric in understanding the changing nature of college's student body are their yearbooks. Each graduating class would publish a yearbook at the end of the year to recount the details and identity of the collective.

Yearbooks represent the visual culture of students at a particular historical moment. If seen as a collective journal about the experience of a student body, yearbooks provide a glimpse into the way collegians viewed their institution and themselves. Historians can better understand the world of student experiences by implementing anthropological analysis to examine the structures and beliefs students

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<sup>248</sup> Table III, Summary of Enrollment Data since 1945, Transylvania University Planning Committee, February 26, 1957, TUSC, 4.

created during their time in college. Furthermore, yearbooks reveal distinct changes over time in the composition of the student body as the systems that influence students—namely, a college’s identity, popular culture and individual beliefs—also change.

By 1948, the editors of Transylvania’s yearbook, *The Crimson*, devoted more attention to the growing faculty and number of subjects being taught than they did to the low number of clubs and organizations. Married men probably didn’t have much time for extra-curricular activities and the number of organization women could create were limited in the late-1940s as most institutions subscribed to artificial rules against women being active in athletic clubs, political organizations or a college’s student governing board.<sup>249</sup> As a result, student activities began to morph with the evolving identity of Transylvania, which included the addition of ten new faculty members between 1946 and 1948. Unlike the three pages devoted to campus clubs and organizations, the editors of *The Crimson* devoted the first six pages of 1948 yearbook to the new faculty members in Psychology, Physical Education, Elementary Education, Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Biology and Education—a clear departure from previous yearbooks with few mentions of the faculty.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> See more information on the historical limitations women faced on American college campuses: Patricia Albjerg Graham, "Expansion and Exclusion: A History of Women in American Higher Education." *Signs* 3, no. 4 (1978): 759-73; Conable, Charlotte Williams. *Women at Cornell : the Myth of Equal Education*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977; Lori D. Ginzburg, "The Joint Education of the Sexes." *Educating Women and Men Together Coeducation in a Changing World*, Ed. Carol Lasser and Sondra J. Peacock, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Amy Thompson McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).

<sup>250</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1948 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1948, 1948), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 2-7.

Although it may seem standard to include faculty in a yearbook, Frederick Rudolph's theory that campus life is tailored by the identity of the college provides a connection between the expanding faculty and their relationship with students. More specifically, the pages of *The Crimson* reveal a pillar of contemporary liberal arts colleges: close faculty-student relationships.<sup>251</sup> Prior to the wave of general education reforms that changed the way faculty advised students in a specific degree program, faculty administered a single curriculum to all students that collected the major areas of study into one degree—a model that didn't include student choice or an elective system. That is not to say faculty-student relationships didn't exist. Students and faculty have a history of out-of-class interaction, but their relationship was typically full of mutual distrust as faculty thought students gave little effort to the curriculum and students tried their best to do avoid interactions with faculty.<sup>252</sup> The growth of Transylvania's general education program created the environment for faculty to be largely present in campus life as advisors to organizations or coaches of budding athletic clubs. Whereas students during the inter-war years were largely portrayed as apathetic and non-academic, the collective return to college in post-war America brought with it, as one historian writes, "a substantial academic experience."<sup>253</sup> Popular images of the post-war college student are supported by the experiences of Transylvania's students heading into the 1950s.

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<sup>251</sup> A.W. Astin, "How the Liberal Arts College Affects Students." *Daedalus* 1999, 128 (1): 77–100.

<sup>252</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 193-196.

<sup>253</sup> James Thurber, "University Days" (1934), in *The College Years*, ed. A.C. Spector (New York: Hawthorn, 1958), 436-41; Robert Benchley, "What College Did to Me (1927)", in *The College Years*, ed. A.C. Spector (New York: Hawthorn, 1958), 183-93; Thelin, 217-221 provides several accounts of student experiences in the 1920s and 1930s.

Historians of higher education frequently cite the image created by Philip Roth's *Atlantic* essay "Joe College: Memories of a Fifties Education" published in 1987 as Roth reflected on his tenure at Bucknell College—a liberal arts college in Pennsylvania in the 1950s. Roth's experience at Bucknell was colored by his ventures in the classroom and intellectual exploration from his time in academically stimulating extra-curricular activities. Although Roth may not represent the viewpoint of every student, education historian John R. Thelin argues Roth's details about life at a church affiliated liberal arts colleges could be replicated at thousands of other institutions across the nation.<sup>254</sup> In particular, Roth's discussion of faculty members illustrates the depth of the student-faculty relationship at liberal arts colleges in the 1950s as students began to take majors and spend time with faculty in facilities dedicated to a particular academic division. Roth seamlessly weaves faculty members into his account as if they were ever-present and highly involved in campus life. Professors who served as faculty advisors in student organizations were "among the most popular teachers on the campus" and students often "tried to find some comfort in thoughts of the small, lively social circle of faculty."<sup>255</sup>

Education was often an experience found inside and outside of the classroom as faculty became one of the growing popular images of campus life at America's liberal arts colleges. Of particular significance to the growth of faculty prominence is the development of research based courses in the curriculum that caused faculty and students to work closer together. Class size also played a critical role. Although scholars have not

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<sup>254</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 298.

<sup>255</sup> Phillip Roth, "Joe College: Memories of a Fifties Education." *The Atlantic*, December 1987, 41.

studied the historical roots of faculty-student relationships created by small course rosters, the modern liberal arts college promotes the way smaller overall enrollments translates into more faculty attention for students, and the same could be said of the situation at Transylvania in the 1950s.

Roth's experiences also share common ground with Transylvania's student body. Many students in colleges across the United States searched for an intellectual home during their time at college in hopes of meeting their educational and professional aspirations.<sup>256</sup> To help their incoming classmates choose the major right for them, the editors of Transylvania's yearbook organized a pitch for the most popular majors and careers students could choose after they completed their general education requirements. The religion department would be a right fit if a student were "looking forward to religious service as a career to enter upon their theological training in a seminary with a broad liberal arts background," or wanted to achieve "the highest values in life and through which he constantly seeks to discover and appropriate the highest values in his own experience of reality."<sup>257</sup>

The biology department, which was barely two years-old, reflected the growing desire of students to gain professional training. Any incoming or undecided student "interested in the professions of dentistry, medicine and graduate nursing" were encouraged to take a "major in biology."<sup>258</sup> Still, students who found interest in "the

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<sup>256</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 298.

<sup>257</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1949 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1949, 1949), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 5.

<sup>258</sup> *Crimson 1949 Yearbook*, 8.



‘Living World,’ Natural History, Conservation of Wild Life Management, or in the Biology of Man” could take courses on those subjects or find “substitute courses in Geography and Geology for Physics and Chemistry” through their general education plan, which “are assuming greater importance now than formerly.”<sup>259</sup>

Above all, the pitch encouraged students to substitute their courses in “physical education, social sciences, psychology, medical technology, religion or agriculture” for courses in the Biology Department “where principles and understanding need not be sacrificed in a mad scramble for content.”<sup>260</sup> In other words, Transylvania’s Biology courses focused more on understanding the scientific method through applied research rather than simply sitting through a lecture and receiving information from the professor. The distinction between the two classroom experiences highlights the way Transylvania’s circular changes influenced the relationship between students and faculty. In the previous model of instruction found in Transylvania’s degree program, professors would lecture material to students in a that reduced interaction with students. The development and implementation of general education courses created subjects like Biology and Chemistry introduced classes where professors would teach the concepts of research and experimentation—two things that involve faculty interaction with students in laboratories or classroom simulations.

Transylvania’s students voted annually to determine their favorite classes, which typically went to courses in the college’s growing social sciences division. In the case of

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<sup>259</sup> Crimson 1949 Yearbook, 8.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

economics, students who wanted to make a career in “business, social work, law, government or community service” would be best to focus their general education electives in economic courses. Sociology electives, however, attracted the most students. “The Social World,” an introductory course in Sociology, was the most popular course for Freshman and Sophomores and a vote from the student population determined the class to be their “favorite course in the General Education curriculum.”<sup>261</sup> Students also found that subjects in history and political science went together and proved particularly useful for understanding the post-war world order. “History tells us the story of what happened in the past; political science aids students to grasp the conflicting desires behind the position of labor and employer, or tradition and progress,” wrote the editors of *The Crimson*, and through “the study of history and political science one broadens the base for problem solving by learning of the experiences of others.”<sup>262</sup>

If taken as a symbolic measure of student priorities, the space dedicated to a discussion of the academic opportunities at Transylvania speaks to the educational aspirations of the college’s first batch of postwar students. The number of pages devoted to a particular subject speaks not only to the level of significance Transylvania’s students placed on the topic or event, but the introduction of new items and the slow fade of others marks the changing priorities of the student body such as little to no mention of organized sports. A quick flip through *The Crimson* in the first five years after World War II reveals a student body intent on scholastic achievement. The class of 1948 wrote in the

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<sup>261</sup> Crimson 1949 Yearbook, 9.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

corresponding year's *Crimson* that the purpose of the college and the student body was to "take a responsible place in tomorrow's society."<sup>263</sup> After years of war, the United States emerged from conflict as a leader in the new liberal world order and evidence suggests college students took America's new role—and their part within it—seriously. Moreover, many colleges and universities went through two decades of enrollment instability—a process that ravage campus life and student activities.<sup>264</sup> It would not be long, however, before the campus returned to extra-curricular activities.



It would take roughly ten years for the college to enroll enough men to fill out rosters for their basketball and baseball teams and create student interests in the sports as both took a backseat to football in the 1920s. Subsequently, the void left by a lack of male intercollegiate competition created a unique space for Transylvania's women. Unable to officially compete against other institutions or organize their own athletic teams, Transylvania's women instead opted to create and manage their own Women's Athletic Association, which had nearly thirty members, and a Women's Archery team with twenty-four-person roster. The development of women's athletic teams at Transylvania was not abnormal, but the percentage of women involved in athletics at Transylvania is something of an anomaly. Across the nation, women constituted 27% of the nation's undergraduate population in 1950, and few of them participated in organized sports because most institutions did not have athletic clubs for women as most went

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<sup>263</sup> Crimson 1948 Yearbook, 9.

<sup>264</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 260-261.

dormant during the Great Depression and World War II.<sup>265</sup> Yet a majority of Transylvania's students were women, and more women joined an athletic club than another other organization on campus outside of sororities and academic-based activities.<sup>266</sup>

Scholars have paid particular attention to the development of intercollegiate athletics after World War II, but it is hard to contextualize and evaluate women's athletics at Transylvania without a study of women in sport at liberal arts colleges. According to Ellen Gerber's *The American Woman in Sport*, when World War II ended organizations for women in sport began to increase as sport became more competitive and intercollegiate and interscholastic competition spread, but mostly at Division I institutions.<sup>267</sup> Nonetheless, women's sports clubs and teams were a linchpin in campus activity immediately following World War II and continued to grow in popularity. The prominence of women's athletic clubs after World War II was made possible because women were the main staple of campus life in postwar American higher education, and liberal arts college in particular as male enrollments took nearly a decade to return to prewar numbers. The trend didn't take long to reach Transylvania. Although women continued to constitute a majority of the students, the 1950s became a decidedly male decade with the re-emergence of basketball, fraternities and de facto roles for men and women on college campuses.

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<sup>265</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 344.

<sup>266</sup> Table III, Summary of Enrollment Data since 1945, Transylvania University Planning Committee, February 26, 1957, Transylvania University Special Collections, 4.

<sup>267</sup> Ellen Gerber, *The American Woman in Sport*, (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1974), 418-435.

Scholars have paid particular attention to the development of men's basketball and football in the 1950s—a period considered “the nadir” of college sports.<sup>268</sup> Transylvania's budding athletic program, however, sputtered out of the gate as low enrollment limited the possibility of a men's basketball team, and eventually axed the idea of a return to football after a decade's hiatus. As quietly as it went away, Transylvania's basketball team re-emerged from its wartime break relatively unnoticed. The college hired a coach for the men's basketball team by giving the new physical education professor a second title a minor pay rise to get the five-person roster competing once again on the hardwood, but the program experienced some obstacles.<sup>269</sup>

It didn't help that Transylvania's newest team had to share a city with one of the best programs in the nation—the University of Kentucky Wildcats. Classical languages professor Ernest Delcamp made the statement, “Why hasn't Transylvania, in the past, drawn her full share of graduating high school students, and athletes especially? Simply because they would go to our neighboring school, who have modern gyms and better athletic facilities, just as easily.” If Transylvania College wanted to attract more athletes, it needed to modernize its gymnasium. Although the college wasn't going to attract the same caliber of players as did the University of Kentucky, students and faculty agreed a gymnasium to house the games would be a good start. The University of Kentucky had recently done the same as they unveiled one of the most state-of-the-art facilities in the United States, Memorial Coliseum, an auditorium-gymnasium that held over 10,000 people. In contrast, Transylvania's basketball program was housed in a wooden, half-

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<sup>268</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 299.

<sup>269</sup> Crimson 1949 Yearbook, 56.

complete structure known as the “barn,” which didn’t have running water in the locker rooms which featured a leaky roof that caused the basketball court to bubble.<sup>270</sup>

Nonetheless, men’s basketball became Transylvania’s primary postwar sport despite the nearly decade-long slump after the war. The reasons as to why and how basketball re-gained prominence at Transylvania goes beyond the hardwood and into the changing views of college sports among administrators. One of the on-going debates regarding college sports is whether or not the players should be considered amateur. The current multi-billion-dollar industry surrounding men’s college football and basketball is a far cry from the origin of competition in each sport, but the move away from amateurism towards professionalism was present in the 1950s—particularly for fans of basketball in Lexington, Kentucky, which included Transylvania’s two presidents during the decade, Raymond McLain and Frank Rose.

After the University of Kentucky men’s basketball team was embroiled in the 1951 gambling scandal that took down some of the nation’s best squads, McLain was hesitant to build a basketball program into anything more than a five-person volunteer, intercollegiate team that couldn’t be corrupted by too much competition.<sup>271</sup> After spending the five years after World War II rebuilding, Transylvania’s basketball team was sidelined by McLain’s fears and barely competed outside of inter-squad meets during the 1950-1951 season. But McLain’s retirement in the summer of 1951 meant a new life for basketball as his replacement, Frank Rose, was an avid fan of basketball and believed

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<sup>270</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1937 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1937, 1937), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University.

<sup>271</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 405.

the amateurism of the college game could be overcome by coaches who built teams with students on athletic scholarships.<sup>272</sup> Although Rose couldn't create his own version of the Kentucky Wildcats and he couldn't hire away their coach, Adolph Rupp, he could have a coach connected to both. Transylvania's basketball program officially came back to life in 1952 when Rose hired C.M. Newton, a recently graduated basketball player from the University of Kentucky.

After the initial slump that lasted for nearly a decade after the war, the men's team finally compiled a winning record that brought the program from three wins a season to reaching the championship game of non-Division I regional tournaments. 1955 marked a turning point for the men's basketball team as they moved into their new gymnasium, McAlister auditorium, and compiled a winning record under Newton. Despite the fact that the 1954-1955 team became known for their "speed and spirit" rather than their height or overall ability, the *Crimson* suggests men's basketball became the most popular sport and activity on campus as home games became sell-out social events.<sup>273</sup> 1957, however, was the basketball team's breakout year with a win at the Capitol City Invitational led by Lee Rose and Charles "Stoop" Adams, which earned Transylvania regional recognition and Newton his first honors as an outstanding coach.<sup>274</sup> Despite

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<sup>272</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, 405.

<sup>273</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1955 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1955, 1955), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 66.

<sup>274</sup> Newton's time at Transylvania is particularly noteworthy for his efforts in developing the program into a Division III contender. After winning the 1951 NCAA Championship playing for Adolph Rupp at the University of Kentucky, Newton served in the Air Force and eventually went to coach at the University of Alabama and Vanderbilt University where he won South Eastern Conference Coach of the Year Honors in 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1988 and 1989.

Rose's emphasis on athletic competition, men's basketball was the only sport to gain the admiration of students during the 1950s—and the only one to win as the men's baseball team did not have a winning season until the 1960s. Still, the popularity of basketball in the mid-1950s stands in stark contrast to a campus whose initial postwar clubs were tied to religious activities. Outside of athletics, campus life began to blossom as the varied academic and social interests of students created a more vibrant campus culture where students moved further away from religious activities.



Transylvania's students established more than three dozen clubs during the early-1950s, but, like basketball, they had little to do with the college's connection to the Disciples of Christ. Compared to a half-century earlier—when five of the eight student clubs were tied in some way to the college's Christian tradition—campus life at Transylvania seemed to have followed the lead of their faculty and administrators: minimize the role of religion in order to maximize the role of pre-professional training. Outside of student government and Greek organizations, students participated the most in what were termed “non-social groups.” The majority of these organizations were dedicated to academic or professional development, or, as one scholar termed them, “key cogs” in the student “system of prestige.”<sup>275</sup> An example of “non-social groups” would be clubs where students network with local professionals in their field of study or organizations that base membership off of academic achievement or faculty recommendation such as the Lampas Circle and Future Educators of America—both of

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<sup>275</sup> Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 211



which are clubs Transylvania students invited to campus in the decade after after World War II.

Although “non-social groups” are historically the least socially active organizations with the lowest number of students, Transylvania’s “non-social” in 1962 were distinctly different than they were thirty-years earlier. Most “non-social” groups were initially related in some way to Transylvania’s relationship with the Protestant Church. The Y.M.C.A and Y.W.C.A. Cabinet, Women’s Lampas and the A.W. Fortune Club were the only active “non-social” organizations and all required some form of “good Christian character” for acceptance.<sup>276</sup> Comparatively, “non-social organizations” grew more than any other type of club in the years following World War II. Transylvania listed Lampas, the International Relations Club, the Student National Education Association, the Model United Nations, Science Journal Club, Transylvania Theatre Association, Phi Beta and the Campus Forum as their “non-social groups” with the Student Christian Association as the only non-sectarian organization for membership.<sup>277</sup>

How students organized themselves outside of the classroom had a direct connection to what students were studying in them. By 1956 most students were majoring in programs that would be considered “pre-professional,” or viewed as vocational training. The development of a new general education curriculum stripped the college of an outdated course plan that put all students through the same curriculum. In its place was curriculum built on student choice of their electives and area of study.

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<sup>276</sup> Crimson 1932 Yearbook.

<sup>277</sup> A Report on Transylvania College Self-Study, August 1962, Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 113.

Every student had to take courses in the same key subject areas, but the courses they could take to fulfill the requirement were varied. As a result of the new system, Transylvania's were studying a vast array of subjects that carried into their extra-curricular activities. A rise in education majors influenced the clubs devoted to the future of teaching while physics and chemistry majors formed a community around their subjects.<sup>278</sup> The tie between curricular and extra-curricular developments undoubtedly accounted for a growth in student activities, but there were other factors at play that cultivated a new social outlet for students on campus: Greek organizations.

Although they were almost defunct by the end of World War II, fraternities and sororities became the most distinct of character of campus life at Transylvania by 1960. The general public and scholars alike are quite familiar with the unflattering image of fraternities and sororities characterized by parties and other reckless behavior, but the history of Greek organizations in American campus life goes past the stereotypical tropes and exposes a critical element of postwar institutional transformation at liberal arts colleges. Greek organizations at Transylvania are both a case study in the postwar character of student life at religiously affiliated institutions in American higher education and the overall growth of Greek organizations at colleges and universities across the nation. In the case of Transylvania, more students were a part of social fraternities and sororities than other organization on campus, but some of the college's Greek organizations were established at the turn of the century. Greek organizations may have

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<sup>278</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1956 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1956, 1956), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 9.

been threatened with extinction during the Great Depression and World War II, but they experienced a revival in the 1950s that swept through American higher education.

Moreover, fraternities and sororities became one of the lasting symbols of twentieth century American campus life and played a unique role in the way liberal arts colleges transitioned away from their Christian traditions in the decades following World War II. Before the outbreak of war, most fraternities were anchored in a Christian tradition and membership was limited to men who displayed what one scholar called “exceptional Christian character,” but declining membership and changing campus demographics forced most chapters to rethink their recruitment strategies in the late-1940s.<sup>279</sup> As was the case at Transylvania, veterans made up the bulk of male enrollment in the first five years after World War II, but few joined fraternities because of their age and marital status. Therefore, in order to recruit new members, fraternities would accept male applicants by turning a blind-eye to any behavior that may have not met the criteria of “exceptional Christian character.”<sup>280</sup> Furthermore, in 1946 a wave of anti-discrimination laws were adopted by the country’s most prominent fraternities in an attempt to curb racism. The advisory boards of national fraternities would draft laws to be accepted by individual chapters—a decision that would completely redefine membership criteria for most Greek organizations.

Although the laws intended to make it illegal to discriminate against African Americans and Jewish people, the laws said discrimination of any kind was unacceptable,

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<sup>279</sup> A.W. James, “The College Social Fraternity Antidiscrimination Debate, 1945-1949,” *Historian* 62, no. 4 (2000), 303.

<sup>280</sup> James, “The College Social Fraternity Antidiscrimination Debate, 1945-1949,” 306.

which inadvertently deconstructed the Christian-based membership criteria.<sup>281</sup> By 1949 most national fraternities were overall more tolerant and accepted students from non-Christian backgrounds, but low male enrollments across the nation still curbed their growth. Although scholars have yet to study the connection between fraternities and religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges, it seems the secularization of fraternities played some role in changing the character of campus life at liberal arts colleges like Transylvania by making it easier for Greek membership to grow and evolve the fraternity into a pillar of social life rather than a vehicle for moral development.<sup>282</sup> As the college's male enrollment reached new heights, so too did membership in fraternities. The popularity of Greek life wasn't something completely unseen at Transylvania, but the amount of students that would join a fraternity and sorority made Greek organizations the most recognizable feature of post-war campus life.

Even in the last year of the second world war, Greek organizations had more members than any other organization at Transylvania. The fraternities—Pi Kappa Alpha, Phi Kappa Tau and Kappa Alpha—had a collective twenty-one members while the sororities—Delta Delta Delta, Chi Omega and Phi Mu—had fifty-nine members out of a student body of 130.<sup>283</sup> And it was the sororities who organized most of the events and activities on campus, which included dances, philanthropy and other social affairs that

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<sup>281</sup> James, "The College Social Fraternity Antidiscrimination Debate, 1945-1949," 319-324.

<sup>282</sup> Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Laura T. Hamilton, *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>283</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1945 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1945, 1945), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 32-35.

made up the majority of *The Crimson*'s coverage of campus life. In the fall of 1945 "Tri Delta gave a benefit party for crippled children" while "Phi Mu sponsored a charm school,"—programs to teach women etiquette at social gatherings—which had a "record turnout."<sup>284</sup> The two most anticipated events of the spring, according to *The Crimson* was "Chi O [campus] sing, and the Phi Mu garden party."<sup>285</sup>

Fraternities also created a new role for women on campus. In the early-1950s Delta Sigma Phi started appointing women as their organization's designated "Sweethearts," giving a woman who had honorary membership to the fraternity based on her closeness with the men in the group. In the same vein, Kappa Alpha Order, Phi Kappa Tau and Pi Kappa Alpha created their own versions of the award. The awarding of an honorary membership to one of Transylvania's fraternities became an sanctimonious occasion in the spring as women across campus gathered for the ceremonies and *The Crimson* documented the occasion by providing the chosen women their own section in the yearbook.<sup>286</sup> The development and growth of fraternities was also characterized by competition. Both fraternities and the college gave awards centered around the participation of fraternities in the area of service, athletics and community involvement—the winners receiving trophies as well as bragging rights for the next year.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> *Crimson 1945 Yearbook*, 33.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>286</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1954 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1954, 1954), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 27-33.

<sup>287</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1952 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1952, 1951), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 30.

To guide the fraternities during their period of growing popularity, several faculty members were appointed advisors. Professors such as John D. Wright, Bob Hatchett and Ed Alderson were all included annually in *The Crimson* beside their fraternity's award winners and campus leaders, which included the student government president and chief officer of the Lampus Circle.<sup>288</sup> As a result, membership in a Greek organization created another outlet for close relationships between faculty and students while also providing academic and extra-curricular opportunities for men and women that did not exist for non-members—a factor that increased the prominence of fraternities and sororities on Transylvania's campus.

As it was almost unheard of in the 1950s for women to attain high office in student organization at co-ed institutions, Transylvania's sororities created positions, events and philanthropies that gave extra-curricular opportunities to women that did not exist before the late-1950s. Although sororities were more focused on student programming such as dances, galas, performances and dinner parties, their members also created their own world of competition in the 1960s. Like the fraternities, Transylvania's sororities competed amongst themselves to win the college's award for best student program, outstanding members of each pledge class and best service project.<sup>289</sup> The competitive drive in Transylvania's also pitted sororities against the fraternities. In the case of academic honors, sorority women systematically dismantled their fraternal counterparts. Beginning in the mid-1960s, the college annually awarded the Greek

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<sup>288</sup> Crimson 1952 Yearbook, 33, 34.

<sup>289</sup> Crimson 1952 Yearbook, 38, 42, 43.

organization with the highest overall GPA, but evidence suggests there was little competition for the first decade of the award's existence. One sorority in particular—Phi Mu—received the award for nine consecutive years, and the fraternities lacked a win for at least twenty years.

Sororities undoubtedly played a large role in the development of campus life at Transylvania for women, but there were still roadblocks to inequality despite advances made in the 1960s into the 1970s. The gains women made in the classroom were often offset by sexism in campus culture. Women made gains in American higher education after World War II, but they came to be measured in inches compared to the miles of progress attained in a few short years in part to the Equal Pay Act and Title IX legislation. The narrative of co-eds at Transylvania remained relatively stagnant from 1945 to 1970 with minor advances coming in academic programming, athletic opportunities and political activism of countercultural organizing. By 1970, a flurry of women's athletic activity as Transylvania organized teams in field hockey, tennis, basketball as well as track and field.<sup>290</sup>

Compared with the undergraduates of the 1940s and 1950s, the co-eds of 1960s and 1970s had a clear advantage over their male classmates in terms of academic honors. Although it is hard to comparatively gauge academic ability in any instance without access to student records, Transylvania's relationship with the "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges," an award given annually to students

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<sup>290</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1975 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1975, 1975), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 70-76.

who attain the pinnacle of scholastic achievement, provides one avenue to see how the college's co-eds received more academic notoriety. Enrollment grew steadily at Transylvania from 1945 to 1975 but the ratio of women to men remained the same—women typically outnumbered the men by 15% to 20% each year—but the number of those selected for the “Who’s Who” honor went from zero women selected in 1948 to 67% in 1968, and, in 1976, 75% of those selected were women.<sup>291</sup> In other words, the number of women recognized for their scholastic achievement reflected cultural upheaval, but more directly tied to the outstanding academic work of Transylvania’s co-eds.

As the number of women who joined Greek organizations grew so too did their involvement in other campus organizations. Student publications—as was the case at many campuses across the nation—became a popular outlet for student opinion. Transylvania’s four publishing organizations—Board of Publications, *The Rambler* newspaper, the *Crimson* yearbook and *Transylvanian* magazine—collectively included three dozen students in 1961—the majority of which were women and recognized annually for their scholastic achievements in journalism.<sup>292</sup> Women were also more active in Pep Club, served more often as Dormitory Counselors, and joined the Christian

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<sup>291</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1966 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1966, 1966), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 71; Transylvania College, Crimson 1975 Yearbook, 92-93.

<sup>292</sup> Transylvania College, Crimson 1961 Yearbook, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1961, 1961), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 78.



Student Association, the Student National Education and International Relations Club in higher numbers than their male classmates.<sup>293</sup>

Transylvania's sorority members also received recognition for more their than scholastic and social achievements. As was the case at many institutions of higher education, the student body used flagship social events such as homecoming or annual dances to promote an individual male and female for their contributions to the campus community. Students would use these events as a way to unify the campus in ritualistic fashion, or, in the case of Transylvania, through an annual celebration of the institution's history known as Pioneer Week, which was capped off with a "T-Day Dance" where the student body voted a male and female student "Mr. and Ms. Pioneer."<sup>294</sup> Those selected for the spirited honor had to display "service, leadership, scholarship and character" and be a student at Transylvania.<sup>295</sup>

By selecting classmates to represent the campus population, Transylvania's students displayed the common interest and bonding found on most college campuses, but the collective experience also included skewed individual attention on women. Any examination of co-ed college yearbooks from the 1950s and 1960s will turn up various takes on the same idea: classmates crowning women for their physical features. Beauty pageants were non-existent at Transylvania before the 1950s, and their introduction into campus culture is a vivid example of the way student life at most colleges and

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<sup>293</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1966 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1964, 1964), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 78-91.

<sup>294</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1964 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1964, 1964), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 87.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

universities began to share experiences as the divisions that once separated institutions in American higher education were slowly crumbling. In the case of beauty pageants, a woman was often selected from each class based on her physical beauty and, according to accounts, service and involvement in the campus community.

Aside from the school-spirited Ms. Pioneer, Transylvania's students showcased four women each year as college's "*Crimson Beauties*." The editors of *The Crimson* yearbook cloaked the contest in the guise of modesty as they announced the co-eds selected in the 1950s and 1960s as "CHARMING BEAUTIES," but the façade had faded by the 1970s when the editors proclaimed, "Transylvania has lovely coeds..." who were "selected on the basis of facial beauty."<sup>296</sup> Women may have been achieving a new level of success in campus activities and academic achievement nationwide, but the most celebrated aspect of a co-ed, according to classmates, was her physical beauty.<sup>297</sup>

But not all women at Transylvania vied to be a "*Crimson Beauty*." Sociologists and historians have collectively uncovered multiple layers to campus life that were once viewed as homogenous and relatively unchanging. Women at Transylvania began to express doubts about their role on campus and created organizations that stepped outside of mainstream, traditional activities. Sociologists Martin Trow and Burton Clark advanced a theory to explain the fracturing of student involvement on liberal arts campuses by categorizing students into vocational, academic, collegiate and nonconformist subcultures—a premise accepted and tested by several prominent

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<sup>296</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1971 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1971, 1971), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 49.

<sup>297</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 234.

historians of higher education.<sup>298</sup> Students in the late-1960s and early-1970s came to college to receive on-the-job training, to learn about the academic world of ideas, engage in campus culture through sports and Greek organizations, or, as was becoming the case in the late-1960s: to engage with new ideas about politics, literature and adult art through protest and off-campus groups.

The growth of political active subcultures in Transylvania was largely attributed to anti-war sentiments developing at American colleges and universities in the late-1960s and early-1970s. Students included in Clark and Trow's countercultural model typically desired to use knowledge and a diversity of education to "find an outlet and develop talent within the soul. Some call it an escape, others recognize it as basic for the enrichment of the total person."<sup>299</sup> Furthermore, a countercultural student pursued an identity as the self-conscious aim of their education that manifest itself in distinct attitudes or actions—typically in the form of non-descript political activism.<sup>300</sup>

It is difficult to typecast a group of students based off of the scant records they left behind, but a clear connection exists between anti-war political activism and some of Transylvania's students. *The Crimson's* editors made the case that most of Transylvania's students were speaking out against the Vietnam War, which may have been true—students were most likely voicing their frustrations—yet few of the college's students, maybe twenty to thirty out of 1,000, were actually protesting as evidenced by an

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<sup>298</sup> Burtin Clark and Martin Trow, *Student Subcultures on the Bowdoin Campus*, (Brunswick, Maine), 1969, 2-3.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

examination of several events. *The Crimson* also claimed Transylvania was “in the process of taking steps towards becoming a place not only of liberal arts, but of liberal ideas” where students could find “an outlet and develop talent within the soul. Some call it an escape, others recognize it as basic for the enrichment of the total person.”<sup>301</sup>

Despite the lofty rhetoric, most of the events that took place during 1968-1969 academic year were no different than previous years. Evidence suggests few disruptions took place on campus and even fewer students actually engaged in protests or political activism.

There were, however, several notable exceptions. Leaders of the demonstration claimed their liberal arts education is worthless without wordily application, which necessitated their involvement in helping end the war. “The study of other cultures helps to widen a person’s viewpoint,” said one Transylvanian, “It is not merely the scholar who studies different civilizations, it is the person who realizes that awareness of others societies brings about meaning in existence and self-knowledge.”<sup>302</sup> And so, on November 15, 1969 a group of Transylvania students marched silently downtown with police escort to demonstrate peacefully for an end to the war in Vietnam. Singing “All We Are Saying is Give Peace a Chance!,” twenty-five Transylvania students joined 1000 university students” from the University of Kentucky to protest in downtown Lexington.<sup>303</sup> Transylvania’s “Peace Group” also went to demonstrations in Frankfort on

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<sup>301</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1969 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1969, 1969), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 1, 17.

<sup>302</sup> Transylvania College, *Crimson 1970 Yearbook*, (Lexington KY: Graduating Class of 1970, 1970), Francis Carrick Thomas Library, Transylvania University, 40.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

May 15, 1970 for a Sunrise Memorial Service for the Kent State shootings as well as holding a twenty-four hour fast and sleep-in on the steps of Transylvania's Mitchell Fine Arts building "where 600 UK students came to protest as well."<sup>304</sup>

Students from liberal arts colleges also participated in similar events, but Transylvania was by no means a hotbed of political anti-war activism. Education historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz describes the late-1960s as the clear moment when campus populations made a clear distinction between "insiders," the Greeks, athletes and students seeking professionalization, and the "outsiders" who grew in their discontent with the events of the 1960s and the typical student experience.<sup>305</sup> Transylvania certainly had both groups, but the majority of students weren't protesting. In fact, the college's administrators were pleased with the relatively tranquil nature of Transylvania's student body amidst the turbulence on campuses across the nation. In a message to the Board of Curators, President Lunger remarked, "Students today are demanding greater freedom and an enhanced measure of individual responsibility," which meant "Drastic changes in college practices and social relegations may be justified."<sup>306</sup>

Towards that end, students demanded the college address the issue of integration. In 1963, two Transylvania students, Patrick Molloy and Michael Mitchell, decided to begin the process of integration at Transylvania. Molloy and Mitchell looked for a black student to break Transylvania's race barrier and found Lula Morton, a student at the top

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<sup>304</sup> Crimson 1970 Yearbook, 33.

<sup>305</sup> Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 229-244.

<sup>306</sup> Report of the President to The Board of Curators, June 11, 1966, TUSC.

of her class at Bryan Station High School.<sup>307</sup> Morton said she wanted to go to Transylvania, but her family didn't have the money for a private college education.<sup>308</sup> Morton's experience at Transylvania represents a key moment in the history of the college while exposing a non-violent, peaceful episode of integration in American higher education.

While other colleges and universities in the American South were embroiled with conflict over integration and making national headlines, the story of integration at Transylvania highlights what Morton calls the "high plane" of college integration. Whereas much of narrative surrounding the integration of American higher education in the 1960s is saturated with reactionary stories of reactionary violence, other colleges and universities enrolled African American students without inciting a venomous reaction. For Transylvania, the story of Morton's provides an example of peaceful and fruitful student activism in the 1960s in the United States South while breaking the silence surrounding a mostly untold story that reinforces the core identity of liberal arts colleges. In a speech given fifty-years after integrating Transylvania, Drewes said enrolling at the college was "a revolution" and wrapped in "peaceful, polite, pretty Southern charm" despite "troubled waters below the surface" of Lexington, Kentucky during the civil rights movement.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> *Lexington Herald-Leader*, Three Pioneers of Integration Receive Awards at Transylvania Commencement, May 24, 2014.

<sup>308</sup> Lula Morton Drewes, "Still Overcoming: Transylvania University Convocation Speech, 2013," Lecture, Lectures Series from Transylvania University, September 15, 2013.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

As Lexington worked to finally end segregation, Morton sensed the conflict embroiling the city during her first years at Transylvania. Despite some conversations to end the college's policy of segregation, Transylvania's administrators did not formally take a step to address the issue of separate education as they worried about "the financial repercussions from donors" if the school were to integrate—a threat many institutions received.<sup>310</sup> Nonetheless, Transylvania moved forward with the decision to admit Morton. Reflecting on her time as a student, Morton said, "For the four years that I was at Transylvania, I was very happy...I felt like a little Freedom Rider on a mission. I was happy in my small way to be joining the thousands across America struggling to bring down the walls of segregation and discrimination," but, Morton adds, her and classmates "remained separated" as she "knew little about them, and they knew little about me."<sup>311</sup> Yet Morton reveals the kindness she received from classmates and the clear absence of major conflicts. Similarly, Morton found comfort in the student-professor relationships that characterized the classroom experience of Transylvania's student. She praised then-Transylvania professors including Monroe Moosnick, Richard Honey and John Wright as "people who nourished my spirit, my soul and my mind."<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Lula Morton Drewes, "Still Overcoming: Transylvania University Convocation Speech, 2013," Lecture, Lectures Series from Transylvania University, September 15, 2013.

<sup>311</sup> *Lexington Herald-Leader*, "Three Pioneers of Integration Receive Awards at Transylvania Commencement, May 24, 2014.

<sup>312</sup> *Lexington Herald-Leader*, "Three Pioneers of Integration Receive Awards at Transylvania Commencement," May 24, 2014.

Two more African American students enrolled at Transylvania the following year, but the process of integration seemed to be peaceful compared to the conflicts in the same year at the University of Mississippi and the University of Alabama—both of which required military intervention. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Transylvania's white students accepted integration, but evidence suggests the college dealt with the issue of race better than other institutions in the South. By 1969, Transylvania's student body elected Josh Santana as the first African American student body president and Jim Hurley was the first African American named Mr. Pioneer, the college's version of a homecoming king.<sup>313</sup> Surprised the embrace Transylvania students gave integration that he started, Michael Mitchell said the college was “a far more liberal place than I envisioned it to be.”<sup>314</sup>

Despite advances made in the area of civil rights, Transylvania's students remained comparatively quiet on other issues rattling American higher education in the 1960s. Rather than joining the chorus case of other students who protested the war and demanded transparency from the United States government, Transylvania's students wanted “drastic changes” in policies that “controlled curfew and drinking.”<sup>315</sup> Lunger also noted the “small number of ‘the beatnik’ type” who were “involved in demonstrations and protests,” but overall the students “showed general apathy.”<sup>316</sup> Yet what Lunger noticed among Transylvania's student population wasn't all that unusual for

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<sup>313</sup> Crimson 1969 Yearbook, 37-40.

<sup>314</sup> *Lexington Herald-Leader*, May 24, 2014.

<sup>315</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 307.

<sup>316</sup> Report of the President to The Board of Curators, June 10, 1967, TUSC.



religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges during the turbulent years of the Vietnam War. Some students were mobilizing in political protests, but the general apathy of Transylvania's student population reflected Transylvania's place in the tumult of student activism. In fact, the Young Republicans of Transylvania had three times as many students as their Democrat counterparts and the *Crimson* gave more attention to the announcement of Transylvania's intention to create an MBA program than it did issues surrounding Vietnam or the other turbulent events of 1968.<sup>317</sup>

Little attention has ever been given to liberal arts colleges during this period. Scholars of student life and the history of college campuses tend to couch the discussion of college campuses in the 1960s around student activism, but not all institutions were engaged in social protest. As a result, many Americans have a vague idea of colleges and universities in the 1960s as the vanguard of liberal extremism and countercultural discovery. But few historians have examined the character of liberal arts colleges, particularly religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges working to reform their identity in the postwar period. Transylvania was still a religiously affiliated college in the United States South where student activism—outside of the civil rights movement—was relatively non-existent. Based on what literature does exist, Transylvania in the late-1960s and early-1970 is a vehicle to better understand and evaluate a relatively unknown segment of campus life in American higher education while gaining an understanding of administrative priorities. Although Transylvania's students did little to disrupt business as usual at the college, they would create a crisis in the mid-1970s that reflected yet another moment of change in American higher education.

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<sup>317</sup> Crimson 1969 Yearbook, 26; Crimson 1968 Yearbook, 95.



## The Liberal Arts, 1975 to the Present

On August 29, 1975, Irvin Lunger announced his retirement from Transylvania University after serving eighteen years as president. The *Lexington Herald-Leader* called Lunger's retirement "the close of an era" that were "key years of growth, stability and strength."<sup>318</sup> Lunger's most notable achievements were related to the overall growth in quality across campus. "Under Dr. Lunger's leadership," wrote the *Herald-Leader*, "the academic level of the school has been strengthened and a highly successful building program has taken place."<sup>319</sup> By all accounts, Lunger oversaw the most prosperous years in Transylvania's history. Since 1963 enrollment remained at or above 700 students—double the amount from a decade prior. Twenty-four full-time faculty members were hired between 1952 and 1964, which brought the total number to fifty-three and allowed for Transylvania's graduation requirements to include mastery of math and science, not just "competence in English."<sup>320</sup> To top it off, all of the facilities on campus—with the exception of the administration building—had been built after World War II.

Yet the blossom of Transylvania's prosperity after World War II started to wilt in the mid-1970s. Despite growing enrollments and signs of success for liberal arts colleges, a sudden financial depression created a gloomy overcast for American higher education. Lunger outlasted the tumult, but the end of his presidency came after a

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<sup>318</sup> "Transy Grew In Lunger Years," *The Lexington Herald-Leader*, Lexington, Kentucky, August 31, 1975, A-14.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>320</sup> Irvin E. Lunger, *Transylvania College: Its History and Its Future*, Kentucky Historical Society, October, 1963.

marked decline in Transylvania's fortunes. The liberal arts and liberal arts college made an unexpected comeback in the thirty years following World War II that was helped in large part by a rapidly expanding economy and growing demand for higher education, but each reached a plateau in the early-1970s.

Unlike their public research rivals, liberal arts colleges did not have tax dollars or government funding to act as a safety net for an unexpected economic downturn.<sup>321</sup> It would have been nearly impossible for Lunger, or any other college president for that matter, to predict the economic instability of the early-1970s prompted by the end of America's postwar boom. Transylvania, like many other re-defined, re-purposed liberal arts colleges, entered into the recession of the 1970s without a plan to weather a downturn in enrollment. In their attempt to create a curriculum that would service students seeking pre-professional and vocational training, religiously affiliated liberal arts colleges tried to outrun their past by running towards similar academic programming found at public research colleges in order to compete for enrollment.

The growth in enrollment prompted a recalibration of fundraising from the college's denominational sponsor to private individuals in order to build facilities for the expanding number of students and faculty. By the mid-1970s, the debt-ridden, religiously-affiliated liberal arts college of the pre-war era known for training ministers had turned into the private, more expensive version of the public research university. While institutions like Transylvania were working to compete with public research universities, so were newly created regional universities and community colleges, which could attract local students away from the more expensive liberal arts college. The

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<sup>321</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 409-415.

number of students who attended college in postwar America grew alongside the number of colleges and universities in the United States. What Transylvania experienced on the eve of Lunger's retirement was a by-product of poor planning on the part of liberal arts colleges, and a natural consequence of market saturation despite knowing a downturn could be on the horizon. From one crisis to another, the rush to give students what they wanted in the years after World War II to ensure financial stability led many liberal arts colleges to lose their distinct identity—and set off another crisis liberal arts colleges are still combating.

Yet many liberal arts colleges had some idea trouble was on the horizon. For Transylvania, Lunger was first informed of the possible trouble with future enrollments in 1968 when he commissioned a year-long study on the college's financial stability from the Robert Johnston Cooperation. The results were disheartening. Johnston reported that Transylvania's academic program were virtually indistinguishable from their cross-town public university rival, the University of Kentucky. Moreover, Johnston reported Transylvania's problems were similar to private, liberal arts colleges across the nation that were losing their edge over public institutions in both categories of price and education program.<sup>322</sup> It had long been true that private colleges held a virtual monopoly on quality and public institutions on quantity (the number of students and available funding for research), but that truth had slowly faded as state-flagship and public colleges developed their own liberal arts curriculum within colleges of arts and sciences or

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<sup>322</sup> The Robert Johnston Cooperation, *A Confidential Report To The President and Curators of Transylvania College: A Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations Pertaining to the Future of Transylvania*, May, 1968, 1.

furthered their lead in scientific research.<sup>323</sup> In case this warning was not clear, the authors of the report told Lunger and the Curators the liberal arts college, not just Transylvania, was “without a stable identity.”<sup>324</sup>

Students who preferred the curricular advantage of small courses with one-on-one interaction with professors could now attend public institutions and study in a particular college, or academic division, within the university. Furthermore, the research bonanza of federal funding that swept through American higher education in the 1960s produced more lucrative research opportunities for undergraduates. In other words, students could now study a liberal arts curriculum without paying the price for a liberal arts college and with added advantages. After decades of reinventing their identity, the liberal arts college no longer had sole claim over the liberal arts.

But Transylvania’s administrators sidestepped the issue of identity and focused more on the financial ramifications of Johnston report. Enrollments across the nation grew nearly every year starting in 1950, which eliminated much of the college’s debt and created an opportunity for investment in facilities. Students were going to attend college, and the cost for most institutions were fairly identical and unchanging into the 1960s, but inflation and the need for more capital to pay down the debt of physical expansion drove the price tag upwards across American higher education. Moreover, faculty salaries continued to increase as debt on instructional and residential facilities skyrocketed as interest rates—as well as the number of loans—grew in the sluggish economic downturn

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<sup>323</sup> The Robert Johnston Cooperation, *A Confidential Report To The President and Curators of Transylvania College: A Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations Pertaining to the Future of Transylvania*, 1.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

of the late-1960s and early-1970s. Transylvania, like many liberal arts colleges, borrowed to build facilities and used donations typically as down-payments, but only if tuition covered operating expenses.

Despite the warning signs, most colleges and universities did not stop to consider what would happen if the trend of growing enrollments suddenly plateaued or reversed. The American economy supported higher education's expansion after World War II because it, like higher education, was rapidly expanding after an initial post-war shortage. Even though Lunger knew about a possible contraction in both enrollments and the economy, he continued to invest in new faculty, facilities and programs for Transylvania. But warnings about the impending crisis in higher education were widespread. Like Transylvania, some institutions were made known of the issue through internal reviews, but it was reports from the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education that claimed the postwar model of spending and expansion was unstable and left many institutions financially exposed for debilitating losses in the case of an economic downturn.<sup>325</sup>



Enrollment at Transylvania had finally topped 1,000 students in 1969, which instilled a sense of confidence from both Lunger and the Board of Curators that propelled further plans to build and expand the academic program. Despite a multi-million-dollar debt for the library, gymnasium and the newly opened fine arts center, Lunger continued ahead with plans for a long-awaited science center and student union in 1969 that would

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<sup>325</sup> Clark Kerr, *The Great Transformation in Higher Education, 1960-1980* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); See: *The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education: A Summary of Reports and Recommendations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Boss, 1980).

be fueled by a \$30,000,000 campaign drive leading up to the college's bicentennial in 1980.<sup>326</sup> At the same time, Lunger announced plans for Transylvania to open an off-site graduate school to house the Inter-American School for Business Administration at Lexington's Spindletop Research Institute for an estimated cost of \$5,000,000 due to the number of business majors at the college who eventually leave to pursue an MBA at another college.<sup>327</sup> Accounting for inflation, Lunger's plans caused the college's operating budget to go from roughly \$700,000 in 1960 to just shy of \$3,000,000 in 1970.<sup>328</sup> Transylvania was no longer in the business of training ministers, but instead in the business of teaching business.

Lunger's plans for such expansion was built on his confidence that enrollments would continue to grow. Each new class at Transylvania was larger than the last—a trend that began in 1950 and ended, abruptly, in 1970 when the class of 1974 arrived on campus. Even though the “enrollment was lower than expected” for the class of 1974 and the “entering class was the smallest of the last six years,” Lunger believed the issue was an anomaly and the college had little reason to worry.<sup>329</sup> Yet the situation worsened. More than eighty students didn't return for the winter quarter set to begin in January 1971 and another twenty dropped out before the start of the spring quarter, which sunk Transylvania's enrollment from 1,009 in the spring of 1969 to 776 in the spring of

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<sup>326</sup> Irvin Lunger, Report of the President, June 1969, TUSC, 6.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>328</sup> “The Transylvania Report: 1969,” Irvin Lunger Collection, TUSC.

<sup>329</sup> Irvin Lunger, Report of the President, June 13, 1970, TUSC, 2.



1970.<sup>330</sup> For an institution whose budget relied solely on enrollment, the loss of nearly 300 students in a year was nothing short of a financial crisis. Rather than dropping out and entering the workforce, a large number of the students that left Transylvania enrolled at the University of Kentucky, and Lunger admitted that the trend of higher education was “public education—particularly in Kentucky and the South.”<sup>331</sup>

His assessment was partially correct. Transylvania’s financial downturn was indeed part of a larger economic transition in higher education, but it was not isolated to liberal arts colleges in the South. Even state-flagship and public institutions soon realized their push to create new academic programs and build facilities to attract students had no secure protection if enrollments suddenly dropped. Almost as quickly as established colleges and universities rapidly expanded their academic programs, new institutions opened their doors to accommodate regional growths in enrollment and generous funding coming in from all levels of government.<sup>332</sup> By 1970, American higher education was over-saturated. There were 2,400 institutions in the United States—more than a third of them founded after World War II.<sup>333</sup>

Regional colleges and universities weren’t new to American higher education, but the term “regional” became more localized in the 1960s and 1970s as did specialization at many public universities. The first public universities were created in the mid-nineteenth

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<sup>330</sup> Irvin Lunger, Report of the President, June 13, 1970, TUSC, 2.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>332</sup> Thelin, 319; Hodgkinson, *Institutions in Transition*, 107.

<sup>333</sup> Hodgkinson, *Institutions in Transition*, 106-119.

century as land-grant research institutions to serve a particular state's population. Instead of establishing more state-wide public institutions, law makers decided to create public universities to serve a particular region within a state with an emphasis on the careers and specializations most needed by the region's population.<sup>334</sup> Prior to World War II, the liberal arts curriculum could be distinguished by a clear influence of religion and emphasis on the classics. The liberal arts college also had a clear distinction earned by modest faculty-student ratios, small campuses and a financial connection to a Christian denomination.

When World War II ended, the tidal wave of transformation swept higher education into a frenzy towards specialization. Public institutions were aided by a funding bonanza vis-à-vis the United States government, which gave them a financial and research advantage over liberal arts colleges. Liberal arts colleges reacted by reforming their curriculum to accommodate new subjects in the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences through student-choice curriculums in required general education courses. As early as 1950, the clear distinction between public and private, university and college, liberal arts and pre-professional training was blurred.

Most institutions followed the model of providing all the things students wanted in their education. As one could expect, the homogenization of curriculum soon dismantled any distinction between the once stark segments of American higher education. Liberal arts colleges adopted similar academic programs to public research

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<sup>334</sup> Steven Brint and Karabel Jerome, *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900–1985*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

colleges who worked to make classroom instruction more personal to offset their large enrollments and emphasis on research.<sup>335</sup> For Transylvania, Lunger and the Curators never once stopped to assess the damage that could be done if enrollments stopped climbing and funding dried up. When the glut of students met the glut of institutions, Transylvania was left with no clear identity, an over-expanded budget, too many irons in the fire of facility expansion and no qualitative advantage over public schools—especially in terms of faculty research and tuition.

In many ways, the current crisis of the liberal arts college is a historical issue of identity. Liberal arts colleges lost their distinction in curriculum in the 1950s and 1960s as every institution moved to offer the same courses in newly developed academic disciplines. Although liberal arts colleges could not enroll more students than public or state-flagship, their administrators and students still emphasized the faculty-student relationship that made it seem as if studying at a smaller institution brought with it a more intimate exchange of knowledge. Transylvania's students often heralded the way smaller colleges provided something no other institution could: genuine interactions with the faculty. One student wrote in 1969, "The biggest asset the small liberal arts college possesses is its emphasis on attention for the individual."<sup>336</sup> At the same time, scholars and pundits alike claimed the liberal arts college had a clear advantage in student-support structures that include personal relationships with professors, but few used that specific

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<sup>335</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 320-322.

<sup>336</sup> Crimson Yearbook 1969, 31.

point as the anchor of a college's identity as a marketing tool in the mid-1970s.<sup>337</sup> At least not initially.

Since the mid-1970s, however, liberal arts colleges have built their identity on the student-faculty relationship. But what did that mean? Colleges like Transylvania could no longer sell a distinct curriculum, but it could sell to students the experience of learning. The modern idea of faculty-student relationships and student to faculty ratios are important because it is one of the only ways liberal arts colleges could distinguish their identity. The faculty would lead students, as *The Crimson* noted, to discover “an outlet and develop talent within the soul...for the enrichment of the total person.”<sup>338</sup> Students saw the value of receiving an education from liberal colleges and how the process of becoming a learner distinguished Transylvania from a public institution. Repackaging such an idea into a selling point would take years and would still not be able to justify a higher price tag in certain economic climates, but the financial turbulence of 1970s prompted liberal arts colleges to consider what made them distinct from public research colleges.

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In time, the age of an institution became one of the easiest ways for a college to distinguish its identity. The newest additions to higher education—branch campuses and community colleges—are distinguished by their relatively low price. In 2016, The National Center for Education estimated the average cost of attending branch campus

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<sup>337</sup> Brian Williams, “Identifying and Overcoming the Three Central Challenges for Liberal Arts Colleges,” editorial, *ACM News*, March 03, 2016, [https://tagteam.harvard.edu/hub\\_feeds/1915/feed\\_items/2161623](https://tagteam.harvard.edu/hub_feeds/1915/feed_items/2161623).

<sup>338</sup> Crimson Yearbook 1969, 17.

fulltime is \$5,000 while a liberal arts college is more in the range of \$37,000.<sup>339</sup> Despite some moderate differences between various institutions, many liberal arts colleges are looking to their past to compete in the present. On the whole, liberal arts colleges share a distinct history that reaches back several hundred years—some even pre-dating the founding of the United States. Such is the case of Transylvania.

Prior to its bicentennial celebration in 1980, Transylvania began a campaign to underscore the college's traditions. Along with a drive to raise \$30,000,000, Transylvania's Curators, administrators and faculty worked to promote an image of steadfastness in the face of dwindling popularity for liberal arts colleges. The University of Kentucky Press published a narrative history of Transylvania in 1975 to coincide with the achievement and to underscore how the college's history is a key part of its present identity. "Transylvania University, which was born during that crucial era," reads the introduction, "should also commemorate its bicentennial with a new history of its long and colorful existence...Despite a history of adversities that might have spelled demise for most institutions, this University has battled courageously and successfully to overcome them."<sup>340</sup>

Transylvania's efforts to publicize its past illustrate a collective movement to fortify the identity of liberal arts colleges. Scholars, journalists and college administrators have worked together for nearly thirty years in an attempt to explain how the traditions and history of liberal arts colleges worked to create an overall identity of

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<sup>339</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, "Total fall enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by attendance status, sex of student, and control of institution: Selected years, 1947 through 2025," *Digest of Education Statistics*, Table 303.10.

<sup>340</sup> Wright, *Tutor to the West*, x.

excellence built on faculty-student relationships, small campuses and the general education curriculum. Francis Oakley, the former President of Williams College, argues the question of “what is it that we are?” is the single biggest issue facing liberal arts colleges and the one that elicits a tidal wave of responses.<sup>341</sup> Oakley contends the general public and scholars alike believe the liberal arts college is wrapped up in a narrative of decline—a story whose character is in a downward spiral from a peak of success—but in reality, many liberal arts colleges are took a disproportionate financial loss in the Great Recession.<sup>342</sup> The liberal arts college may seem to be in a state of decline, but most commentators will agree that a degree from a liberal arts college holds more value in the eyes of future employers and indicates success in graduate degree programs—something that has remained true in American higher education despite a flurry of political, social and cultural changes.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Francis Oakley, “Prologue: The Liberal Arts College: Identity, Variety, Destiny,” 5-6, *Liberal Arts Colleges in American Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities* (New York: ACLS, 2005); Victor E. Ferrall, Jr., *Liberal Arts at the Brink* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>342</sup> Francis Oakley, *Community of Learning: The American College and the Liberal Arts Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Mark Roche, *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 1-14; Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution*, 2d ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1969), 20-27.

<sup>343</sup> To read more about the ongoing discussion of educational excellence at liberal arts colleges, see: Fareed Zakara, *In Defense of a Liberal Education*; *Community of Learning: The American College and the Liberal Arts Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); *A Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1994); David W. Breneman, “Are We Losing Our Liberal Arts Colleges?” *College Board Review* 156 (Summer 1990): 16-21, 29; David W. Breneman, *Liberal Arts Colleges: Thriving, Surviving, or Endangered?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994), esp. ch. 1, 1-19, and appendix A, 138-61. Cf. Michael Delucchi, “Liberal Arts’ Colleges and the Myth of Uniqueness,” *Journal of Higher Education* 68.4 (1997): 414- 26; Hugh Hawkins, “The

In other words, the identity of liberal arts colleges should be tied to the past because its model of education is worth preserving, even as it is slowly disappearing with the growth of specialization and need for technical training. Liberal arts colleges have a distinct history characterized by continually surviving crises by evolving to meet student needs. What observers find is not a continual march of progress where faculty, administrators and students stayed true to the mission of their institution, but instead an evolution of curriculum to meet the needs of a particular moment. The curricular identity of Transylvania changed as the economy evolved after World War II, and students entered higher education to receive the training they needed to enter the workforce. If anything, the identity of the liberal arts college is characterized by the ability to change and to meet the needs of the present.

There are few similarities between the economy of today and the humming postwar economy of the 1950s, and another revision of the liberal arts curriculum is necessary, but the liberal arts college itself must remain true to the traditions of ensuring students are given the room to learn skills such as writing, analysis and empathy through the structure of a liberal arts classroom. From their founding to the present, liberal arts colleges have supported intellectual development through faculty-student relationships—

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Making of the Liberal Arts College Identity," *Daedalus* 128.1 (1999), 15-16, 21; Robert A. McCaughey, *Scholars and Teachers: The Faculties of Select Liberal Arts Colleges and Their Place in American Higher Learning* (New York: Barnard College, 1995), esp. ix, 41-46, 92-93, 103-05; Kenneth P. Ruscio, "The Distinctive Scholarship of the Selective Liberal Arts College," *Journal of Higher Education* 58.2 (1987)

a tradition should not be dismantled for the sake of educational progress. It is, by all accounts, the true distinction of a liberal arts college.

Higher education is not a static entity, but rather an evolving, collective institution. The addition of community colleges, technical training programs and branch campuses are a result of tech-based jobs in the growing information economy. The true challenge facing all liberal arts colleges is the same as it was at the dawn of postwar America, but the circumstances are different. An educational infrastructure did not exist to accommodate careers in the STEM fields or social sciences, so colleges and universities had to provide the skills students needed or face going out of business. In the case of Transylvania, the college would have most likely gone bankrupt without restructuring their curriculum to accommodate student choice, general education courses for vocational training and pre-professional training.

But the liberal arts curriculum is no longer what it used to be. Transylvania's pre- and post-war curriculum share little in common, and the same is said to be true for hundreds of other liberal arts colleges. A majority of liberal arts colleges have continued to move away from the liberal arts curriculum to accommodate courses in STEM and other technology-based pre-professional careers.<sup>344</sup> Several studies indicate nearly 100 liberal arts colleges have moved away from a traditional liberal arts curriculum based on the arts and sciences model of education since 1990.<sup>345</sup> Yet the traditional definition of a

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<sup>344</sup> See: Vicki L. Baker, Roger G. Baldwin and Sumedha Baker, "Where Are They Now? Revisiting Breneman's Study of Liberal Arts Colleges" *Liberal Education* Vol. 98 No. 3.

<sup>345</sup> Michael Delucchi, "'Liberal Arts' Colleges and the Myth of Uniqueness." *Journal of Higher Education* 68 (4): 14–26; M. Riddle, L. Turk-Bicakci, and C. S. Levy, "From the Liberal to the Practical Arts in American Colleges and Universities: Organizational Analysis and Curricular Change," *Journal of Higher Education* 76 (2) 2005, 151–80; C.



liberal arts curriculum used in the last fifty years is different from the definition used fifty years prior. The recent history of liberal arts colleges is characterized by a changing identity, and leaders in higher education should embrace the ability of liberal arts colleges to evolve.

Moreover, changes to the liberal arts and liberal arts colleges that took place throughout the entirety of the twentieth century gives perspective to the current crisis, which is why a historical examination of the liberal arts college is needed. The choice facing liberal arts colleges in the current economic crisis is similar to the one facing the same institutions seventy-years ago. For Transylvania, the choice brought decades of prosperity, but it also led to a reminder all institutions should heed: evolving to meet the needs of the present is different than compromising a college's identity. Liberal arts colleges must adapt and meet the needs of students, which may mean changes to the way

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Morphew and M. Hartley, "Mission Statements: A Thematic Analysis of Rhetoric Across Institutional Type." *Journal of Higher Education* 77 (3) 2003: 456–71; R. Shoenberg, "How Not to Defend Liberal Arts Colleges," *Liberal Education* 95 (1) 2009: 56–9; B. Spellman, "The Resilient Liberal Arts College." *Inside Higher Ed*, July 2009; E. Stone, (2004, November 12). Liberal arts: Vocation vs. vocational. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51(2), B5; Rick Matthews, (1977). The church-related college: An agenda for the twenty-first century. *Journal of General Education*, 29(1), 29-36; Vincent Diconti, "Experiential Education in a Knowledge-Based Economy: Is it Time to Reexamine Liberal Arts," *Journal of General Education*, 53(3/4), 167-183.

institutions fundraise, the demography of the student body, the types of courses taught in the classroom and buildings constructed on campus, but the small campus and faculty-student relationship will still anchor a liberal arts education.

Therefore, those who want to solve the current crisis facing liberal arts colleges need to access the past before moving towards the future. The history of the liberal arts shows that the liberal arts curriculum and the liberal arts college are two distinct entities that work in tandem to create the experience of receiving a liberal education. The liberal arts curriculum is meant to empower students to meet the present needs of their world, which is why it continues to exist, but not in its original form. Liberal arts colleges, however, provide the structure to implement the curriculum. The case of Transylvania illustrates how the identity of a liberal arts college has barely changed since its founding and remain distinguished from all other segments of American higher education.

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