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University Without Walls: A Novel Approach to Higher Education

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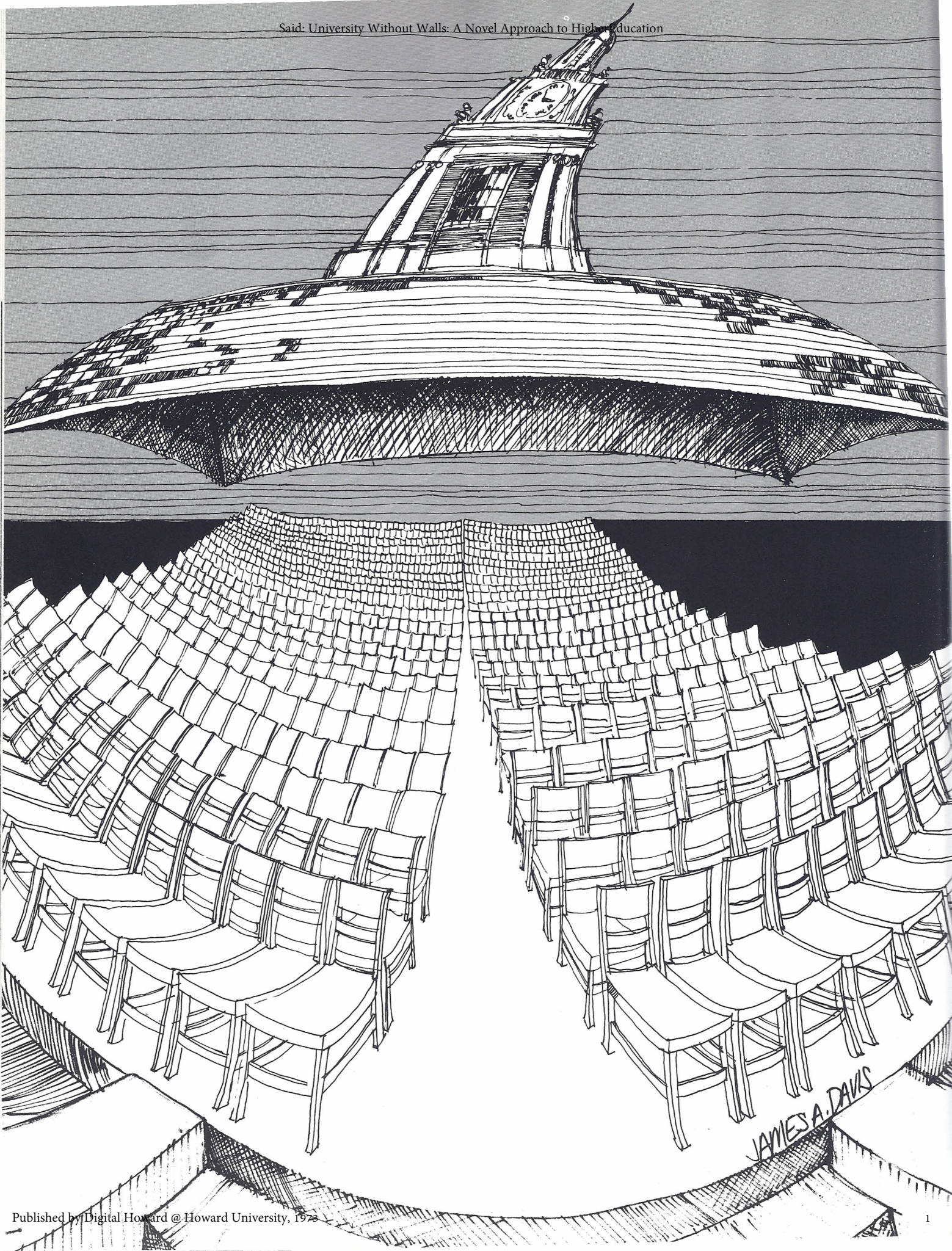
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University Without Walls:

A Novel Approach To Higher Education

At age 43 and a successful career in a field that rewards him with a lucrative five-figure annual salary, Howard S. Gloyd hardly fits the picture of a candidate for an undergraduate degree in sociology. Nor does Ruth B. Powers, a 40-year-old registered nurse and candidate for a degree in Allied Health Sciences, or Lloyd Lacy, Chief Security Officer for Howard University and candidate for a degree in business administration.

Yet the three decided sometime ago to earn college credentials by enrolling in a unique and innovative approach to a college degree, the University Without Walls (UWW)—a new concept to higher education that allows working persons to devote full-time to their employment while completing requirements for a degree through independent study and research. And, at their own pace.

The UWW concept was introduced to the nation three years ago at selected colleges and universities to provide mature adults with a chance to earn college credentials.

At Howard University, the UWW was launched in the Fall of 1971. The initial enrollment of five students has increased to 100 men and women of varying ages and professions, all of them baccalaureate degree candidates.

The Howard UWW is headed for success. A year after it began, it graduated one of the first students to enroll, 71-year-old Eugene Dynner, perhaps the oldest student ever to earn a degree at Howard. Mr. Dynner received the Bachelor of Arts in Art History in June, 1972, after one year of study. He concentrated in Chinese Elements in Maya Art under the supervision of the College of Fine Arts. Four more students in political science, art, sociology and education graduated this year.

A New Concept in Higher Education

At first it was just an idea. Then a plan. Now the University Without Walls. The UWW concept is a revolutionary approach to adult higher education. Its popularity is increasing each year.

At Howard, like the others in the country, the UWW is part of a consortium of several institutions of higher education under the umbrella of the Union of Experimenting Colleges and Universities at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Nationally, more than 3,000 men and women—some successful in business and other fields—are enrolled as UWW students at 23 colleges and universities coast-to-coast.

Besides Howard, the other institutions participating in this experiment in education include, Morgan State College, Baltimore, Md.; University of California, Berkeley; Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; and Goddard College, Plainfield, Vt.

The Howard UWW—which was launched with a \$40,000 joint grant by the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Office of Education but is now funded through the University budget—is the only one of its kind in Washington, D. C.

"All of the students in our program are self-directed, well-motivated individuals who have crystalized their thoughts and are able to articulate their educational goals," said Mrs. Anita E. Hackney, Director.

Designed as an "experiment in individual instruction," the UWW allows students to attend classes only when necessary, for audit or credit purposes. The focus is not on traditional classroom instruction but rather on independent learning, internships, apprenticeships, field work or research in areas of interest to each student.

The students are trained in an atmosphere that offers "a mixture of learning activities, including seminars, workshops, community projects or field work," Mrs. Hackney explained. As an example, she cited one Howard student who spent three weeks in Europe researching urban problems for a class project.

All UWW students, Mrs. Hackney noted, are encouraged to learn from every conceivable experience of benefit to their stated goals.

Students meet frequently with their advisors to review progress they made, as in this scene of a meeting between **Howard Gloyd** and his advisor, **Dr. John Rier**, Associate Dean of the Graduate School. Standing next to Gloyd is **Anita Hackney**.

Ruth Powers, a registered nurse who is pursuing a degree in Allied Health Sciences, is one of few University employees enrolled in UWW.

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"This is a different kind of college education. It is not a cure-all concept. It provides an alternate means for those who want a college degree," Mrs. Hackney explained.

"The University Without Walls is an innovative approach to an undergraduate degree, which does not have the usual spatial and temporal limits and does not consider the classroom to be the principal instrument of instruction. For the classroom, we utilize the city, the nation and the world," she emphasized.

Mrs. Hackney said the UWW is designed for: "self-directed, well-motivated students encompassing a broad citizenry of all ages, backgrounds and interests." And those accepted to participate usually are individuals who have demonstrated the ability to benefit from this newest approach to a college degree.

Some of the participants, like Mr. Gloyd or Mr. Lacy, are individuals who have achieved success by sheer determination and hard work in a society where the individual's worth most often is measured by scholastic achievement first, ability second, hence the need for a college de-

gree. Some are individuals who have not yet ascended to the top of the occupational ladder but feel they need university education to reach the upper echelon of their occupation.

When Mr. Gloyd was asked if a college degree was necessary to prove his ability and competency, he replied: "I don't need it (the degree), but the Establishment needs it. For a person like me to stay in business, I have to demonstrate that I have been accredited by an institution. I have worked in the field of social work for over 20 years but never had a chance to solidify that background with an academic degree."

Mr. Gloyd, a former Methodist minister, now works as youth training director for a national organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C. He said the UWW represents "a realm of reality because of its clear objectives."

Eligibility and Acceptance

Who is eligible for the UWW? Anyone without a formal college degree, including students already in college.

To be accepted, the applicant must

state a definite goal; demonstrate maturity, show ability, and above all, be determined.

Acceptance in the program is not based on test scores. But each applicant must present a planned program of study in the area of concentration relevant to the stated goal, and enter into a "contract" with the UWW.

Each application to the UWW is reviewed thoroughly by Mrs. Hackney (with the help of her administrative staff) and faculty-University officials associated with the UWW before it is approved.

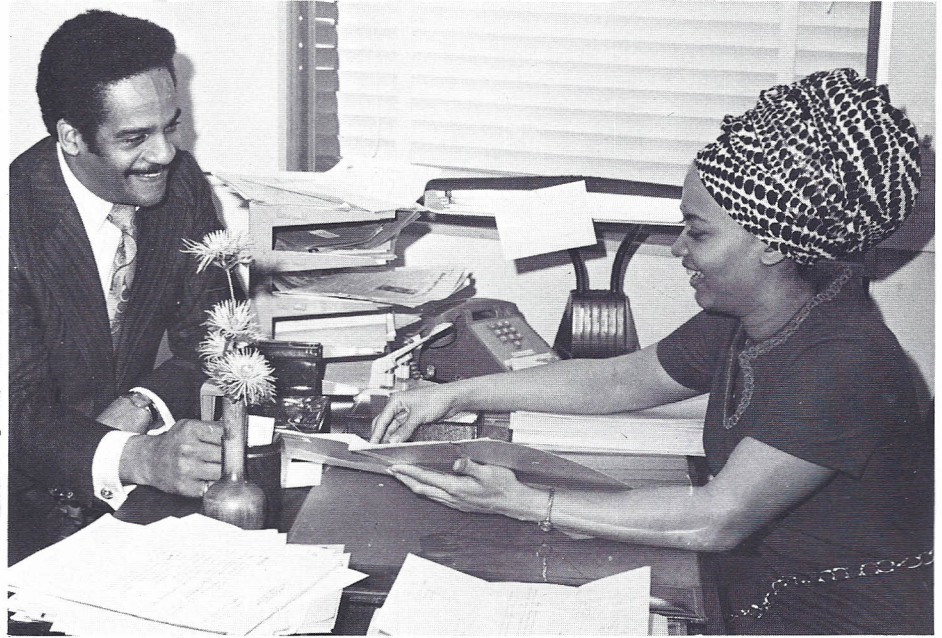
All accepted students are required to attend the admissions workshop, followed by individual interviews by teams of advisors, students already enrolled in the UWW, members of the University Without Walls Advisory Committee and the UWW faculty.

The student begins the study program after the "contract" is accepted and approved by the Director and Deans of Schools or Colleges. An official log in which all program-related activities are recorded is kept by the student and is reviewed regularly by the advisor.

Lloyd Lacy wears two hats at Howard, that of Chief Security Officer and that of a student in the University Without Walls.



Applications and correspondence are handled by the administrative staff, such as **Janet Walker**, seen here assisting **Gloyd**.



The degree is awarded after the completed work is accepted by a reviewing committee. Depending on each student's initiative, background and work schedule, a year or more of study is required for graduation. The UWW tuition is the same as that of the open university (full time) program.

The Future

The future of the UWW at Howard seems to be bright. According to Mrs. Hackney, more students are expected to enroll in the future. The expansion of the UWW will depend on the number of faculty advisors available, she pointed out.

"The academic community thus far has been gracious in assisting us. Witness the growing number of advisors who have welcomed this new challenge," she explained.

"We need commitments from additional faculty members to enable us to offer the support system vital to the growth and development of each student," she emphasized.



The UWW made it possible for **Marian Jones** to continue working full-time as a secretary while earning a psychology degree.