“WE ARE ALL ISLANDERS TO BEGIN WITH”

A CENTURY OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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The image contains a text snippet discussing the university's history and the importance of learning and teaching. It mentions that the world has become deeply and frustratingly local but also more global due to a pandemic of global proportions. The text reflects on the university's history and the ideals of learning and teaching.

Additional text within the image:

"We are all islanders to begin with": A Century of International Learning at the University of Chicago

Part I: A Sense of Place

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An early version of this essay was presented on October 20, 2020, as a Report to the College Faculty. John W. Boyer is the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in History and the College, and Dean of the College.
our faculty and students to interact with the wider world in search of new knowledge and cultural understanding.

This culture of engagement with the world has grown energetically over the last twenty years. In that time the University of Chicago has developed a unique and rich set of global institutions and connections, and, in spite of the pandemic, we will not reverse course and turn inward, onto ourselves. Quite the opposite, we intend to continue to pursue an ambitious and aggressive strategy in engaging the world. Most recently we signed a formal purchase agreement to build a new research and teaching center in Paris for all of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, creating a host of new scientific and educational opportunities for the University. The new Center in Paris is a subject to which I will return later in my remarks.

Yet our recent movement into the world has been all the more unique because of the vital role played by our students as well as our faculty. How do we explain this exceptionality? Whence have we come, and where are we going?

This year happens to be the twenty-fifty anniversary of the issuance of the letter by President Hugo F. Sonnenschein to the University community on the future of the College. It is no exaggeration to call Sonnenschein’s letter from April 1996 a decisive turn in the recent history of the University, for it has contributed powerfully to the opportunities and resources that we welcome as established features of the institution today, including those for international engagement. In many ways the letter must be understood against the backdrop of the University’s downward financial trajectory and the limited role of undergraduate education and student life since the 1950s, whose gravity became apparent as Sonnenschein’s administration took office in 1993, facing several years of projected budget deficits. In examining these problems, then Chief Financial Officer Lawrence Furnstahl produced an extensive set of data showing that these large deficits were merely symptoms of structural problems connected to several decades of insufficient tuition revenue, fund-raising, and endowment growth, all of which implicated the College.

The University was not generating the revenue to sustain its grand ambitions, and its financial position relative to peer institutions was declining across several trend lines as a result. The pragmatic adjustments made by earlier administrations, while vital and important, were no longer meeting the scale of the problem. Furnstahl’s data became a critical part of campus discussions between 1996 and 1999 and informed the mandate for two senior faculty committees convened to explore the future of graduate and undergraduate education, respectively. Both of these focused on the pool of applications, the adequacy of facilities, and the availability of instructional resources. On the key question of the future size of the College the undergraduate committee was unable to reach a consensus, and focused its recommendations instead on a variety of concerns that would have to be...
addressed in the event of an increase in enrollment (see fig. 1). This outcome left the final decision about an increased level of enrollment for the College to the president and the board. In the face of the chronic trends outlined by Furnstahl, but also with confidence that a larger College would be an immense, long-term asset to the University, President Sonnenschein decided to take decisive action. Following consultation with the Board of Trustees about the future of the University’s demography, he announced a formal plan to add 1,000 students to the College within a ten-year time horizon, assuming that the applicant pool could be deepened and expanded to include more talented and committed students.

On April 30, 1996, Sonnenschein sent a letter to the University faculty arguing that the “brilliant past” which the University had drawn from its “fierce commitment to ideas and intellectual community” would be difficult to sustain in the future without generating new revenues for investments in research facilities, libraries, classrooms, salaries, and financial aid. It was clear that the current financial structure, in which “tuition does not cover salaries and endowment does not grow at a robust rate,” could not provide these resources “either in the near term or the far term.” To secure a brilliant future, Sonnenschein recommended giving “heightened priority to collegiate education both inside and outside the classroom,” a path that would make “the College more frequently the school of choice for the most talented and committed students” and allow an expansion of the College “from our current 3,550 undergraduates to 4,500 within ten years.” The task at hand was not simply to increase revenue, but to expand and improve the quality of liberal education, a social mission that was richly deserving of the University’s resources and consistent with its history. The kind of education that the University was uniquely positioned to offer had never been more needful than in the present time of “dynamic change in knowledge and technology,” where liberally educated men and women were a crucial resource for “a world in which hope, respected leadership, and thoughtful citizenship are in short supply, and in which prejudice, fear, and the manipulation of public opinion are all too prevalent.” The University of Chicago, with its reputation for education in critical thinking and the thoughtful formation of values, curricular innovation, interdisciplinarity, and its carefully crafted Core, had the responsibility to communicate to the broader public “the profound worth” it had to offer, beginning with reaching the most talented students and convincing them to apply and matriculate.

For the University, reaching these students would require a changed disposition toward undergraduates, with recognition that “a student’s life encompasses more than coursework,” and that “they will pursue many career paths” and “do not fall short of their aspirations as learners when they decide to become bankers or film producers instead of professors.” It would also require a curriculum that attended to students’ goals and intellectual interests “before and after graduation,” as well as investments in student community through new residence halls, food services, nonacademic programming, and recreational facilities. Sonnenschein closed his letter with a challenge: while this course of action was not without risk, the greater risk was “to remain on a course that will not sustain excellence. Belief in the values that make the University of Chicago distinctive must be translated into actions that provide the necessary support for these values.”

Faculty reaction to the April 1996 letter was divisive and generated a variety of fascinating reports about the University’s cultural balance, historic identity, and capacity for growth. These claims converged with other issues in undergraduate education to fuel intensive debate and

1. The full text of the Sonnenschein letter follows this essay.
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controversy for several years. Those events are now distant enough from our own time to have settled into received narratives and interpretations of motives. It is significant that, while Sonnenschein did cite adverse financial trends as one major reason for expansion, he also stressed that a larger, stronger, and better supported College would serve the cultural welfare of the University as a whole, fostering the scholarly and curricular eminence of the institution in diverse and unexpected ways. Certainly, the last twenty-five years have seen rich intersections between faculty research and teaching and many domains of campus life that have flourished with a larger undergraduate presence, such as student career preparation, residential life, participation in the arts, engagement with the city and region of Chicago, and international education.

Seen from the vantage point of 2020–21, the results of these interventions have been stunning: not only did we achieve Sonnenschein’s initial goal of 4,500 students, but we have pushed forward to a new steady state for the College of 7,000 students (see fig. 2), which puts Chicago solidly within the middle of our peer group in the Ivy Plus—slightly larger than Princeton, Brown, and Yale, about the same size as Harvard and Stanford, and still smaller than Penn, Cornell, and Columbia. The current level of undergraduate enrollments will now become the new permanent size of the College in future decades.

One of the concerns about the 1996 plan was whether the College could significantly increase its enrollment and applicant pool while maintaining rigorous standards for admission and the highly intellectual nature of the student culture, which would require the reversal of several decades of negative public perceptions about the quality of undergraduate student life. In light of this, it is worth considering how the College has evolved in terms of several indicators since 1996, beginning with admissions statistics that capture the size, demography, and academic quality of the classes that we welcome to campus each year. If we examine data for the Class of 1999, the last admitted to the College before Sonnenschein’s plan, we see a baseline of 1,009 students who joined our community, bringing our degree-seeking enrollment that year to 3,554. Not all the metrics that we collect today are available, but this class would seem to support the argument of those days that Chicago applicants were “self-selecting,” in that it began with a pool of 5,487 applications, of which 3,182, or 58 percent, were given offers of admission. The student body that they joined had a strongly midwestern and even local character. Among the matriculants of autumn 1995, 46 percent came from the Midwest and 28 percent from the state of Illinois, while international students accounted for just 5 percent. The South and West combined for 26 percent of incoming students. In terms of

![Figure 2: Enrollments in Autumn 1995 and Autumn 2020](image)

*College, Division, and Professional Schools/Other enrollments are degree-seeking students only.*
academic strength, the Class of 1999 brought an impressive average SAT score, then the best indicator available, of 1,297.²

By the midpoint of our story in 2008–9, the confidence that University leaders had placed in the College’s ability to attract the most talented and committed students with a powerful approach to liberal education had borne fruit. Our degree-seeking enrollment had reached 5,026, surpassing Sonnenschein’s initial goal of 4,500 students, with 1,320 first-year and transfer students entering that autumn. Far from showing a decline in selectivity, this class demonstrated a dramatic improvement, beginning with 12,397 applications (see fig. 3). The acceptance rate had fallen to 28 percent, while our yield rate, indicating students who accepted their offers of admission, had risen to 38 percent (see fig. 4). Nor had this growth come at the cost of academic quality. The average SAT score for matriculants had risen steadily to 1,411 and 86 percent had been in the top tenth of their high school graduating class.

This decade of growth set the stage for even more striking gains coming out of the great recession of 2007–9, in which our brilliant Admissions Office, now capitalizing on the availability of distinctive majors, career programs, and opportunities for international study, brought to our campus an undergraduate body that in my view surpasses any other in the nation. In 2019–20, we reached the top of our peer group by most measures of competitiveness, with 34,641 total applications and 2,137 offers of admission, creating an acceptance rate of just over 6 percent.

These are important and decisive confirmations of Sonnenschein’s argument about the unique value and attractiveness of a Chicago liberal arts education. They are all the more compelling in that our yield reached

² The Class of 1999 took the SAT tests before the College Board, which directs the SAT, “recentered” scores in April 1995; the highest pre-1995 score was 1,600, the highest post-1995 is 2,400. See Neil J. Dorans, The Recentering of SAT Scales and Its Effects on Score Distributions and Score Interpretations, College Board Research Report No. 2002-11 (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 2002), www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-02-04-Dorans.pdf.
81 percent, and that these students, who have made Chicago their first choice, are exceptionally prepared for the rigors of our curriculum, as many of my colleagues have witnessed in the classroom. Average SAT scores have risen to 1,528 and fully 99 percent of entering students come from the top tenth of their graduating classes. Our students are as likely to come from the Northeast, South, or West of the country as from the Midwest, and 18 percent matriculate from home addresses outside of the United States. While we do not carry out our instructional work in pursuit of these numbers, they demonstrate the attractiveness of Chicago’s undergraduate degree and underscore the value of the teaching and mentorship that each of you contributes to its academic programs.

Within the strengthening of the admissions pool we see equally dramatic transformations in the student body that would have seemed unlikely in 1996. The expansion of the College’s financial aid structures, largely through the philanthropy of our alumni to the Odyssey Program, has been one of the key features in opening our community to students of limited means, many of whom are the first in their families to attend College. Since 2007, the Odyssey Program has enabled these students to attend and participate in all of our campus opportunities without the burden of educational debt. As a result, roughly one quarter of every incoming class is comprised of Odyssey students, totaling more than 5,000 sponsored students today, and the average grant award to students has more than tripled, amounting to 61 percent of the average student budget. We glimpse the cumulative scale of this change by tracking total institutional expenditures on undergraduate aid, which have risen from $22 million in 1995–96 to $133 million today. These are strong indicators of economic diversity, and they have gone hand in hand with a movement toward ethnic and racial diversity on campus. In the student body of the mid 1990s, nearly 60 percent of enrolled students identified

Figure 5: Racial and Ethnic Profile of the College, 1994–95 and 2019–20

Figure 6: Six-Year Graduate Rates, 1996–97 to 2019–20
as White, roughly one quarter as Asian, and less than 5 percent self-identified as either Black or Hispanic/Latino. The intervening decades have witnessed a steady reconfiguring of this profile, such that among the matriculants of the Class of 2023, 5.6 percent identified as Black and 14.3 percent as Hispanic/Latino and 7 percent as multiracial (see fig. 5). Hence as our student body has grown larger, more competitive, and better prepared academically, it has also become more diverse, welcoming ideas and perspectives that have greatly enriched our campus and intellectual community (see fig. 6).

I want to turn now to issues in the quality of student life and experience identified in Sonnenschein’s letter that are linked to our preparation of students for civic and professional leadership beyond the classroom. The evolution of our study abroad programs will feature prominently in the final portion of this essay, but suffice it to say here that the design of our model of international education in the late 1990s was embedded in the spirit of thoughtful reform that characterized the plan for the expansion of the College, with a commitment to support and preserve the unique structures and rigor of our curriculum.

The vehicle for growth was our Civilization Abroad programs, first launched in 1997, which enabled our students to study abroad while continuing to fulfill requirements for graduation. In that year, total participation in study abroad came to 123, but the next decade witnessed an upward curve to 417, and in 2018–19 we were able to enroll 624 students in a vastly expanded menu of faculty-led Civilization, Core, and department-based programs in sites around the globe (see fig. 7). In today’s College nearly 60 percent of our undergraduates will study abroad at least once.

We see similar trajectories in the area of student career preparation, which faculty committees and alumni surveys in the early 1990s had identified as a point of serious dissatisfaction for our students. In the late 1990s the College launched a series of initiatives to create a comprehensive professional advising and support program for students, beginning with the Jeff Metcalf Internship Program that sought to create fully-funded summer internships for undergraduates. If our Career Advising was virtually non-existent in 1996, the Metcalf Program, in combination with a set of nine imaginative and industry-specific career programs, has now created the most coherent and ambitious Career Advising program in the United States, with robust engagement from our students, alumni, and faculty. The number of paid internships has grown from seven in the inaugural year of 1997 to 108 in 2004 and 3,000 in 2019 (see fig. 8). Nearly 40 percent of our undergraduates participated in the program in 2019, holding internships in 150 US cities and nearly 60 countries.

Figure 7: Participation in Study Abroad Programs and Summer International Travel Grants (SITG), 1983–84 to 2018–19
We see the true impact of these programs in our students’ successful transitions to professional lives, whether through employment or graduate study. In 2003, when we first began to track these outcomes, 58 percent of graduates had confirmed their plans. By 2019, that number had risen to 96 percent.

Finally, as an act of historical appraisal, we can question whether these transformations have had the intended impact on the University’s financial security and stability, with all of the projected resources to sustain institutional brilliance. In 1995 the College generated $37.6 million in net tuition, whereas last year the College attained over $230 million, all the while increasing the levels of financial aid, student support, and student services, maintaining our robust dedication to academic freedom, and enhancing the quality of our curriculum and degree programs (see figs. 9 and 10).

Writing in April of 2001 Professor David Kirp of the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, offered...
a perceptive analysis of Hugo Sonnenschein’s presidency, concluding that only a significant passage of time could determine who had been on the right side of history: Sonnenschein, with his stress on the need for a larger and more competitive College, or his faculty critics, who believed that such a course would damage the intellectual and cultural vitality of the institution. The distance of twenty-five years allows for such an assessment. In my personal view, the first prediction—which has resulted in a vibrant, highly competitive College that assembles 7,000 bright young scholars from across the nation and the world and that has become the heart of the University’s educational endeavors—was clearly on the right side of history (see fig. 11). We might conclude, as William Gladstone said in 1866 of the wait for universal voting rights in nineteenth-century England, “time is on our side.”

Among the many changes that have marked the last twenty-five years, the University’s expanded presence in Europe and in Asia has been particularly decisive. This array of changes on the global front could only have happened in the context of the many other structural and cultural transformations that have marked the College since 1995—they are all integrated and interconnected and ultimately of a single piece. A College of 3,400 students would never have been in the position to launch the menu of initiatives in international education that we have undertaken since 2000. In the remainder of my remarks today I want to focus on this history of the University’s international origins and traditions, but also draw some lessons for the present and the future, particularly for the new Center in Paris. My text draws upon some elements of an earlier report on international education that I delivered thirteen years ago, in October 2007, but with many additions and revisions.

The new vision for the modern university as a site for independent scholarly research and where knowledge itself would possess a high national value was thus radically innovative. This new perspective was anchored in the admiration for the authority of science that was widespread in nineteenth-century culture, but it also reflected the ambitious statism of the liberal constitutional governments of the mid- to late nineteenth century, which saw universities as supremely useful places to cultivate the intellectual maturity and the utilitarian talent of new professional elites who were needed to manage the increasingly complex economic, cultural, and judicial institutions of the state. The modern university was also founded on the increasing prosperity of the middle and upper middle classes—the Bürgertum—who over the course of the nineteenth century needed and wanted deeper and more effective educational resources to bolster their social standing, both for self-improvement and cultural cultivation, but also to enable them to achieve superior professional outcomes. Finally, the research universities contributed mightily to populating denser and more dynamic public spheres of opinion, discourse, and knowledge about an increasingly complex civil society, one based on new forms of commercial achievement, industrial innovation, urban growth, and legal and bureaucratic complexity. As state institutions, the universities saw themselves and were seen by their advocates as key vehicles to advance the impact of the new liberal constitutional states by elevating and enriching new kinds of merit-based social and cultural elites.

Wilhelm von Humboldt argued in 1810 that “higher academic institutions are the pinnacle of a nation’s moral culture. This notion follows from the calling of such institutions: to pursue knowledge in its broadest and deepest sense of the word and devote themselves to the use of knowledge not as material arranged according to particular external purposes, but rather as autonomous, self-arranging material of intellectual and
ethical formation.” Of course, the actual evolution of German universities was complex, and they did not self-reflexively draw upon Humboldt’s ideas alone. The balance between teaching and research was always fragile. Nor did the German universities lack an often rowdy student culture that was only marginally concerned with genuine learning. Nor were all faculty equal in their opportunities to do research, since the tenured full professors in the German system (Ordinarien) enjoyed enormous prestige and authority, while much of the teaching was done by untenured lecturers (Privatdozenten) who were poorly compensated and who lacked any semblance of real job security. But over time the ideal of the German university as a state-funded, but self-governing civic entity, dedicated to creative and often transformational research by men who would also regularly conduct normal classroom instruction, gained hold as the normal way of doing business. This ideal generated a level of scholarly accomplishment and cultural distinction that was without parallel in the world. It was also a model that had a profound impact in America.

The young Americans who flocked to the German universities in the nineteenth century to gain advanced degrees, including more than a third of the original faculty of the University of Chicago, were conscious of their distinctiveness, and sought to emulate it back home. As George Bancroft wrote about his experiences in 1820, “I need not say, how fine the schools of Prussia are; they are acknowledged to be the finest in Germany. Here in Berlin a great many new ideas are going into application. … I need not assure you how happy I am in having an opportunity of studying the science of education in a city where it has been the subject of so much discussion and the government have done so much, have done everything they could to realize the vast advantages about to result from the reform in the institutions of instruction. No government knows so well how to create universities and high schools as the Prussian.” The German model thus proved more compelling than its French or English counterparts. (In France, universities in the nineteenth century were weak and dispirited, with more prestige and financial support being accorded to the Grandes écoles and specialized research institutes; whereas in England, the traditional model of the Oxbridge college was suitable for the socialization of gentleman elites, but not for the calling of advanced research.)

Yet the young Americans who visited Germany soon realized that the universities were deeply oriented toward professional-vocational training, not what we could call the general culture of the liberal arts. True, faculty leaders of the German universities around 1900 may have valued the Humboldtian ideal of the unity of teaching and research, but most of their institutions had become large certification machines for students who wanted to pursue a career in the civil service or in one of the learned professions. They were hardly idealized sites where liberal arts learning could be cultivated. Further, given the strongly hierarchical structure of their faculties, with the domination of a small number of full professors over a large mass of underpaid assistants and associates who did not enjoy civil service protection, they were not ideal places for the intellectual or pedagogical development of young faculty. The prominent American economist Richard T. Ely, who studied in Berlin, captured this point well 5.

5. Ibid., 134–35.
when he wrote in 1880 that “a German university is, from beginning to end, through and through, a professional school. It is a place where young men prepare to earn their ‘bread and butter,’ as the Germans say, in practical life. It is not a school which pretends or strives to develop in a general way the intellectual powers, and give its students universal culture. This is a point which should be clearly understood by all trying to Germanize our institutions.” Ely noted that this phenomenon was reflected in the behavior of students, who rarely enrolled for lectures or courses that were not tested in state exams. Even noteworthy professors, famous for their research, might find their courses badly attended if their lectures were not relevant for the respective state examinations taken by students who wished to enter careers in law, medicine, science, or secondary school (Gymnasium) teaching. For Ely, the German institution most closely similar to the American college in its quest for “general intellectual training” was the secondary level Gymnasium, not the German research university.

Given such skepticism as that expressed by Ely, the ways in which the new model of the modern German university influenced the late nineteenth-century American universities have generated an often controversial literature. Some scholars believe that there was no single causal process of influence between the German and American “models” of university education, and that if there was a strong German influence it was largely in the conception of professorial authority rather than in specific institutional innovations. Gabriele Lingelbach has argued that the impact of the German model has been exaggerated, and that many of the norms and behavioral models associated with academic life in Germany were not viable in an American context. German models and practices were experienced by American faculty members in a “highly selective and in some cases clearly inaccurate” mode.

What about our experience at the University of Chicago? To the extent that he imagined the new research university, William Rainey Harper drew from his own experiences at Yale, but he was also profoundly influenced by the fact that his teachers at Yale had studied in Germany. Harper initially was quite enthusiastic about encouraging young American scholars to study in Europe, which essentially meant studying in Germany. Thomas Goodspeed later recalled that in the initial organizational period of the University for Harper “it was a recommendation to have studied abroad and earned a higher degree.” According to Goodspeed, Harper even issued agreement forms to prospective younger scholars whom he thought would profit from an academic sojourn in Europe, promising to nominate them for jobs once they returned to Chicago: “In every case in which he made these contracts the prospective President was accustomed to require, or at least very strongly advise, the prospective instructor to go abroad for as long a stay as possible to better his preparation for his future work.”

What did Harper and his Chicago colleagues admire in the German tradition? Their most fundamental assumption was the idea that scientific research in all fields should be pursued for its own sake and the parallel

9. Thomas W. Goodspeed, “History of the University of Chicago,” n.d., 43, Thomas W. Goodspeed Papers, box 2, folder 7, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago. All subsequence references are in this collection, unless otherwise noted.
10. Ibid., 67.
idea that the instructor at a university (in contrast to a secondary school or other preparatory academy) must be both an active researcher and a teacher. In ruthless contrast to the practices of the old University of Chicago that had collapsed in 1886, Harper treated his faculty as agents of professional prestige, whose individual and collective attainments, sanctioned by the competitive and meritocratic standards of a new national scholarly community, filled with learned journals, international conferences, and professional organizations, would define the very essence of what the University was. Harper believed in relentless competition based on merit, even if weaker souls found this discomforting. Research was salutary not only as a way of advancing new knowledge but as a way of demonstrating the imagination, the creativity, and the professionalism of the new faculty and of mobilizing and legitimating the expertise of the new University to improve and enrich the civic world of the metropolis. As James Turner and Paul Bernard have argued, research became a fundamental feature of the “normative conception of the university professor” by the 1890s. This image of research as a social and professional prophylactic matched well the rising confidence and prestige of the university-based professoriate in the United States that had coalesced since the 1880s as a new professional community with enhanced scholarly standards and rising levels of compensation, protected by the growing power and authority of the academic disciplines.

Harper well understood that he had the rare chance to launch his project for a new university at a time when a completely new national system of higher education in the United States was being born, which explains his frenzy in spending huge sums of money, even money that he did not have, as quickly as possible to push his schemes forward. The creation of the Association of American Universities at the University of Chicago in 1900 reveals that the research universities were premised on a new national system of higher education: they would have international standards and competitive models and would ensure that our new doctoral programs were worthy of German standards. The first organization of the top US research universities ever created, the AAU had fourteen original members, of which eight were founded just before or after 1870. The founding of the AAU was due in part to perceptions that early doctoral education in America did not meet German and broader European quality standards. At the same time, the AAU was also a signal that new American universities had more in common than merely classroom instruction, and they would soon become in fact key agents of the emergence of a new, massive national system of higher education that would eventually create patterns of mobility and talent transfer in which the whole became much more than its parts. Moreover, an explicit national focus was critical as well. For its part Chicago sought to draw graduate students and faculty from across the nation and, in fact, succeeded within twenty years in developing a national constituency of students and alumni, by contrast to the traditional localism of the typical nineteenth-century American college.

A second major influence of the German tradition upon Chicago, aside from the prominence of scholarly research, was the idea that the research university was a key asset to progress in modern life. In March 1904, on the occasion of its fiftieth quarterly convocation, the University of Chicago hosted a much-publicized visit by five distinguished German scholars who, with much rhetorical fanfare, were awarded honorary degrees by President Harper. The head of the Department of Botany, John M. Coulter, was

asked to give a celebratory lecture on the importance of German universities for the new academic culture of the University of Chicago. Coulter argued that the nineteenth-century German research universities had offered their American cousins five important exemplary norms: the idea that the research university is a key asset to progress in modern life; the idea that faculty must enjoy freedom to teach, unencumbered by external pressures (Lehrfreiheit); the idea that students enjoy a similar privilege in determining the course of their studies (Lernfreiheit); the idea that scientific research in all fields should be pursued for its own sake; and the idea that the instructor at a university (in contrast to a secondary school or other preparatory academy) must be both an active researcher and a teacher. Coulter was not indifferent to the cultural or social differences between Germany and America, and he acknowledged that the organizational ideals embodied in the German university would have to be “adapted to the peculiar genius of each people.” The tradition of the college in American higher education was one important structural difference between the two systems, and Coulter admitted that the “imperceptible gradation from college to university that characterizes the American system of higher education is not a thing that can be abolished or that ought to be abolished.” Still, the German university manifested a powerful valence in its dedication to academic freedom, its commitment to independent scientific research, and its belief in the value of enrichment of knowledge, and as such it presented America with a powerful instrument that could curb the irrelevant emotions of mankind, and … introduc[e] that intellectual domination which must analyze problems to their ultimate factors and construct general systems of belief that are rational and effective. It must be evident that scholarship is now attacking, not merely problems of interest to itself, but also those of the most far-reaching importance to mankind; and it is not too much to expect that the results will not only enormously extend the boundaries of knowledge but will also organize upon a scientific basis all political, social, and religious institutions.12

The year 1904 proved to be particularly auspicious for notable meetings of Central European scholars and Chicago faculty. The visit of the distinguished German scholars in March was followed six months later by the visit of another delegation of senior German scholars passing through Chicago in mid-September on the way to the International Exposition and Congress of Arts and Science in St. Louis, of which Professor Albion Small of the University of Chicago was one of the leading organizers.13 Small hoped that bringing together European and American scholars at the congress would not only give senior scholars on each side of the Atlantic a better appreciation of the work of their colleagues on the other continent, but also that the distinguished Europeans would find in the incipient US

12. John M. Coulter, “The Contribution of Germany to Higher Education,” University Record 8 (1903–4): 348–53. Coulter may have been asked by Harper to give this address since he had just spent three months between August and October of 1903 touring various German university research facilities in botany, including Berlin, Bonn, Dresden, Leipzig, and Munich. He found Berlin a “great pushing scheming center for taxon[omy] and floristic ecology with schemes far greater than [the] money supply.” See his “Botanical Notes Made in Europe, Summer of 1903,” entry of August 25, 1903, John M. Coulter Papers, box 2, folder 6. Coulter received his PhD from Indiana State University in 1882. He did not study in Germany, but as the chief editor of the Botanical Gazette Coulter maintained professional contacts with various senior German scientists in the field of botany. During Coulter’s chairmanship of the Department of Botany at Chicago from 1892 to 1925, his department produced 175 PhD dissertations.

13. Chicago Maroon, October 8, 1904, 2.
scholarly attainments a worthy counterpoint to their own scientific efforts. Tellingly, in the process of assembling lists of possible invitees from Europe on the topics of international law, diplomacy, and national administration, Small reported to Harper in April 1903: “I ought to say that the predominance of Germans in the list submitted ought not be to charged in any degree to [Hugo] Münsterberg. The fact is that the prominent scholars are so overwhelmingly German that we have done our best to canvass the other nations in order to make for them a respectable showing.”

If one takes John Coulter’s arguments literally, the early University seemed to owe an enormous debt to the model of the German research university. Certainly many of the early Chicago faculty were also influenced by English scholarship, and the higher research institutions of France were also well known, at least to a few. But the University honored neither the British nor the French systems of higher education with the flurry of honorary degrees and the kind of speeches that Harper and his colleagues accorded to the Germans in March 1904.

In fact, Harper hired few senior foreign scholars directly from Europe. The most prominent was Hermann von Holst, a senior constitutional historian at the University of Freiburg whose short tenure in Chicago left a long-lasting impact on local faculty culture. But the presence of American-born scholars at Chicago who were trained at one or more German universities was extraordinary. Of the 204 members of the faculty of the University of Chicago in 1896–97, eighty-four had taken degrees or advanced training at a European university and seventy of those had studied at one or more German universities. Thus, over one out of every three faculty members at the newly founded University had a direct personal experience with the educational and research practices of the German university system.

Their experiences in Germany varied enormously. James Breasted spent three years in Berlin, assiduously mastering Hebrew, Arabic, and several other languages, plus immersing himself in the arcane details of Near Eastern history and culture. Breasted had first come to know Harper at Yale, which he entered as a graduate student in the fall of 1890 in order to study divinity after graduating from North Central College in Naperville, Illinois. Breasted had actually wanted to devote full time to the study of the Hebrew language, but his father insisted that he complete a course in divinity instead. Breasted cleverly managed to combine both interests, and he came to know Harper over the course of the 1890–91 academic year. Encouraged by Harper to undertake a two-year course of doctoral study in Germany, Breasted left for Berlin in the fall of 1891. While in Berlin, Breasted served as an informal contact for Harper with German bookdealers. Breasted also helped Harper’s wife and children during their residency there, and he tutored Harper’s children in Latin. He initially devoted most of his efforts to learning Coptic, Arabic, and

14. Small’s confidence in American scholarship was evident in the vigorous debate that he conducted with Hugo Münsterberg of Harvard about the conceptual organization of the Congress, in which he insisted that “we are far enough advanced so that we are no longer jealous of estimates passed upon us from the Old World standpoint. But on the other hand we are sure enough of ourselves so that we no more fear the ridicule of the Old World scholars than we do that other bugaboo, the dark, which used to frighten us in our childhood.” Quoted in A. W. Coats, “American Scholarship Comes of Age: The Louisiana Purchase Exposition 1904,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22, no. 3 (September 1961): 408.


Hebrew, quickly establishing a warm relationship with the senior German Egyptologist Adolf Erman. Erman told Breasted that he must remain in Berlin for a three-year period if he hoped to achieve real mastery of his subjects: “He says that I must stay here three years, that one can get no more than a superficial knowledge of the subject in less time, and he is not one of the slow Germans either. The further I go in the subject the more thoroughly I agree with him. It is simply vast and broadens every day.” Breasted flourished in Berlin—taking courses in Egyptian grammar, doing archaeological exercises, and studying Plato and Aristotle—and found all of his work to be “intensely interesting.” He soon received reassuring accolades from his German mentors that he proudly reported back to Harper.

Harper responded by informing Breasted that he was now considered to be a member of the young University’s faculty, to which Breasted charmingly responded: “I was very glad to learn that I am already a member of the University, and I shall be interested to learn further of the nature of the connection.” He came to master German and made many friends. He even met Frances Hart, the young American woman whom he would eventually marry. Not only did he pursue intensive academic work but he also vacationed with Adolf Erman and fellow German doctoral students, hiking through the Harz Mountains in the late summer of 1892 under conditions that he reported to Harper as idyllic.

As his studies progressed, Breasted came to understand more broadly and fully the range of Egyptian history and culture. He proudly informed Harper that “the picture of Egyptian life, history and thought is gradually growing into completeness,” a remarkable anticipation of the great works of synthesis (Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt; History of Egypt; The Conquest of Civilization; The Dawn of Conscience) that Breasted would produce later in his career. He also came to have a more acute appreciation of the significance of scholarly scientific progress that was represented by a scholar of Erman’s caliber:

All investigators before Erman were satisfied with loose translations, loose rendering of meaning, inexactness everywhere, recognized very little grammar and no syntax at all, and possessed but the barest smattering of Coptic. They made no distinction between the oldest and latest language. With a keenness which I admire more and more everyday, he began with the Coptic which he thoroughly mastered as the last phase of the dying language. Then going into the language of the “New Empire,” he studied every line of its immense literature, and wrote his great “Neuegyptische Grammatik”… On this foundation he now went to the most difficult task of all, i.e., the language of the “Old Empire” and the grammar which he wrote is just complete and will come from the press in a few weeks. This great task has consumed fifteen years, during which he has also written the most complete “Archaeology” that has yet been written, a marvel of correct detail. In a word, Erman, with a perfect mastery of Coptic, an absolute command of the vast lexicon and intricate grammar of invigorating air. It is like a new lease of life.”
the language through all its periods, holds the unique position of being the only man in Europe who can translate an inscription with absolute grammatical exactness. … Erman’s learning is so vast that every time I work with him I am more astonished at him.\textsuperscript{22}

Erman became more than a source of pedagogical support and mentorly advice for the young scholar, for we can see embedded in these admiring words a determination to be like his new mentor, and this quest for large-scale mastery based on scientific exactitude would have a formidable effect as the role model for the professional standards of scholarship and the academic life on the most talented of Breasted’s generation of American expatriates. When the big day came and Breasted passed his final oral examinations for the doctorate in July 1894, he was rewarded with high praise and the citation of “cum laude,” making him feel as if he was a natural son of German academic culture.\textsuperscript{23} He proudly reported to Harper that the four German doctoral students who were also examined at the same session all received the grade of sustinuit, a “just passing” rank considerably below that which he had merited.\textsuperscript{24}

In the years that followed Breasted continued to admire German academic culture, particularly the willingness of the royal academies to support independent research projects and the munificence with which scholarly conferences were organized. But it was also telling, and fully in line with Harper’s own sympathies, that when the question came up in 1902 of appointing a scholar of Arabic at Chicago, Breasted wrote to Harper: “I thought I ought to tell you this, adding at the same time, that R. F. [Harper’s brother, Robert Francis Harper] and I talked the question over, and it seemed to us that we had passed the time where it was necessary to introduce foreigners. … We arrived at the conclusion that, as our Semitic department was manned throughout by men whom it had developed and supported, that we ought to go on in the same way.”\textsuperscript{25} This sidebar comment is noteworthy in signaling not only a general and growing self-confidence in the prestige and power of the new American research university, but also its willingness to slowly repudiate the need to look to Europe for well-trained scholars.

Other young Americans had rather different experiences from those of Breasted. For example, James Tufts spent only one year in Germany and gained a clutch of valuable experiences. But unlike the case of Breasted, it would be difficult to argue that these experiences transformed Tufts’s life. Yet his career affords an example of Harper’s perspicacity in identifying talented young American scholars, offering them a preliminary job contract, and then urging them to go to Europe for additional seasoning. Tufts, who eventually became a prominent American philosopher of pragmatism with a specialty in moral and social philosophy and in theories of social relations, taught at Chicago from 1892 to 1930. In 1889, Tufts had been appointed an instructor of philosophy at the University of Michigan with a salary of $900 a year. If he had remained at Ann Arbor, he would have been scheduled for a promotion to assistant professor at a salary of $1,600 annually. Tufts was not unhappy with his current job—he had a chance to work with John Dewey, who was already developing a reputation for analytic precociousness as a scholar and teacher, and he admired the

\textsuperscript{22} Breasted to Harper, January 27, 1893, ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Breasted to Harper, July 21, 1894, PP, 1889–1925, box 9, folder 14.
\textsuperscript{25} Breasted to Harper, September 12, 1902, PP, 1889–1925, box 9, folder 15.
less privileged and more open-minded atmosphere of the Midwestern student body. (Tufts called it a “stimulating and wholesome world.”) But Tufts did have a longstanding wish to study for a doctorate in Germany, and it was not clear to him how he could combine this with his teaching responsibilities at Michigan. He knew Harper from having taken his Hebrew language courses while Tufts was studying at the Yale Divinity School. So, when the president-elect contacted him in early November of 1890 asking about his interest in a position at Chicago (an assistant professorship at $2,000 a year), the path to a German higher degree seemed clear, because the new University would not open its doors until the fall of 1892. By early December 1890, Tufts was writing to Harper: “If I go abroad next year I should wish to plan my studies partly with reference to my position [at Chicago], and the field of philosophy is so wide that it is rather necessary to take some special field in it.” Tufts resigned his position at Ann Arbor in June 1891. In August he married Cynthia Hobart Whitaker, a young schoolteacher from Massachusetts, and the newlyweds set off for a year in Germany. There followed a series of letters from the young Tufts to Harper from Berlin and then Freiburg, asking pertinent questions about how he could best use his time in Germany to prepare himself for the teaching assignment Harper had in mind. Since Harper in fact had no fixed views about what Tufts should (or should not) study, eventually Tufts ended up writing a doctoral dissertation on Kant under the supervision of Alois Riehl of the University of Freiburg.

Tufts’s reaction to Germany was differentiated. Within the wider reaches of German society, he disliked German militarism and found the many displays of martial pomposity in everyday life to be ludicrous. But he and his wife socialized with other Americans at the American Church at Motzstrasse 6 in Berlin, enjoying many friendships in the expatriate community. Tufts also found the atmosphere of academic seriousness at the University of Berlin to be congenial and inspiring. Years later he still admired “on the one side the spirit of inquiry and independent thinking embodied in a great university, and on the other, the experience of living among a people of different culture and in a land where music, the stage, and arts of form had a longer history and richer monuments to show. A university that included on its staff a Helmholtz, a Koch, a Virchow, a Dubois-Reymond, a Mommsen, a Pfeiderer, a Harnack, a Zeller, a Paulsen, a Kohler could not fail to impress the dignity and worth of scientific activity upon those who frequented its halls.” Tufts moved to Freiburg midyear to work with Alois Riehl, who was willing to count the two years Tufts had spent at Yale as fulfilling the degree requirements in Freiburg. After completing his dissertation and passing his final examinations summa cum laude in July 1892, Tufts proudly returned to Chicago where an assistant professorship awaited him at the new University. For Tufts, the German academic world was admirable. The real tragedy lay in the fact that this world was surrounded by and distorted by the “Germany of militaristic class and rule, of insolent officers and rigorously
trained goose-step subordinates, of armed soldiers at street corners.”

In contrast to Tufts’s generally optimistic and pleasant experiences, Paul Shorey’s story was much more complex. A distinguished scholar of Greek literature and an early twentieth-century expert on Plato, Shorey had attended Harvard College. After working for two years in his father’s law firm in Chicago and passing the bar in 1880, he decided to travel to Germany to study classical languages. During his three years at various German universities he regularly corresponded with William M. Payne, a close friend from high school days in Chicago. These letters and cards revealed a lonely, deeply homesick young man who had great difficulties adjusting to his new surroundings and to German educational practices. He found Cologne and other German cities he visited to be filled with “gloomy, dirty streets” and with “hideous shop windows and homely faces.” He quickly felt that “the boasted superiority of the German races is pitiable to one who comes from Paris and northern Italy to Germany.” Nor did he much appreciate German rivers, finding that “the Rhine is no more beautiful than the Hudson and the sickening, watery cabbage grows and blows over the dumpy hills are unbearable after the intense coloring and graceful distinct outlines of Piedmont.” Berlin he found to be not much better, being filled with “insignificant buildings we should never make any fuss over in America.” Ending up in Bonn at the university, he found that the lectures were “very dull and I can’t make much out of them—nothing but isolated facts some of which I had known and forgotten and others which I still remember.” He also found that “German society is so unreal and vulgar that a true picture of it is not art—for the rest of the world. … The country, the manners, the civilization or rather barbarism, the language and the thought are all essentially repugnant to me.” In Leipzig he found his classmates were “all infected with Hegel to a greater or less extent,” and where it was also the case that “the ideas, methods, and illustrative quotations are all very stale to me.” Shorey was self-conscious enough to reason that his isolation might have been his own fault and wondered why he felt “cold and unvivacious” whenever he was forced to converse with his fellow Germans. He had better luck in Munich, where he worked with Wilhelm von Christ on a dissertation on Plato’s ideas about human nature and found von Christ to be a supportive and sympathetic mentor. He finally completed his work in June 1884. But the more he read in German scholarship on Plato, the more he felt frustrated by its abstruse and highly technical nature. He complained to Payne: “I cannot be a classical scholar according to the German standards. My mind refuses to grasp their methods of reasoning and I have not and cannot have enough minute grammatical and historical knowledge to sustain me. It is almost a physical, certainly a nervous pain to me to follow a chain of reasoning that has absolutely no cogency for me.”

Shorey was an acerbic, deeply opinionated personality, given to making controversial and occasionally outrageous comments about all manner of events and persons he encountered. In one essay published in 1908, he denounced the culture of the city of Chicago as one marked by ugliness and vulgarity. In another in 1912, he defended strikebreakers in a local


32. Shorey to Payne, September 16, 1881, September 18, 1881, October 30, 1881, May 2, 1882, May 14, 1882, and January 8, 1884, William M. Payne Papers, Newberry Library, Special Collections, Chicago. I am grateful to Daniel J. Koehler for his discovery of the Shorey-Payne correspondence in this collection.
union dispute by telling prolabor students that they were engaging in "sentimental anarchy."  

Shorey’s unhappy memories of his time in Germany persisted through his subsequent career. When Jules Cambon, the French ambassador to the United States, visited Chicago in May 1901, Shorey was a member of the organizing committee. At a dinner in Cambon’s honor, Shorey made remarks to the effect that “the University had followed too closely the German methods of education, and that it needed an injection of the French spirit to subdue its strength and earnest spirit into finer uses.” In 1911, Shorey authored a tough-minded critique of German educational practices in the periodical *The Nation*, entitled “American Scholarship.” Shorey began by arguing that the current model of a research university in America was one that was staffed by scholars who were “made in Germany.” This reliance on German training and values led to a mal-adjustment in which US educational institutions were badly integrated into the culture of their own nation. What was most troubling was not the German innovations of the seminar, the doctoral dissertation, or the final oral examinations, which were in theory good innovations, but rather the “aims and ideals” of the system as a whole. What was needed was for Americans to “emancipate ourselves from slavish subservience to German influence without losing the lessons or forgetting the debt of gratitude that we owe to Germany.” US universities had the potential to have, more than their German counterparts, a “unity and continuity of culture, uninterrupted contact with the national life and education, and the more intelligent and sympathetic personal guidance” with students. Shorey saw the greatest need in encouraging general cultural training and erudition among US graduate students, and for this the German universities were completely useless. Instead, a slavish imitation of German methods resulted in younger scholars trained as pedants who practiced the “game of investigation” for its own sake, which soon became a “parody of scientific research” consisting of a “‘pyramiding’ of unverifiable hypotheses.” What was wanted was a genuinely American tradition of higher education, which would be more closely integrated to English and French ideals of style, eloquence, and empirical restraint.  

Shorey’s essay in *The Nation* would dog him throughout the next several years. A year after it was published, Shorey was nominated to hold the one-semester Roosevelt visiting professorship at the University of Berlin in 1913–14. Even though he called attention to *The Nation* article when he accepted the appointment to the professorship, he soon encountered hostile criticism on the part of those who felt that he had no business serving as a representative of America to the German academic world. Shorey wrote a long, exculpatory letter to Nicholas Murray Butler, who was president of Columbia University and who had chaired the selection committee, protesting that quotations from the article in *The Nation* were being taken out of context and that he had in fact great respect for German culture and German literature, but the letter was uncharacteristically tame and unconvincing for a personality who indeed seemed to thrive on controversy, overstatement, and polemic involving German society and politics. Since his primary responsibility was to deliver a cycle of public lectures on “American Democracy and Culture” in Berlin, Shorey found himself trying to explain American culture and society to German

33. *Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 1908, 8; *Chicago Tribune*, May 16, 1912, 3.  
34. *Chicago Tribune*, May 17, 1901, 3.  
36. Shorey to Nicholas Murray Butler, December 27, 1912, Paul Shorey Papers, box 2, folder 5.
students by using the theme to elaborate the ways in which American democratic political and social practices influenced the development of a peculiarly American national literary culture over the course of the nineteenth century. Although he admitted that democracy might not be a self-evidently fortuitous milieu for the growth of a complex and rich culture, he insisted that American society was on a path to overcome its banality and superficiality, and that, to take but one concrete example, America would soon have a secondary educational system equal to that of the fabled German Gymnasien, which would make it much easier for the universities to produce a strong elite of powerful leaders. Ironically, at the end of the semester in February 1914, Shorey was honored at a dinner attended by over one hundred German scholars. At least one report of the affair indicated that in an impromptu speech he expressed regret at the formulations that he had used in the 1911 article, thus seeming to apologize for his expressions. Adolf von Harnack, the distinguished biblical scholar and head of the Royal Prussian Library, was reported as declaring: “Shorey has put the German professors to shame by admitting that he could make mistakes.” In fact, Shorey had not changed his mind about Germany or German universities, although he did regret having mentioned several individual German professors by name in his broadside in The Nation. 

Adolf von Harnack, the distinguished biblical scholar and head of the Royal Prussian Library, was reported as declaring: “Shorey has put the German professors to shame by admitting that he could make mistakes.” In fact, Shorey had not changed his mind about Germany or German universities, although he did regret having mentioned several individual German professors by name in his broadside in The Nation. Of course, this “relapse” was but a transient thing. During the crescendo of pro-British and French enthusiasm that took hold among the majority of the University’s faculty during World War I, Shorey again adopted strongly anti-German attitudes and statements. In May 1917, for example, he warned that “Germany is already planning the next war. A negotiated peace that on any pretext leaves her in control of Central Europe is merely a truce in which she may prepare to fight on more favorable conditions. That is the alternative which the pacifist dupes of German propaganda refuse to face.”

Shorey was a brilliant teacher and a tough-minded critic who was fearless in criticizing the work of others. So, one might write off his anti-Germanic invective to a general iconoclastic habit of mind, especially because he was deeply impatient with what he saw as abstruseness, verbosity, and pomposity (not to mention wrongheaded interpretations of Homer and Plato). Yet Shorey’s life and career afforded the example of someone who quickly outgrew his German training and who, as he argued in The Nation in 1911, could legitimately encourage US students to stay in America for their academic training. As we have seen, even scholars like Breasted came to relatively similar conclusions, but without the active animus against German Wissenschaft that Shorey took delight in putting forth. One suspects that, in the end, Shorey’s dislike of imperial German politics and contemporary social mores deeply colored his readings of that nation’s many outstanding scholarly and cultural achievements.

Of the early senior faculty at Chicago who had studied in Germany, Albion Small, the founder and first head of the Department of Sociology, was perhaps the one whose scholarship was most directly influenced by contemporary German scholars in his field. Harry Elmer Barnes and Ernest Becker have argued that Small’s scholarly contributions were as significant to the field of institutional economics and political theory as

38. “Everybody has read and sometimes quotes my unfortunate Nation article on German scholarship. I call it unfortunate because though all of it was true, it was not necessary to mention names as I did including by some perversity of fate three or four of the leading Berlin Professors.” Shorey to Harry Pratt Judson, December 24, 1913, PP, 1889–1925, box 60, folder 21.
39. Shorey, “Unpublished lecture notes for a war address,” 1917, here 17–19, 32, Shorey Papers, box 42, folder 3; the Chicago Maroon published a version of this talk on May 4, 1917.
to sociology, and certainly Small’s investigation of the German cameralists would fall into this tradition. Small studied in Berlin and Leipzig for the two years between 1879 and 1881. He never completed his doctorate, instead spending a year at Johns Hopkins in 1889–90 writing a dissertation under the direction of Herbert Baxter Adams. When Small returned to Germany in the summer of 1903, he found much that he disliked about the militarism that infused turn-of-the-century German political culture.

In an interview in the Chicago Record-Herald, he insisted that many Germans had told him that they thought that war with America was inevitable because they believed that America’s rising hegemony in world markets deeply threatened key German interests. During World War I Small was staggeringly pro-Ally, attacking Prussianism and the militaristic spirit that it embodied as a kind of “resuscitated paganism,” and after the war he continued to comment on his earlier personal experiences in Germany with biting irony. Still Small devoted a great deal of time to studying and interpreting the work of major German social scientists, and he urged other graduate students to spend time in Germany as well. Traveling to Germany had also led to subtle changes in Small’s personal values. Late in his life Small remembered that the first time he had ever taken a walk with a girl on a Sunday afternoon was in Weimar in 1879. The young woman, the daughter of a German general, later became his wife. Growing up as the son of a Baptist minister in Maine in the 1860s and 1870s, where a strong residue of Puritan culture dominated public and private behavior, such “recreation” on the Sabbath—especially with a member of the opposite sex—would have been sternly forbidden. But in Germany, a new society in the Old World, it seemed plausible and natural for the young graduate student.

Small’s adult intellectual universe was Protestant American and urban, but many of his key ideas and concepts—including social process and social planning and the linear movement of society toward greater progress and unity under the sponsorship of an enlightened state—came from the German Kathedersozialisten, Adolf Wagner, Gustav Schmoller, and Wilhelm Roscher, with whom Small studied in 1879–81, and from subsequent engagement with the work of Albert Schäffle, Paul Barth, and Gustav Ratzenhofer.

Small’s book on the German and Austrian cameralists published in 1909 was a searching effort to explain the origins of an elite-driven civic political system that was efficient, was goal-oriented, and would and could restore itself to achieve a more coherent and integrated civil society. He insisted that “Americans have much to gain from better


41. Chicago Record-Herald, September 30, 1903, 9; Albion W. Small, “Will Germany War with Us?” Collier’s Weekly, December 10, 1904, 23. Small provided a more subtle and reasoned explanation of his concern to the German Consul General in Chicago, Walther Wever. See Small to Wever, October 3, 1903, Albion W. Small Papers, box 1, folder 15.

42. Albion W. Small, “America and the World Crisis,” American Journal of Sociology 23 (September 1917): 145–73.


understanding of the Germans” and “the efficiency of the German civic system is beyond dispute. As an adaptation of means to ends, it operates with a remarkably low rate of waste.” He also believed that, in contrast to the financial and human wastage of the American system, “there is hardly room for debate upon the proposition that in sheer economy of social efficiency Germany has no near rival among the great nations.” Small was thus deeply indebted to the ideas of the German collectivists, a policy perspective that Small saw as an alternative to both capitalism and socialism. Moreover, the organizational example of the German Verein für Sozialpolitik (Association for Social Politics) provided a model of collaborative professionalism and research proclivity that Small and other early social scientists sought to transplant to America. Small’s last book, entitled Origins of Sociology, self-consciously bypassed the recent jingoism of the war, regretting the militaristic behavior of many German scholars but also insisting upon the theoretical import of their scholarship, and soberly acknowledged the huge intellectual debt that American scholars owed to their German counterparts. Small insisted:

The entire tradition, of which we have indicated only some of the most outstanding elements … was partly the undivided inheritance with other heirs, partly the creation of the men who formed the Verein für Sozialpolitik. It determined their plane of thinking. It molded their attitudes. It formed their policies. Much of this tradition was mobilized in the formation of the American Historical Association. The American Economic Association was formed in conscious and avowed emulation of the Verein. Its organizers transmuted the spirit and much of the creed of the parent body into the current of American thought. The American Sociological Society was incubated within the American Economic Association, with crossings from the Historical Association. The sociologists carried along the same tradition, and developed certain of its implication beyond the limit set by the historians or the economists.

William Rainey Harper’s own experience with German academic traditions came in two strikingly different ways. Harper read German, and he was deeply conscious of the way in which German biblical scholars shaped the basic paradigms of Semitic studies. However, Harper never studied in Germany. His only personal foray into German scholarly life was in the late summer of 1891 when he attempted to buy the so-called Berlin Collection from S. Calvary and Company, a Berlin bookdealer on Unter den Linden. This collection, which was purchased at a cost of $28,400, was touted as encompassing hundreds of thousands of volumes. But later investigations have significantly reduced the size of the collection that actually arrived in Hyde Park in June 1892 to about 58,000 books and 39,000 dissertations. Harper’s subsequent attempts to obtain clear and reliable information about the discrepancy from his Berlin agents were deeply frustrating, but even what was delivered from Germany immediately gave the fledgling University a splendid and rich

46. Ibid., 17.
48. Ibid., 327.
collection of books and learned journals relating to European history and culture from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century.\(^49\)

In a few cases, a whole department at the new University was shaped by German paradigms. The early Department of Mathematics afforded such a case. Harper appointed Eliakim Hastings Moore, a specialist in algebra and group theory, as professor and acting head of the department in February 1892. Moore had spent a postdoctoral year in Germany after completing a PhD at Yale in 1885, and his own work was indebted to his work at Göttingen and with Leopold Kronecker at Berlin. Karen Parshall, Moore’s biographer, suggests that “the ideas which Moore encountered in Germany dominated his mathematical thinking for the remainder of his career.”\(^50\) Moore also received an honorary degree from the University of Göttingen in 1899. A brilliant and determined administrator who had an “uncanny hunter’s instinct” both for identifying important new research problems and for discovering gifted students, Moore’s early strategy for building his department focused on the recruitment of two talented German scholars.\(^51\) Moore first hired Oskar Bolza, an expert in the calculus of variations who had studied at the University of Berlin and with Felix Klein at the University of Göttingen. Bolza was already in the United States, having been recruited by G. Stanley Hall at Clark University, and was thus a ripe target for Harper and Moore. Bolza in turn insisted that Moore hire Heinrich Maschke, an expert in differential geometry and group theory, who had also studied with Klein at Göttingen as well as at Heidelberg and Berlin.\(^52\) The three men worked together until Maschke’s death in 1908. Even after Bolza returned to Germany, he maintained a link to Chicago in the special status of “non-resident professor of mathematics,” which he enjoyed (with an unfortunate interruption during World War I) until his death in 1942. Together the three, in the words of R. C. Archibald, made Chicago’s Department of Mathematics “unsurpassed in America as an institution for the study of higher mathematics.”\(^53\) Moore and Bolza were especially influential teachers who trained a number of promising doctoral students—among them Leonard Dickson, who was the first individual to receive a PhD in mathematics at Chicago, and Gilbert A. Bliss, who was chairman of the department from 1927 to 1941. Both Dickson and Bliss traveled to Germany for additional postdoctoral training (at Leipzig and Göttingen), suggesting that contact with European universities was proving to be a sustained, transgenerational phenomenon in mathematics, at least before World War I. Both Dickson and Bliss later served as president of the American Mathematical Society.


52. The sequencing of the two appointments and their tactical interconnectedness is described in Ibid., 197–202, 286–93.

The presence of the two German scholars gave the young department a research luster and orientation toward publishing that sometimes resulted in collisions with their younger American colleagues. This was apparent in Moore’s refusal to promote to assistant professor a young American mathematician, Harris Hancock, who ironically was also trained in Germany and had been hired as a lowly “associate” in 1892, preferring to recommend him for an appointment at the University of Missouri, and that with a rather weak letter of support. Harper, who by this time was acutely conscious of the importance of quality undergraduate teaching, took issue with Moore, arguing: “I am sorry that I cannot quite agree with you in the recommendation of Hancock to be head of the Department of Mathematics in the University of Missouri. If he is good enough for that, he is certainly a strong man for us as instructor or assistant professor. Besides, if he should go, he would go as an enemy of the University, and I do not think it wise to place an enemy in so important a position. I think it better to hold him here for at least another year or two.”

For his part Hancock was convinced that the “foreigners” (meaning Bolza and Maschke) in the department were holding him and other younger instructors back, a charge that Moore did not really reject. Hancock argued instead that “in the domain of mathematics, as teachers, critical scholars, and investigators, Bolza and Maschke are today, in my judgment, far superior to what Hancock, Boyd, and Slaught will ever become.” A year later, this theme emerged again when Harper responded to comments by Moore about the value of research over teaching by observing:

“With some of the propositions which your letter contains I agree. With some I do not agree. The first is not correct. The undergraduate work is essential and as important as graduate work. I would not say that the undergraduate work is primary and the graduate work secondary, nor, on the other hand, would I say that the graduate work is primary and the undergraduate work secondary. They are of equal importance. I do not know that I can agree with you on your second proposition, that the whole corps of instructors should be made up of instructors who are primarily successful producers [of research]. In my opinion, it is as important to have good teachers as to have good producers, and in my opinion there are good teachers who are not good producers.”

Harper’s comments to Moore were part of a larger readjustment on his part to the importance of teaching and reflected his sense that the German model, in its worst manifestations, could generate a disregard for undergraduate teaching. This may explain Harper’s eventual reluctance to hire Americans who were returning from long stays in Europe. He told Ella Young in 1899 that he insisted they spend at least two years elsewhere in America before he would consider them for a job at Chicago:

54. Moore assessed Hancock in 1896 with the comment, “I do not find in Mr. Hancock any well-marked note of mathematical originality, independence, or soundness. He does have industry and will undoubtedly do considerable compilation work.” Moore to Harper, January 31, 1896, Harper Administration, box 22, folder 7.


56. Moore to Harper, June 28, 1898, PP, 1889–1925, box 17, folder 2. Harper eventually changed his mind about Hancock and terminated his position in early 1900 because of “the friction which has attended your presence during these last years.” Harper to Hancock, January 31, 1900, Harper Papers, box 5, folder 12.

In my opinion it requires at least two or three years for a student who has studied five years abroad to become Americanized so as to take a satisfactory position in an American institution. On account of my knowledge of the facts in the cases of so many American students who have taken a German Doctorate, I have practically refused to consider applications form such persons until they have been back in the country at least two years. I understand there may be exceptions, but the exceptions are so few in my observation that it has practically become a working rule for me.\textsuperscript{58}

Harper’s concerns notwithstanding, Moore’s liking for German-trained scholars did not cease, for he recommended the appointment of Ernest J. Wilczynski to succeed Oskar Bolza in 1910. Wilczynski was born in Hamburg, grew up in the United States, and returned to Berlin to take his PhD in 1897. He started his career at Berkeley as an assistant professor in 1902, and then he accepted an appointment at the University of Illinois from 1907 to 1910. His coming to Chicago had long been lobbied for by Kurt Laves, another Berlin-trained colleague who had taught astronomy at the University of Chicago since 1893 and who tried to identify an academic position for Wilczynski at Chicago as early as 1897.\textsuperscript{59} Such informal networks among the émigré scholars must have been strong, especially given the lack of job security that the younger foreign scholars faced.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{58} Harper to Ella Young, January 28, 1899, Harper Papers, box 4, folder 22.

\textsuperscript{59} Laves to Wilczynski, August 31, 1897, October 23, 1897, March 2, 1910, and May 1, 1910, Ernest Wilczynski Papers, box 2, folder 2.

\textsuperscript{60} Laves insisted that he and Wilczynski were targets of possible exploitation: “Wir hier trotz allem und allem as foreigners behandelt werden, die man nur nimmt wenn man muss and nie los zu werden sucht so bald es geht.” Laves to Wilczynski, April 23, 1898, Wilczynski Papers, box 2, folder 2.

Many other examples of German influences on the early faculty were evident among both senior and junior faculty. The first head of the Department of Chemistry was John U. Nef, Nef, a Swiss-born, American-raised chemist who spent three productive and happy years in Munich working with the great German chemist and Nobel laureate Adolf von Baeyer. Nef received his PhD in 1889, with the honor of summa cum laude, and Baeyer is reputed to have told his colleagues at the time that Nef was one of the best students he had ever had.\textsuperscript{61} Nef’s subsequent scholarly career was heavily indebted to the institutions of the German academic world: of the forty scientific articles that he published over the course of his career between 1883 and 1917, twenty-seven were written in German and appeared in journals published in Germany, particularly \textit{Liebigs Annalen der Chemie}. Nef left Germany with a strong sense of what it meant to belong to a scientific faculty. He was one of the contingent of faculty rebels who resigned from Clark University in 1892 and came to the University of Chicago because of President G. Stanley Hall’s perceived disrespect for faculty rights, and he became an equally staunch defender of departmental autonomy at Chicago. Nef’s later opposition to Harper’s efforts to provide more resources for undergraduate teaching was cast in affective terms and used an historical claim that made perfect sense in terms of Nef’s experience of what a “true University” had to be:

It is generally understood that the development of the university in undergraduate numbers during the past 10 years has been made at the sacrifice of research and of the graduate schools. Research

\textsuperscript{61} See the handwritten biographical sketch of Nef by his son, John U. Nef Jr., in the John U. Nef Sr. Papers, box 1, folder marked “Biographical Materials.”
work at the University has simply been tolerated but never recognized as its highest function; otherwise there would have been an endowment for use in research only which could never be directed to other purposes and the needs of research would not always be postponed because the needs of instruction are pressing. In the end such a policy is bound to be ruinous, for time and experience have proved beyond doubt that the life and soul of a true University lies in those gifted men who are capable of extending the bounds of existing knowledge.\(^{62}\)

Other German-trained scholars, like Ferdinand Schevill of the Department of History who took his PhD at Freiburg under the direction of Hermann von Holst, more easily bridged the gap between graduate and undergraduate instruction and made names for themselves by writing popular as well as professional scholarship. Still other European-trained scholars had a strong collegial impact, even if not in the domain of original research. Adolf Carl von Noé came from Graz, Austria, and after studies at Graz and Göttingen ended up in Chicago where he took both a BA and a PhD. Noé began his career atChicago in 1904 in Germanic languages, but after 1920 he moved into geology and paleobotany, in which he had also had prior university training. He eventually became an expert in world coal formations, and he was one of the designers of the underground coal mine at the Museum of Science and Industry.\(^{63}\) Noé, who was also deeply involved in creating the American Committee for Vienna Relief in 1920, was able to raise thousands of dollars to send to impoverished Viennese from wealthy Chicagoans, including persuading Harold H. Swift to contribute $300 a month for many years toward this cause.\(^{64}\) In 1929, Noé’s eldest daughter, Mary Helen, married Robert S. Mulliken, the Chicago Nobel laureate in chemistry, who himself had collaborations with several distinguished European scientists in the 1920s and 1930s (particularly with Friedrich Hund of Leipzig, with whom he developed the molecular orbital theory).\(^{65}\) The early German and Romance language departments also hired Central European scholars—including Camillo von Klenze, a Swiss national who had a Harvard BA and who had studied for his doctorate at Berlin and Marburg; and Hans M. Schmidt-Wartenberg, who was born in Germany and trained at Jena, Berlin, and Cornell and who ended up in endless feuds with his colleagues (particularly Paul Shorey), accusing them of anti-German prejudice and becoming a source of considerable frustration to Harper.\(^{66}\)

Perhaps the most fascinating example of the early internationalism of the University was the case of Hermann von Holst, and von Holst leads us back to the visit of the German professors in March 1904. Von Holst was certainly the most distinguished European academic recruited by

\(^{62}\) Handwritten memorandum of Nef, most likely to Harry Pratt Judson, December 1906, Nef Papers, box 1, folder marked “1902–1906.”


\(^{64}\) In so doing, Noé was able covertly to support his relatives in Austria, which suggested that he had not lost a traditional Austrian sense of private patronage.


Harper for full-time service in the early faculty. A chaired professor at the University of Freiburg and the author of the monumental eight-volume *Constitutional and Political History of the United States* (published in English translation between 1876 and 1892), von Holst had already rejected offers of professorships at Johns Hopkins and Clark. Harper’s vision of a great new university in the middle of the vast continent intrigued him, however, and von Holst eventually succumbed to Harper’s urgent appeals. When he appeared in Chicago in late 1892 he brought with him clear professional expectations about the life of a full professor, and Harper was forced to accommodate these demands. Benjamin S. Terry, a younger American scholar working on his PhD with von Holst at the University of Freiburg who assisted Harper in conducting the negotiations with von Holst in the fall of 1891 and winter of 1892 (and who was also hired by Harper as a professor at Chicago), wrote candidly to a confidant of Harper about the danger of intruding on the sense of sovereignty that the senior German scholar brought to his vocation:

> The man who has spent his active life in a German university makes much of “Lehrfreiheit”. Von Holst is like the rest of them. I do not believe that you will get him to enter into any stipulation as to the number of hours per week [of teaching] in the amount or kind of work that he is to do. He simply asks for the liberty to do what he shall think is best for his department and for his work. He asks for confidence on the part of the authorities. Harper cannot do better than commit this whole matter to von Holst himself. You need have no fears that he will not earn his salary. As a simple advertisement, all that he costs will be well spent. More than that, he is much more widely known, and has a much more extensive personal acquaintance among wealthy Germans of America than I think you are aware of, to say nothing of his wide acquaintance with the eminent men of his own department in both Europe and America.67

The prospect of hiring Hermann von Holst did not meet with universal approval, generating on the part of a few by subtle pangs of resentment and jealousy. Harper’s second-in-command at the early University, Harry Pratt Judson, disliked what he saw as Harper’s far too inflated estimation of the impact of German scholarship on the American universities. He stubbornly opposed Harper’s decision to appoint von Holst, urging against the “slavish imitation of foreign ideas” and insisting that “American scholarship should be inspired by ideals materially different from those of Germany. The motives, methods, and spirit of an American department of history … would in many essentials be radically antagonistic to those of a German university.” But Judson also resented the fact that a German national would lead a department of which he, Judson, would be a member: “I dislike the idea of a foreigner at the head of such a department in an American university. It seems to me that departments involving American history, American literature, and American politics should be in charge of Americans, if possible. Personally, I must confess that I don’t fancy having to work under a German. I doubt if many American professors would.”68

Ignoring Judson’s petulance, Harper proceeded to follow Terry’s advice and successfully recruited von Holst. Given his age and troubled medical condition—he was on medical leave for serious gastrointestinal troubles for a significant part of his seven-year tenure—von Holst did

67. Terry to Eri B. Hulbert, December 27, 1891, Harper Papers, box 14 folder 8.
not develop a significant school of doctoral disciples in the time before
he returned to Germany in 1900. He did have a powerful personal
impact on the formation of the early faculty of the Department of
History, in that both Benjamin Terry and Ferdinand Schevill had been
his doctoral students at Freiburg, but his impact in the larger develop-
ment of American historiography before 1914 was limited to the
speak his mind on controversial public issues, such as denouncing
American foreign policy in Latin America in 1895 and the American
annexation of Hawaii in 1898 (much to Harper’s chagrin and embar-
rassment) and in his staunch protection of his own \textit{Lehrfreiheit}, however,
von Holst served as a powerful example to his local Chicago colleagues of
a senior German \textit{Ordinarius}, and the freedom that von Holst claimed and
regularly practiced must have offered an alluring model for other senior
members of the faculty of the early University.\footnote{See “Is Fiat of a Dictator,” \textit{Chicago Tribune}, December 19, 1895, 2; “Von Holst Stirs Up War,” \textit{Chicago Tribune}, December 22, 1895, 1.} Even in the face
of Harper’s displeasure, von Holst insisted that faculty were “not slaves but
free men, everyone entitled to his own opinion and free to avow them.”\footnote{Von Holst to Harper, December 22, 1895, PP, 1889–1925, box 85, folder 2.}

Von Holst was a tough advocate of academic quality control, and more
than once he sent Harper comments to that effect. In the case of a Mr.
Jude, von Holst wrote that “it would not be calculated to build up its reputa-
tion for a high standard if higher degrees were frequently conferred upon
students of Mr. J’s intellectual caliber.”\footnote{Von Holst to Harper, June 29, 1895, PP, 1889–1925, box 85, folder 2} He also urged Harper to treat
graduate students like adults, and he defended the autonomy and freedom
that he accorded to graduate students taking his seminar by insisting:

The work as conducted by myself does not admit of controlling the
time spent by the students from day to day or even week to week. I
necessarily must put the students upon their honor and try to make
them realize that they do not work for my benefit, but for their own.
It is, of course, possible that some of them abuse of this, but to judge
from the apparent interest manifested by the class in the work I have
no reason to suppose that there are many who do so, if indeed any.
If there be any I am at a loss to see how I could help it. For it would
be unjust to the students and derogatory to the interests of the
University to make the great majority of the conscientious students
pay the penalty for any dereliction of duty on the part of a few by
changing the character to the work, i.e., by lowering it from the
University standard to that of the college.\footnote{Von Holst to Harper, December 24, 1895, PP, 1889–1925, box 85, folder 2.}

This image of a famous senior professor steeped in the dignity and inde-
pendence of the academic calling and defending uncompromising ideals
of teaching must have offered his younger colleagues on the Chicago
faculty a powerful model for their own professional self-development.
Von Holst’s health forced him into early retirement in 1900. He returned to Europe, where his medical condition (intestinal ulcers) continued to worsen. In early 1903 J. Laurence Laughlin, the head of the Department of Economics, proposed that the University commission an oil portrait of von Holst. Laughlin had become an admirer of von Holst’s courage in defending faculty rights and his high academic standards during their shared tenure at Chicago, and von Holst had published a trenchant essay attacking Eugene Debs and the role of the labor unions during the Pullman Strike in Laughlin’s new journal, the *Journal of Political Economy*.\(^74\) The University Senate approved Laughlin’s proposal, and within several months Carl von Marr, a noted German-American painter living in Munich, was busy at work on a full-length oil portrait of von Holst. Laughlin wrote to von Holst’s brother, Matthias von Holst, who undertook the negotiations with Marr, that the faculty wanted “a work of art, as well as a characteristic portrait of a great scholar … we wish the character of the von Holst we knew and loved and admired in America.” Laughlin specifically wanted “a portrait such as Lenbach would have painted in his earlier years.”\(^75\) Marr agreed to take the commission for a fee of $4,000. Ironically Marr himself had once observed von Holst lecturing in Freiburg, while visiting a friend at the university there, and he had been tremendously impressed with the historian’s demeanor.\(^76\) Marr completed his assignment within six months, shipping it to Chicago in early August 1903. Marr’s portrait of Hermann von Holst, which now hangs in the Department of History’s John Hope Franklin Common Room in the Social Science Research Building, portrays a serious, independent-minded, senior scholar, who is unencumbered by the cares of the world and oblivious to local intramural university politics as well.

Once the preparation of von Holst’s portrait was underway, the question then became how to structure its dedication ceremony. Clearly, here was an opportunity for public visibility as well as remembrance and celebration. J. Franklin Jameson, who had succeeded von Holst as head of the Department of History, recommended on behalf of his department that the University invite the distinguished German theologian Adolf von Harnack to come to Chicago to speak at the ceremony and to receive an honorary degree. Initially the University Senate agreed to this idea, but J. Laurence Laughlin soon intervened with what he believed to be a better idea. Namely, why not invite four or five distinguished German scholars, giving all of them honorary degrees? Laughlin believed that the German government was much more likely to support such a venture if a number of distinguished scholars were involved, and the significance of the ceremony would be all the greater. Laughlin’s idea was immediately adopted, and various faculty groups set to work coming up with lists of names of possible Germans who might be invited to receive honorary degrees.\(^77\)

\(^74\) Hermann von Holst, “Are We Awakened?” *Journal of Political Economy* 2, no. 4 (1894): 485–516. Laughlin commissioned this article from von Holst, insisting, “You cannot afford to keep silence. You could do a great good, with your authority and prestige, by saying the strong and courageous word.” Laughlin to von Holst, July 10, 1894, Hermann von Holst Papers, box 12, folder 9. Laughlin’s proposal to honor von Holst in 1903 may have also been influenced by his view that William Rainey Harper had grown too powerful as president. Laughlin wrote to von Holst in early 1902 complaining that “Harper is more an absolute monarch than ever.” Laughlin to von Holst, March 22, 1902, von Holst Papers, box 12, folder 9.

\(^75\) Quoted in Mathias von Holst to Karl Marr, March 18, 1903, J. Laurence Laughlin Papers, box 1, folder 2.

\(^76\) Marr to Mathias von Holst, March 19, 1903, J. Laurence Laughlin Papers, box 1, folder 2.

\(^77\) *Minutes of the University Senate*, June 6, 1903, June 17, 1903, June 20, 1903, July 1, 1903, and October 31, 1903.
The process went through several elaborations, as names of possible German professors worthy to receive honorary degrees went on and off the lists. It soon became apparent that the visits could not be arranged for October 1903, when the dedication ceremony for von Holst’s portrait was scheduled. The senate therefore decided to uncouple the two events, allowing a smaller and local ceremony for von Holst’s portrait in October and resolving to dedicate the March 1904 convocation in honor of the visiting Germans, thus making the latter event a day of German-American honorifics.

For the dedication ceremony of the portrait in mid-October, Harper, Jameson, and Laughlin all delivered stirring commendations of von Holst, as a scholar and an academic citizen. Although the speakers praised von Holst’s scholarly contributions, it was his moral leadership and professional ethics that they most emphasized. When Laughlin praised his friend’s demeanor as that of “a whole mighty spirit—a great moral force—blazed and gathered in his commanding attack,” he summed up the substantive importance of von Holst for the early University faculty. For Laughlin “the one striking impression that he made, within the University and without, was that of a great moral force. With his students, as with the public, he not only set the chords of right and wrong to vibrating afresh, but he set every conscience on the right key.”

This left the Senate with a second opportunity for public display of value-laden rhetoric about the debt of the University to German science. Walther Wever then entered the picture. Wever was an incredibly energetic consul general of Germany from 1900 to 1908 in Chicago, who saw as his personal and professional mission the cementing of good relations between America and Germany and who believed that one facet of this process could be undertaken by bringing German and American universities closer together. During his eight years in Chicago, Wever undertook a number of imaginative ventures that included the creation of professorial exchange programs. He also functioned as an informal fund-raiser for the University, persuading Catherine Seipp, widow of wealthy German-American businessman Conrad Seipp, to give a gift to subsidize prizes for the best essays written on German literature and culture. Wever was also well placed in German administrative politics, since his older brother, Hermann Wever, was a high-ranking civil servant in the Prussian Ministry of Culture in Berlin, where he was quietly able to support his brother’s schemes. With Walther Wever’s support, invitations were sent to five leading German scholars, asking them to journey to Chicago for a special event honoring the impact of German academic culture on the new University of Chicago. These visits were subsidized by the imperial German government and local German businessmen, through the mediation of Wever. The senior faculty organized an elaborate convocation in late March 1904, at which five honorary degrees were awarded. The honorees were Berthold Delbrück, professor of Sanskrit at Jena; Paul Ehrlich, professor of medicine at Berlin; Wilhelm Herrmann, professor of theology at Marburg; Josef Kohler, professor of law at Berlin; and Eduard Meyer, professor of ancient history at Berlin. All were eminent authorities in their fields, and as a group they represented a high level of distinction that must have confirmed the hopes of the organizers who


79. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, July 1, 1903, and February 28, 1904 (“Dr. Judson explained that the German government was much interested in the visit of distinguished German scholars to the University of Chicago and that the Germans of Chicago were also interested in assisting in the payment of the necessary expenses, and that it was confidently believed that the larger part of the $2,500 would be contributed.”) The board authorized the University to cover up to $1,000 of this amount, the remainder to be paid by the Germans.
wanted to create a strong public symbolic gesture. Arriving in Chicago in mid-March 1904, the German scholars were honored at various dinners and receptions, including a huge public reception at the Auditorium Hotel attended by no less than 5,000 guests, with the scholars entering the room accompanied by a march from Wagner’s Tannhäuser. Two days later, on March 22, 1904, John Coulter gave the speech at the convocation that I have already referenced, proclaiming the University’s allegiance to the values of Lehrfreiheit and Lernfreiheit. But the most remarkable speech of the day was given by William Rainey Harper himself. In introducing the ceremony, Harper insisted that the University owed much to the “ideals of German scholarship” and was greatly indebted to German intellectual life. But he also used the scene to paint a larger picture of the importance of international contacts and connections to the University as a whole. Reprising his 1899 address at the University of California, Berkeley, on “The University and Democracy,” Harper now insisted that universities were among the most powerful agents of international understanding and comity and that their capacity to sponsor and encourage an “intermingling” of “widely diverging ideas” was bound to lead to closer connections between the nations of the world. The University was thus a mediator not only of ideas but also of peoples, for its function was “to lead the souls of men and nations into close communion with the common soul of all humanity. This is a work which universities in the past have accomplished and which, perhaps, they are doing today more largely than ever before.”

Harper thus exploited the eagerness of the Imperial German government and the local German community in Chicago to practice transnational Kulturpolitik. The self-confident desires of his own colleagues to bask in the light of German Wissenschaft in order to reveal their own significant research accomplishments led them to stage an academic event that both highlighted the progress that the University had made in becoming an international research university and formally acknowledged the intellectual debts that the University owed to a selective appropriation of German university practices and traditions. To Charlemagne Tower, the US ambassador to Germany, Harper later insisted that the convocation had been a “great success” and that in fact “it is the greatest event that has happened in the history of the University.”

At the end of Walther Wever’s service as consul general of Germany in Chicago in 1908, a group of senior faculty members, led by Albion Small and James Tufts, urged the University to award him an honorary degree. They justified this extraordinary act by arguing that he had provided “conspicuous service to his own country and to this city,” creating a relationship to the University that was “without parallel in this or any other country.” The sponsors were especially grateful that Wever was “largely instrumental in bringing about the visit of the distinguished German

80. Berthold Delbrück’s biographer recounts the charming story that Delbrück was held in such high esteem during the Atlantic voyage that he was invited to sit next to the captain of the ship each evening as an honored guest, and he further reports, “Die ganze Reise war für ihn etwas sehr Erhebendes. Mit wahrer Freude konnte er später davon erzählen. Der Eindruck, den die aufstrebenden amerikanischen Universitäten auf ihn machten, war sehr günstig.” See Eduard Hermann, Berthold Delbrück: Ein Gelehrtenleben aus Deutschlands grosser Zeit (Jena: Frommannsche, 1923), 110–11.


scholars to the University in the spring of 1904, which served to cement our friendly relations with the German academic world.\footnote{Minutes of the University Senate, October 24, 1908, 377–78.}

The October 1904 celebration inaugurated a series of other transactions. As mentioned, Wever worked assiduously to create a program of exchange professorships that eventually sent John Matthews Manly and Albert Michelson to the University of Göttingen and J. Laurence Laughlin to the University of Berlin and that also invited Hermann Oncken, Heinrich Kraeger, Ernst Daenell, and Lorenz Morsbach to Chicago. What is particularly important about this process is that it was a powerful signal of growing equality and independence that Chicago would now send “its” senior \textit{Ordinarien} (as they were perceived by the German academic community) to Europe. No longer was the University dependent on German culture, but it now had something to offer in its own right. Moreover, a heightened sensitivity to the University’s own status was evident when Judson wrote to Wever in 1908, complaining that while he had sent John Matthews Manly, “one of our professors of the highest rank,” to Göttingen, the Germans had sent a mere associate professor to Chicago, a fact that Judson took to be insulting.\footnote{Judson to Wever, August 20, 1908, PP, 1889–1925, box 46, folder 4. For the general context of these exchanges, see Bernhard vom Brocke, “Der deutsch-amerikanische Professorenaustausch: Preussische Wissenschaftspolitik, internationale Wissenschaftsbeziehungen und die Anfänge einer deutschen auswärtigen Kulturpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg,” \textit{Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch} 31 (1981): 128–82.}

The March 1904 convocation thus had a fascinating history. It began as an act of reverence for our one locally distinguished German \textit{Ordinarius}, Hermann von Holst. But it quickly turned into a calculated and shrewd attempt to elevate the young University to a level such that other senior German \textit{Ordinarien} would not only want to visit, but also from which they would gladly receive honorary degrees. This exchange captured magnificently the subtle impact of German research tradition on a university that had already emerged as the anchor of scholarly prestige of the American Middle West. The many Chicago faculty who had studied at one or more German universities had brought back with them not an innocent or even a naïve nostalgia, and certainly not any admiration for the autocratic politics of the German government. Nor were they oblivious to the obvious structural differences that later scholars have insisted upon between the German and the American research universities. But what they did take from the German model was its high valuation of the authority of scientific thinking, the importance of truth telling and scholarly discovery, the prestige of intellectual erudition, the need to create institutional arrangements like large libraries and scientific laboratories to advance the discovery of new knowledge, and the powerful independence of the senior faculty as the corporate group in university life. Their idealization of German \textit{Wissenschaft} was sober and selective, and they knew exactly what they were borrowing and what they disdained to borrow. So large and capacious was this influence that even John Coulter, who had never studied in Germany, could easily cloak himself in the mantle of German scientific practices. It was particularly important that Harper, who had himself never studied for a day at a German university either and who must have felt slightly uneasy about displaying his still very young and unfinished university to senior scholars from Germany, was still willing to take the chance of staging what he later felt to have been a remarkable event that signaled both the bold self-confidence and the hybrid internationalism of the early University.

While it is undeniable that the German universities resonated powerfully with colleagues in the first generation of our faculty, especially the
many dozens who had studied in Germany, the fact that the Humboldtian model emerged later in the United States had the inevitable consequence that it was premised on sustaining a strong tradition of the general liberal arts in addition to specialized scholarly research. In Chicago’s case this hybridity reflected the complexities of our history in several important ways. First, the earliest history of the University was strikingly local in many dimensions that had little to do with the outside or at least transatlantic world. The old University on 34th Street that collapsed in 1886 was a liberal arts teaching institution, and the Chicago Baptists led by Goodspeed and Gates who campaigned for a second university wanted to restore that kind of model, but on more solid footing. In seeking John D. Rockefeller’s support in 1889–90, the creation of a new undergraduate college was a kind of sine qua non: William Rainey Harper had to struggle to get money for his graduate and research ambitions and only succeeded after assuring his donor (and the broader Baptist community) that he would indeed properly provide for a new college. From the very first, Harper was not only trapped in having a large clutch of younger undergraduate students on campus, but he was also forced to organize the first two years of their academic study in relatively broad ways to acculturate them to the kind of rigorous, university-based norms that he wanted to instill in the curriculum of the third- and fourth-year undergraduates at Chicago (who, then, would provide a pool of highly qualified, potential graduate students for the new University). Second, much of the financial and civic support for Chicago’s re-founding in 1890 was anchored in the emergence of new civic elites who were anxious to expand educational resources in a burgeoning city. These civic boosters assumed that undergraduates would be part of the new campus population in visible and socially prominent ways. Third, the new American research universities were not established to populate and continually replenish a state-engineered professional structure regulated by a formal system of state examinations. The more inchoate and informal processes of professional education in America, and the growing significance of business education in the American hybrid model—by contrast to Germany, where it was located in technical training institutions—made it far easier to connect undergraduate liberal education with new instructional structures in the professional and graduate schools, without having to worry about status or prestige boundaries.

Finally, a critical point of differentiation between the German and US research universities involved philanthropy. With the exception of the new land grant universities like Michigan and Illinois, the most exemplary new research universities were private in their founding. Like Stanford and Johns Hopkins, the story of Chicago’s founding is part of the history of private American philanthropy. American universities borrowed selective elements of the German model but added massive private philanthropy as a new idea. Philanthropy in higher education did exist in Europe in the nineteenth century, but it was largely restricted to individual private donors who provided scholarship assistance to selected students who were studying specific subjects or who were in a special social or economic status. The great European research universities were public institutions, founded by the Crown and subsidized almost completely by the state. In contrast, Chicago was profoundly dependent upon the massive philanthropy of the Rockefeller family and prominent Chicago families for the first two decades of its founding. Up to World War I, John D. Rockefeller was the principal—if often ambivalent—donor to the University, contributing a total of $35 million by 1910. As late as 1925 tuition constituted less than 33 percent of the University’s budget, whereas endowment revenue, based on private gifts, provided 43 percent.

The new private American universities faced the absence of any
significant government or state support and hence needed to appeal immediately to civil society. The wealth that they assembled in this way was largely new wealth, the product of nineteenth-century industrialism, commerce, and transportation (railways). Chicago was a special example of these processes because it was a university in a large city as well as a private Christian university, and its founding rationale had much to do with the fact that the urban elites who created the huge metropolis of Chicago also wanted the prestige of a major university in their midst. These donors had many motivations, religious as well as civic boosterism, and the history of Chicago demonstrates these often strange patterns of connection very well. Their early philanthropy was massive, and while it echoed the religious motivations of the Rockefellers, it also carried elements of civic pride on the part of Gilded Age elites in the central business district of Chicago, as well as the progressive conviction that science would become a panacea to remedy social ills and enlarge the cultural visibility of the city itself, but also to valorize the worth of scholarly life. All of this combined in dynamic ways with the value they attached to undergraduate teaching.

Other differences with the German tradition soon emerged. In creating a new University of Chicago, Harper also defended liberal arts teaching as a form of personal intellectual enrichment that led toward more effective citizenship, thereby honoring the humble but transformational instructional work that had defined both the frontier college nature of the old University of Chicago and the highly functional instruction that informed the work of the Morgan Park Seminary, where Harper had previously taught from 1879 to 1886. After all, Harper too came from that world, even though his institutional and intellectual aspirations carried him beyond it. The Humboldtian model called for the unity of teaching and research, but as we have noted in its implementation the Germans tended to move to ever narrower disciplinary specialization. In contrast, the American model preserved significant elements of the ethos of the nineteenth-century liberal arts college as an integral component of the new university model.

Moreover, unlike the often insular German universities, Harper also endowed his new institution with a more capacious understanding of its responsibilities to the central city. Erudition, teaching, and social improvement would combine to enhance the impact of science, but also to elevate the quality of Chicago’s public culture well beyond the local Baptist community. Hence Harper’s frenzied efforts to take the University everywhere via an Extension Division—Harper’s University would not only be public in a radically new way, but it would create its own grateful publics in the wider city and the region. Hence, also, Harper’s conviction that the new University was not the protector of a denominational creed but would be instead an open defender of democracy and liberal values by its capacity to touch “life, every phase of life, at every point. It enters into every field of thought to which the human mind addresses itself. It has no fixed abode away from man; for it goes to those who cannot go to it. It is shut behind no lofty battlement, for it has no enemy which it would ward off. Strangely enough, it vanquishes its enemies by inviting them into close association with itself. The university is of the people, and for the people, whether considered individually or collectively.”

Harper’s dedication to liberal arts teaching was all the more important, because after 1900 the German model began to suffer stresses and strains caused by those who believed that pure research could not be best undertaken within the traditional university and that specialized research institutes (today, they are called the Max Planck Institutes) should become the bearers of advanced research. As William Clark has suggested, because

of the departmental structure of the American universities, which allowed more flexibility to combine research and teaching in nonhierarchical modes, these strains were less evident, and the history of the modern American research university in the twentieth century has been a continuous, if somewhat conflicted effort to combine both functions.\footnote{William Clark, \textit{Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 466–71.} 

The new American universities like Chicago were oriented toward specific labor markets, but they were not as in Europe state-sanctioned machines to train and test masses of civil servants or Gymnasium teachers. This would provide a foundational difference between the Old World and the New. The leading private universities in the United States did not encompass large populations of students and faculty, stressing intellectual and professional quality over quantity on all fronts and leaving the responsibility of mass higher education to the state universities. Rather they aimed to create models of elite research and educational achievement that, so they believed, would also enhance the ambitions and autonomy of the public universities. The Harvard historian, Albert Bushnell Hart, caught this idea well when he commented that Chicago’s success would become the success of Northwestern and the large public universities of the Middle West, as those institutions sought funds “to compete with Chicago. Every good neighbor has prospered because of the rise of the new University.”\footnote{Albert Bushnell Hart, “William Rainey Harper,” \textit{Boston Evening Transcript}, January 11, 1906, 11.} 

That it so easily became a competitive model and a standard setter for the other great midwestern universities demonstrated that Harper’s vision was indeed based on an American national strategy.

\footnote{McLaughlin to J. Franklin Jameson, June 7, 1916, Andrew C. McLaughlin Papers, box 2, folder 2.}
two opposing ideals of the State, ideals indicated roughly by the words democratic and absolute.”

Further polarization resulted from the entry of the United States into the war in April 1917 and the heightened anti-German stance of the University administration led by President Harry Pratt Judson. Judson did all that he could to mobilize anti-German sentiments on campus, from encouraging students to volunteer for the new military science program that he had established in late 1916 and personally drilling students on Stagg Field to leading war bond solicitations and giving anti-German speeches to the community. The decision of the Board of Trustees in 1917 to purge enemy aliens from the membership roll of the faculty meant that Oskar Bolza’s nonresident professorship was abolished. Moore must have felt badly about this, and in April 1924 he urged Ernest DeWitt Burton, who had succeeded the anti-German-minded Judson as president in 1922, to restore Bolza’s previous status, a move to which Burton readily agreed. Bolza was pleased to accept this reappointment, but also insisted that the action of the trustees in 1917 had caused him “deep sorrow and injury,” and hoped that their willingness to reverse themselves in 1924 was a sign that the board regretted “the injury done me formerly.” The zenith of anti-German animus came in March 1918, when the Board of Trustees voted at Judson’s urging to rescind the award of an honorary degree that the University had presented in June 1911 to Count Johann von Bernstorff, the former German ambassador to the United States.

As it did for the United States at large, the war thus divided our university. In its aftermath, international relationships might slowly be restored, but the extraordinary, if also deeply complex, admiration for things German and more broadly European that was so evident before 1914 was never to return. By the 1920s, it was clear that the great American universities had found their own identity. Writing to a colleague in California in 1925, Adolf von Noé observed that European scholars could no longer presume that, merely because they had generated a list of publications at their home university, they would be eagerly welcomed in the United States and that “America has become more or less self-sufficient along scientific lines, and foreign visitors who do not receive a special invitation to lecture should be discouraged.”

The end of the war brought peace, but it did not bring a wholesale return to European study. Part of the change was the result of the maturation of graduate study in the United States and the feeling of many US graduate students that American doctoral programs were now so rigorous and prestigious that the need for foreign study had been obviated. This view was reflected by Andrew McLaughlin when he commented in late 1918 to C. H. Firth of Oxford:

The situation is such that we do not expect that a very large number of students will go to any European country for graduate work. One reason for this is that students going abroad for prolonged study are likely to find when they come back to the United States that they have lost touch with the academic world and with the university professors. To some extent this absence of intimate

90. Moore to Bolza, September 18, 1914, and December 8, 1915, Eliakim Hastings Moore Papers, box 1, folder 12.


relationship with any particular university reacts unfavorably on a student’s chances for recognition, or, to put it more flatly, reacts unfavorably upon his opportunity to get a position to teach. . . . But in addition to that our universities have developed to such a stage that students find here thoroughly organized graduate courses meeting their requirements and the great body of them are likely to remain here and not be tempted to go abroad.93

Some of the young Americans who ventured to Europe did so with an air of skepticism, both about the state of the Old World and about the fustiness of its academic customs. Describing a group of English academics he met in London, the young Harold Lasswell reported to Charles Merriam in 1923:

I am the despair of the very small group which I have touched because of the obstinate stand I have taken against choosing a detailed subject of historical periodicity and digging in. They don’t think my method is research, and I am so interested listening to them that I haven’t taken the trouble to explain myself. . . . Believe us, there is a young army of ancient traditions to be busted in this academic work, . . . or what is more probable, there is a young tenderfoot who is going to get bused by the aforesaid army. However, I think I know what I am after, and I am taking every opportunity to get it by casual discussion and the like. I like the journalists and the Foreign Office people whom I have met much better than the academicians. 94

Yet, along with this studied, cocky insouciance toward the English scholarly world, Lasswell left little doubt about his general sense of the permanency of British imperial values: “Curious atmosphere, this, near the decaying corpses of personalities and nations dead and dying. A living perception of the antagonisms of race, economic interest and the rest (coupled with the unconscious fetters of society) somehow gives one a chill of the disenchanted soul. The men who think in England are peering into a future for them very black.”95

Americans may no longer have felt compelled to travel to Europe after 1918, or at least to evaluate their experiences in overly pietistic frames of mind, but the same could not be said for students coming in the other direction. In fact, after 1918 the University of Chicago profited from its newly won prestige and continued prosperity, becoming a destination for hundreds of foreign students from abroad. The University thus replicated in a mirror image the process that its own faculty had undertaken in Europe before 1914. By 1923, 432 foreign-born students representing forty-one countries were registered in various academic programs at Chicago, across all departments and schools. 96 Several younger Europeans who came to Chicago in the 1920s to seek their professional and intellectual fortune ended up staying at the University.


95. Ibid.

They included Otto Struve in astronomy and Thorkild Jacobsen in Assyrian and Sumerian studies, who both came in the 1920s as graduate students, received Chicago PhDs, and eventually were invited to join the faculty; and Wilhelm Pauck, who came to study at the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1925 but also ended up with a faculty appointment in the Divinity School.

In a few cases, brilliant young Europeans with European PhDs continued to find places on the Chicago faculty. On the eve of the Depression William Zachariasen, a young postdoctoral fellow from Norway, joined the Department of Physics. He spent the next forty-four years in a distinguished career at Chicago, including service as chairman of the Department of Physics from 1945 to 1949 and 1956 to 1959 and dean of the Division of the Physical Sciences from 1959 to 1962. It was telling, however, that the most distinguished senior European scholar to assume a full professorship at the University of Chicago in the 1920s arrived not from Germany but from Great Britain. Sir William Craigie, who was the third editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and who abandoned an endowed chair at Oxford in 1925 to work on the *Dictionary of American English* project at Chicago, was rightly seen as a particularly prestigious appointment for Chicago to have engineered. Many younger scholars who had studied in Germany before the war now remembered their personal connections with German academic culture with some ambivalence. Barry Karl has shrewdly observed about Charles Merriam, the brilliant Chicago political scientist who was one of the most influential scholars of American and European politics during the interwar period and who had studied with Otto von Gierke and Hugo Preuss in Berlin in 1899–1900, that “after the war … Merriam tended more to deny the relationship than affirm it, though his vacillation on the subject of his German intellectual forebears was characteristic of the problems his generation faced.” Most meaningful scholarly connections between Europe and America that continued in the 1920s at the University of Chicago came about via the initiatives of individual faculty members. Merriam’s nine-volume *Studies in the Making of Citizens*, a series of books dealing with comparative civic training in various European nations and the United States and published by the University of Chicago Press between 1929 and 1931, was informed less by Merriam’s appreciation for traditional European political traditions and much more by his belief that after 1918 American political values of educating responsible citizens, and especially the American ideal of participatory democracy, were “a model for the rest of the world.” Similarly, the work of Merriam’s colleague Quincy Wright on the causes and prevention of war enabled Wright to maintain a large range of professional correspondents and other scholarly contacts in various European states, especially relating to the future of the League of Nations, but within a framework that

97. John Matthews Manly to Ernest D. Burton, October 31, 1924, PP, 1889–1925, box 58, folder 13. Manly quoted a letter from Professor J. F. Royster of the University of North Carolina who believed that Craigie’s appointment was “the farthest step toward American scholarship [that] has been taken for some time and is good proof of the intention of the University to become the first graduate school of the country.”


was defined by Wright’s conviction that America’s involvement in collective security was in the world’s interest, not merely in America’s self-interest. 100

Quincy Wright also became the director of the Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation, which was perhaps the most ambitious and systematic program of engaging world affairs developed at the University of Chicago between 1918 and 1941. This foundation owed much to the internationalist perspectives of Albion Small, who like many US academics had been deeply disillusioned by the shrillness of wartime rhetoric—especially that manufactured by jingoist newspaper publishers eager to boost circulation. In the summer of 1922 a local banker and his wife, M. Haddon MacLean and Pearl Harris MacLean, had attended a summer institute on international politics held at Williamstown, Massachusetts, that was sponsored by Bernard Baruch. They found the presentations enlightening and wondered if a similar, but longer-term and more permanent venture could be organized at the University of Chicago in honor of Pearl MacLean’s recently deceased father, Norman Wait Harris, who had been a prominent Chicago banker. Albion Small’s daughter, Lina, was married to Pearl’s brother, Hayden B. Harris, giving Small access to the Harris family discussions. In November 1922 Albion Small wrote to Pearl Harris MacLean, urging that the Harris children and their spouses consider creating an endowment to encourage the meetings of scholars from different parts of the world to exchange views on key world issues. Small urged:

The war has taught us in a hundred ways how defective are our sources of information, both on home and on foreign affairs. We do not know how to discount the influence of different sorts of interests upon the stuff that is dealt out as information by the newspapers. We shall need more and more, as our international contacts become more intimate, means of informing ourselves as to the precise conditions—as to the real milk in the coconut—in every country with which we are dealing. This all points to the need of drawing upon expert individuals who will not be under the cover of newspaper anonymity, but who will tell what they know for all it’s worth. The income of $100,000 will, of course, not secure all that kind of information which we shall need, but if the fund were wisely administered, it would be a national formative force of growing power and influence. 101

Pearl Harris MacLean and her siblings accepted Small’s advice, and in early 1923 they initiated what came to be called the Norman Wait Harris Foundation with a gift of $150,000 to the University. They made their gift believing that the problems besetting a Europe bankrupted by over four years of total war would surely have a continuing impact on the United States: “The spirit of distrust which pervades the Old World

100. “There can be no doubt that national sovereignty has overridden itself. The economic and cultural requirements of the world demand that sovereign states be subordinated to a world order as the feudal principalities of four centuries ago were subordinated to the national orders. … Those who believe in democracy, in nationality, and in international law cannot hope to turn back to the exaggerated conceptions of national sovereignty. They must confront the imperial design of totalitarianism with a positive program for rehabilitating the standards of individual and national rights, for establishing institutions to secure and develop these standards, and for supporting these institutions by a sustained and general sentiment of world citizenship.” Quincy Wright, “International Affairs: International Law and Totalitarian States,” American Political Science Review 35 (1941): 743. On Wright, see also Steven J. Bucklin, “The Wilsonian Legacy in Political Science: Denna F. Fleming, Frederick L. Schuman, and Quincy Wright” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1993), 17–76.
is not without its effects upon our country. How to confront this disintegrating tendency is a problem worthy of the most serious thought.\textsuperscript{102}

The first series of public lectures funded by the Harris Foundation took place in 1924, one part of which were given by a prominent German international legal scholar, Herbert Kraus, from the University of Königsberg. Kraus’s lectures were subsequently published by the University of Chicago Press as \textit{Germany in Transition}. They contain (for the early 1920s) a particularly shrewd analysis of the threat represented by Adolf Hitler, with Kraus suggesting ominously that

it is no wonder that under such conditions in Germany there is constantly a cry for a leader, which has so far been in vain. Perhaps this is simply because there is at present no leader in Germany, though certainly it is not because the German people as such are unable to accept one. Obedience and discipline in the presence of a strong personality have been most correctly classified as German characteristics. No, a leader has not appeared yet for the reason that this epoch has not produced any man of large enough political caliber to direct the storm.\textsuperscript{103}

Within a decade, Herbert Kraus’s fear of a “strong personality” who could “direct the storm” in Germany came to pass.\textsuperscript{104} Adolf Hitler’s coming to power in early 1933 inaugurated powerful new international movements that had a deep impact on the University of Chicago. Most faculty looked with abhorrence on the activities of the Nazis, and most probably shared Frank Knight’s conviction when he refused to accept the award of an honorary degree from the University of Heidelberg in 1936:

It is with the deepest feelings of regret that I have to decline the proffered dignity. In the present state of political opinion, it simply would not do for an American who cares for any standing as a liberal to accept an honorary degree from a German university. Such things are not, are not intended to be, and probably could not be, simply a matter between scholars and institutions of learning. If the contrary were the case, I should of course be most pleased to accept a degree from the ancient and great University of Heidelberg. But I could not, under present conditions, give this affront, for it would be such, to the great majority of my fellows engaged in the free and impersonal promotion of truth, in America

from the law professorship at the University of Göttingen (where he had moved from Königsberg) for reasons of political unreliability. Kraus was described by one Nazi professor as “a prominent democrat and an advocate of international cooperation,” values which disqualified him from serving as a university professor in the Third Reich. Kraus spent the war in forced retirement in Dresden, where he survived the fire bombings of February 1945, and in 1946 he was able to reclaim his professorship at Göttingen. Kraus’s most notable claim to fame after 1945 was his service as an associate defense counsel to Hjalmar Schacht at the Nuremberg War Crimes trial of 1946. After heated debates among the trial judges, Schacht was exonerated and set free. On Kraus, see Frank Halfmann, “Eine ‘Pflanzstätte bester nationalsozialistischer Rechtsgelehrter’: Die juristische Abteilung der Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftlichen Fakultät,” in \textit{Die Universität Göttingen unter dem Nationalsozialismus}, 2nd ed., ed. Heinrich Becker, Hans-Joachim Dahms, and Cornelia Wegeler (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1998), 115–17, 129–30.
and elsewhere. As you know, a considerable fraction of these, including many of my personal friends and nearest colleagues, are Jews and I am sure you will recognize that this fact makes a difference, unfortunate as that fact may be.105

Ironically, the most significant personal contribution that the University made to resisting Hitler’s terrorism was Franklin Roosevelt’s appointment in June 1933 of William E. Dodd, a distinguished professor of American history at Chicago since 1908, to be the US ambassador to Germany. Dodd was a Jeffersonian Democrat and vigilant internationalist who supported Woodrow Wilson’s foreign policy ideals. Under the direction of Erich Marcks and Karl Lamprecht, he had spent two years at the University of Leipzig from 1897 to 1899, completing a dissertation on Jefferson’s conflict in 1796 with Alexander Hamilton and John Adams. Dodd was the son of poor North Carolina farmers, and his humble social origins shaped his distaste of class and caste privileges of any kind. He disliked privileged aristocratic elites both in Germany and in the United States, and he often compared the Prussian Junkers to the antebellum slave-holding plantation owners. Yet Dodd’s democratic values served him less well as the leading US diplomatic representative in Nazi Germany than either Roosevelt or he could have imagined. Dodd’s work in Berlin was only modestly successful, in part because of his personal inflexibility, his unpopularity with his own staff who found him too “professorial” and ascetic, and his public and private disdain for Hitler and the Nazis (he ostentatiously refused to attend the Nazi Party’s annual Nuremberg rallies). Dodd became a persona non grata not only with the German government but also with the many conservatives in the State Department and Congress, who found his incessant warnings about Hitler to be both boorish and extremist. Having been recalled earlier than he wished, Dodd left his post in Berlin in late 1937, discouraged and humiliated.106

If the decades before 1914 saw a strong movement of American scholars to Germany and the appropriation, albeit selective, of institutional practices and academic ideals from the great Central European universities, the 1930s and 1940s saw a reverse pattern of internationalism, under which approximately forty-five refugee scholars, the majority from Germany and many of them also Jews, gained various kinds of appointments to the faculty of the University of Chicago. Beginning in the early 1930s, a trickle and then a steady flow of exile scholars came to our campus in the wake of Hitler’s rise to power in Germany and his subsequent conquest of much of the rest of continental Europe. President Robert M. Hutchins’s views

105. Frank H. Knight to Carl Brinkmann, May 25, 1936, Frank H. Knight Papers, box 58, folder 7. Knight was invited to receive this honor on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of the founding of the University of Heidelberg. For the controversy surrounding this event, see idem, *Heidelberg and the Universities of America* (New York: Viking Press, 1936). In a rather different context, Adolf von Noé sought to defend Hugo Simon, the German consul general in Chicago in 1933, who was summarily fired by the Nazi government for allegedly failing to insist upon the Nazi flag being flown at the Chicago World’s Fair in July 1933. Noé wrote to German foreign minister Konstantin von Neurath, urging that Simon be retained because of “his profound humanistic education and rhetorical talents, as well as his extraordinarily attractive personality.” Given that Simon had served as Walther Rathenau’s personal secretary in the early 1920s and was a confirmed liberal democrat, he was despised by the new regime, and, in fact, Simon had decided not to return to Germany but to accept a temporary offer to teach at Northwestern University in a form of voluntary exile. See Noé to von Neurath, draft, July 10, 1933; and William E. Dodd to Noé, July 24, 1933, Noé Papers, box 4, folder 13.

of who among the many available refugee scholars should be invited were critical, given that Hutchins controlled the University’s purse strings in an increasingly draconian manner. Although he lent his name to fundraising efforts to support displaced refugee scholars under the aegis of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Foreign Displaced Scholars that was organized in New York City in May 1933, Hutchins’s general view, which he (almost) consistently followed, was that only those refugees who were either extremely useful for teaching purposes or extremely distinguished in their scholarly reputations could or should be offered actual faculty appointments at the University of Chicago. Hutchins attitude was, thus, wholly unsentimental and manifested no public sense that the University owed Central European refugees any unilateral accommodations because of its previous debts to German academic learning. When Hutchins wrote to a wealthy lawyer in Chicago in 1933 that “we should bring at least four distinguished German scholars to the University of Chicago for no less than three years,” the most important word here was “distinguished.”

The refugees came from many different pathways. At the beginning of the Nazi persecutions in May 1933 a prominent chemist at the University of Chicago, Hermann Schlesinger, wrote to Hutchins, alerting him that a number of distinguished German scientists was now available and urging that the University help in any way possible. But Schlesinger was also wise enough to argue that the University should only take scholars “whose coming would not impair the opportunities of our present staff” and that they should be treated in the same way as current faculty in terms of research support “for the future reputation of the University.” In the early 1930s, with the scope of the disaster not yet apparent, Hutchins seemed interested in pursuing several of these possibilities, and the number three man on Schlesinger’s list, James Franck of the University of Göttingen, was eventually recruited by Chicago in 1938. As the decade wore on and the effects of the Depression worsened and as the number of needy refugee scholars increased dramatically, Hutchins became more cautious, stressing that only individuals of the highest level of reputation or promise should be considered. Some suggestions for such appointments came from individual faculty members, who learned of refugees via contacts at other universities or by the refugees themselves contacting them. Other ideas came from the Emergency Committee or other charitable organizations. Still others came via interventions from members of the Board of Trustees or other local civic leaders. Much later in his life Hutchins would recall that the University had no central policy on refugees, other than worrying about their rising expectations once they arrived on campus, but otherwise reacted on an ad hoc basis. In some cases possible appointments fell apart even with Hutchins’s support, as happened in the case of Jacques Maritain, whom Hutchins wanted on the faculty but whom the Department of Philosophy refused to recommend.


110. John Nef reported to an impatient Maritain in 1940: “It is entirely due to Hutchins that we have got as far as we have. He asked me when you were still in Chicago last spring about the chances for getting you as a permanent member of the faculty, and it was at that time that he proposed your appointment to the Department of Philosophy, which has the authority to support it. They not only refused that, after considerable delays, but later on after further delays, they refused Hutchins’s suggestion that you be made visiting professor for next year.” Nef to Maritain, September 5, 1940, Nef Papers, box 29, folder 18.
The ways in which these scholars made contact, and the ways in which the University responded, were idiosyncratic and reflected the highly diversified and decentralized structure of the University. The case of Friedrich Kessler, a talented German legal scholar, is a good example of a situation in which lobbying by a key Chicago faculty member was critical. Kessler’s wife was Jewish, and that fact, together with his profound personal distaste for National Socialism, led him to flee Germany in 1934. A scholar specializing in contracts, credit transactions, and civil procedure, Kessler had done considerable research in US law at the Institut für ausländisches und internationales Privatrecht in Berlin between 1927 and 1934 (both his doctoral dissertation from 1927 and his Habilitation from 1932 dealt with issues involving American marriage law and American tort law). He came to the United States on a short-term grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and ended up at Yale Law School, where he served as a research fellow and lecturer from 1934 to 1938. During this time, he befriended Edward Levi, a young scholar from Chicago who spent a year as a Sterling Fellow at Yale after graduating from the University of Chicago Law School in 1935. Levi and Kessler collaborated on a paper on comparative law, and in the context of this project Levi brought Kessler and his work to the attention of Hutchins.\(^1\) When James William Moore suddenly resigned from the Law School faculty in April 1938 to go to Yale, creating a teaching vacancy, Levi recommended his friend Kessler for an untenured associate professorship. Kessler visited Chicago in May 1938, and Bigelow and Hutchins enthusiastically supported his appointment. Kessler was torn between Chicago and Yale, which had also offered him a junior appointment, and spent several weeks unable to make a decision before opting for Chicago. His wife, Eva, reported her husband’s mood in a private letter to Levi:

> He feels he would leave half-finished work here (book with U.W.). Hamilton said he wanted badly to work with him. … On the other hand: there is Chicago with its attractions and the opportunity to work with you. … You see—that is how it looks to Fritz. If you know any advice: do give to your poor worried friend. He reads Max Weber’s *Religionssoziologie* with great enthusiasm and succeeds in getting his mind away from the choice he has to make—for half hours. But I really did not exaggerate yesterday saying it goes right through his heart.\(^1\)\(^2\)

Unless the scholar had served on the faculty in a temporary or provisional capacity for one or more years, the University was willing to make commitments to permanent tenured appointments in only a few exceptional cases. This frustrated negotiations with charitable relief organizations, which understandably would have preferred that the universities commit themselves beforehand to a permanent position before requesting financial support from the agencies. In some cases, the appointments were distinct failures. Ernst Manheim came in 1937–38 with strong recommendations from senior scholars, but, after a year at Chicago, it was clear that he was not of the quality that the Department of Sociology expected, and he

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111. See Levi to Hutchins, September 19, 1936, Hutchins Administration, box 127, folder 13. Levi observed: “I think that Dr. Kessler is a good man for comparative law work of this type and he ought to be kept in mind.” Hutchins responded: “Sometime when you have the time I should like to talk to you about Kessler.” September 24, 1936, Hutchins Administration, box 127, folder 13.

moved on to a permanent post at the University of Kansas City. Some of the refugees stayed for a short tenure and then moved on, like Edgar Wind in art history and Gerhard Herzberg in astronomy, having made little long-term impact on their departments. Werner Jaeger, a prominent classicist from the University of Berlin, was recruited in 1936 to succeed to the chair held by Paul Shorey, but by 1939 he was on his way to Harvard. Robert Hutchins was unsettled by this loss but, given that Jaeger’s scholarly approach “was understood but was not part of the mainstream of American classical scholarship or American culture,” perhaps the loss was in perspective not that great.

Some of the European scholars were younger men who first gained national and international fame at Chicago, while others were already senior scholars with distinguished reputations in their fields. Each had a complex story to tell, and the range of their emotional adjustments to the new academic culture and new urban civilization was inevitably complex. Many of the most distinguished refugees came only after they had experienced a prior, often frustrating, “trial” period at a smaller or less prestigious institution: Hans Morgenthau at the University of Kansas City, Hans Rothfels at Brown University, and Leo Strauss at the New School in New York. For each of these scholars, Chicago became a new and prestigious home, and they were impressed with the University and its academic resources and scholarly communities. Hans Rothfels, a talented, politically conservative German historian, wrote in relief to his former teacher Friedrich Meinecke that having arrived at Chicago he was impressed by the “scale of the place and high level [of scholarship and learning],” which had on Rothfels “a stimulating effect after so many years of more or less elementary-level teaching.”

Perhaps the most notable refugee scholars came in the physical sciences, with Enrico Fermi and James Franck, both winners of the Nobel Prize, being the most obvious. Once at Chicago, Franck devoted considerable efforts to helping colleagues left behind in Germany, telling Otto Struve during the Christmas holidays in 1938, “I used all my spare time writing letters on behalf of the people who are suffering in Germany.” But Chicago also hired Paul A. Weiss in zoology, Marcel Schein in physics, Konrad Bloch in biochemistry, and Antoni Zygmund in mathematics, all of whom had distinguished careers with many significant scholarly contributions. The history of the Oriental Institute was dramatically shaped by a generation of brilliant European scholars who transformed it between


117. Paul Weiss soon encountered Harold Swift’s patronage, with Swift inviting Weiss to visit his vacation home at Lakeside, Michigan, in 1935 to investigate how Swift could cultivate toads on his farm that might then be used for scientific investigations. See Swift to Filbey, December 23, 1935, Hutchins Administration, box 316, folder 2.
1930 and 1960 into the distinguished research organization that we know today. Henri Frankfort, Thorkild Jacobsen, Arno Poebel, Erich F. Schmidt, and Arnold Walther, who came before 1933, were not refugees; but the additional presence of Gustav von Grunebaum, Ignace J. Gelb, A. Leo Oppenheim, and Hans Gueterbock further confirmed the Oriental Institute’s stunning international reputation. Still other foreign scholars made a strong impact in various fields of the humanities, including Rudolf Carnap in philosophy, Arnold Bergsträsser in Germanic languages, Wilhelm Pauck in divinity, and Ulrich Middeldorf, Ludwig Bachhofer, and Otto von Simson in art history. Among the regular academic departments at Chicago, art history was perhaps the most fundamentally transformed by the refugee appointments. But in the immediate postwar period, political science also experienced a major impact via the presence of Hans Morgenthau and Leo Strauss.

Occasionally, a refugee scholar ended up at Chicago via a set of completely idiosyncratic events, which, in retrospect, related as much to intra-faculty political wrangling as to the substantive merits of the case itself. For example, Hans Rothfels was appointed to a tenured professorship in the Department of History during a successful visiting appointment in the Summer Quarter of 1946. Rothfels was a prominent scholar of nineteenth-century German political history who had studied with Friedrich Meinecke at Berlin. Rothfels occupied a full professorship at the University of Königsberg until he was dismissed by the Nazis in 1934 and fled Germany in 1939, gaining a temporary appointment at Brown. The Department of History had originally not intended to appoint a scholar in modern German history, since S. William Halperin was already on its staff, but rather hoped to hire a senior scholar specializing in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European history. In the years immediately preceding the appointment of Hans Rothfels the Department of History found itself in an ongoing battle with President Hutchins over new appointments. Hutchins had manifested a consistently negative opinion of most of the department’s personnel recommendations since the mid-1930s, so much so that the department’s chair during the later 1940s, William T. Hutchinson, would later recall his colleagues’ “increasing sense of frustration born of the Central Administration’s unwillingness to concede that the Department knew either the proper content of its own curriculum or the qualifications of an ‘outstanding historian.’”

Seeking to rebuild its depleted ranks, the department nominated a group of highly promising historians in November 1943 (including Franklin L. Baumer, Robert R. Palmer, C. Vann Woodward, Wesley F. Craven, and John C. Miller), hoping that the administration would at

118. One former student recalled his experience upon arriving at the Oriental Institute in 1948: “Arriving at the University of Chicago in the fall of 1948 to engage in graduate studies, I encountered for the first time Oriental studies as an institution. The university at large was radiating a particular excitement generated from the confluence of two intellectual traditions, the American and the European, which was represented by the large number of scholars from various European countries, Germany in particular, who had migrated to the United States due to conditions in Europe in the 1930s and during World War II. The European scholars were as fascinated by the American academic system (in which governmental and private funding agencies of all sorts set broad goals and let individual institutions, scholars, and students freely choose the manner of pursuing them) as were the American scholars and students by the presence of renowned foreign scholars whom fate had dropped in their midst and who had brought with them their diverse ways of thinking and teaching.” Muhsin Mahdi, “Orientalism and the Study of Islamic Philosophy,” Journal of Islamic Studies 1 (1990): 81.

least approve offers to two or three, but Hutchins rejected all of them.\textsuperscript{120} The department then renominated Wesley F. Craven in January 1946 for a full professorship in American colonial history, but Hutchins turned this recommendation back again as well. In a kind of parallel action directed against Hutchins, the department had already voted in August 1945 not to appoint Ernst Kantorowicz, a German refugee specializing in medieval history who was then at Berkeley and was strongly favored by Dean Richard McKeon of the Division of the Humanities, John U. Nef Jr. of the Committee on Social Thought, and Robert Hutchins himself.\textsuperscript{121} Defending its professional prerogatives against what the majority of the department felt to be Hutchins’s capriciousness and high-handedness, the department even polled seven major medieval scholars in the United States, the majority of whom ranked Kantorowicz as not being at the top of the field, with one referee urging that “he should never lecture to undergraduates. I doubt that he should even lecture at all, if he always performs as he did here.”\textsuperscript{122} The last straw came in May 1946 when the department’s renewed attempt to recruit the brilliant young American historian of the French Revolution, Robert R. Palmer, collapsed when Princeton University preempted Chicago by offering Palmer a full professorship.

In the aftermath of this guerrilla war, with departmental faculty members feeling badly over the “vile state of the Department” because of its alleged mistreatment by Hutchins, and with William T. Hutchinson insisting that “the Office of the Central Administration, as usual in recent years, seems to lie awake nights thinking up petty ways to annoy Departments,” Hans Rothfels appeared on campus.\textsuperscript{123} A man of considerable personal charm and broad erudition, Rothfels gained an advocate in Bessie Louise Pierce, the noted expert on the history of Chicago, who happened to be the informal acting chair of the department for the summer term. Rothfels also met a number of department members at two pleasant social occasions soon after his arrival in Hyde Park, and in late July the department suddenly voted to offer him a full professorship. The chair at the time, William Hutchinson, secured the support of his colleagues, including the grudging support of Louis Gottschalk, who had favored the appointment of a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century specialist instead, to push through Hutchinson, tried to persuade his colleagues to compromise with Hutchins, but they adamantly refused: “I could not persuade my colleagues in this afternoon’s faculty meeting to adopt my point of view in regard to [the] Kantorowicz matter. I believe that the stubbornness of a majority of them in not yielding a whit to the desires of the President [is] really working against the best interests of the Dept. And yet I am only too aware that the President’s dictatorial methods are irritating and merit resentment on our part. But because of his power under the Statutes he holds all the ace cards.” Hutchinson, Private Diary, entry of August 2, 1945, Hutchinson Papers, Addenda, box 4.

\textsuperscript{120} Hutchinson to Redfield, November 8, 1943, Division of the Social Sciences Records, box 22. Hereafter cited as SSD Records.

\textsuperscript{121} Hutchinson, Private Diary, entries of April 11, 1945, May 16, 1945, May 17, 1945, August 2, 1945, and August 21, 1945, Hutchinson Papers, Addenda, box 4; Louis Gottschalk to William T. Hutchinson, May 14, 1945, Louis Gottschalk Papers, box 2, folder 3. Hutchinson also took the highly unusual step of submitting to Robert Hutchins an extremely detailed eighteen-page review of Kantorowicz’s scholarship, together with copies of letters of approval or disapproval from nine local Chicago faculty members on May 25, 1945. See SSD Records, box 22.

\textsuperscript{122} Minutes of the Department of History, August 2, 1945, and August 21, 1945; and Hutchinson to McKeon, August 21, 1945, SSD Records, box 22. Louis Gottschalk believed that, based on these surveys, Kantorowicz “ranks somewhere about tenth in his special field. He would probably rank no higher among scholars in the field of history in general.” The department chair, William T.
Rothfels’s appointment. Ironically, on the evening of the same day that the vote was taken, Rothfels gave a paper at the Graduate History Club on the rise of Nazism, which William Hutchinson described as follows: “There was a large crowd. Although he is an émigré, or because of it, I thought he ‘leaned over backward’ too much in apologizing for the Germans accepting Nazism. Also, he rambled a lot. Altogether I regret (for I have a very high regard for him) that he did not help himself in the esteem of my colleagues who hadn’t met him before.”

Granted that the department took the vote on Rothfels before he gave what amounted to a failed job talk, but why did they do this? Hutchinson suggested that the faculty were impressed with Rothfels’s scholarly publications, but an equally compelling answer may lie in Louis Gottschalk’s somewhat peeved comment to Hutchinson that he was now ready to support anyone whom the central administration would approve. The key behind William Hutchinson’s decision was that this case involved an appointment that Dean Robert Redfield was willing to support and that Redfield could persuade Hutchins to support as well. In fact, Redfield was the actual architect of Hans Rothfels’s coming to Chicago from the very beginning. Redfield first learned about Rothfels from the German philosopher and one-time adviser and executive assistant to Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg during World War I, Kurt Riezler, who was now a member of the faculty of the New School for Social Research. Riezler contacted Redfield in October 1945 with a note that suggested that Rothfels “is a first class man and a sure bet—the best of the younger generation of German historians, both as a scholar and a broadly educated man. He is not at all the narrow type of the so-called national historians of Germany and has real knowledge of the factors and forces operating in the political field around the globe.” Redfield was sufficiently intrigued to ask John Nef for an opinion (suggesting to Nef that “Kurt Riezler, whose advice to Mr. Hutchins has often been found helpful and reliable has suggested that Hans Rothfels might be a person who should be appointed here”), and he soon wrote to Rothfels asking for more information about his publishing interests. Redfield then maneuvered to get the Department of History to invite him for a temporary teaching assignment in the following Summer Quarter, using a special endowment fund, the Hamill Fund, to pay for the visit. Up to this point, few members of the department knew anything about Hans Rothfels, and when Redfield asked Louis Gottschalk to read one of Rothfels’s essays, he received back a mixed opinion, praising Rothfels’s erudition and thoughtfulness but also noting that “a certain German patriotism shows through the effort at detachment.” Undeterred, Redfield pushed ahead, and he soon had more ammunition in the person of Edward Mead Earle, a Princeton historian whom Redfield knew from their service together on the Board of Trustees of the Social Science Foundation in New York City. Earle wrote in late February 1946, suggesting that he had heard via certain “subterranean

124. “I don’t believe Louis Gottschalk is enthusiastic about him although you may recall that he recently said in [a] faculty meeting that he would not oppose the appointment of any qualified scholar in the European field whom the administration would favor. … I know that Louis Gottschalk at least faintly hopes that Robert Palmer may not be so firmly fixed in Princeton, despite his recent big advance there, that he might not be persuaded eventually to come here.” Hutchinson to Pierce, July 11, 1946, Hans Rothfels File, Department of History Records.


126. Riezler to Redfield, October 11, 1945, SSD Records, box 55.
rumors” that Chicago might be considering Rothfels and added his own strong endorsement to that of Kurt Riezler.127

Once the Robert R. Palmer initiative had imploded in May 1946, leaving the historians even more discouraged, Redfield had a free avenue on which to push ahead, assuming that Rothfels was able to make a sufficiently positive personal impression when he showed up in late June 1946. When this proved to be the case, Hutchinson called a rump session of the department on July 24, 1946, to vote on the recommendation (no minutes were kept of the meeting), and within a week Redfield had secured the central administration’s approval of Hutchinson’s recommendation. Bessie Louise Pierce, who had a keen sense of intramural University politics, hit the nail on the head when she wrote to fellow historian Walter Johnson: “You may not have heard that Mr. Rothfels has been invited to join the staff as professor of European history. He apparently made a great hit with the Administration and his appointment went through like greased lightning.”128 Given that Robert Redfield was about to retire from the deanship of the Division of the Social Sciences at the end of August 1946, leaving Hutchinson with no sense of what might lie ahead for the Department of History on the decanal level, he may well have seen Rothfels as an acceptable “bird in the hand” option who would be approved by the lame duck dean.129 Having presided over the Wesley F. Craven and

127. Earle to Redfield, February 26, 1946, SSD Records, box 55. Earle knew Rothfels because of the latter’s contribution of a chapter on Clausewitz to the volume on Makers of Modern Strategy that Earle edited in 1943.


129. Hutchinson described Redfield’s departure with the thought that “I’ve always liked his efficiency and squareness, although he has never been a warm friend of History. I fear to learn who his successor will be.” Hutchinson, Private Diary, entry of July 18, 1946, Hutchinson Papers, Addenda, box 4.


encounter American civic democratic practices, since he was protected within the sturdy bastions of an elite university. According to this argument, teaching at Chicago furthered Rothfels’s acceptance of the idea of a democratic civil society, such as did not exist in Germany in the 1920s, but it did so in a sheltered way that also allowed Rothfels to maintain deeply conservative social and national values, such as he seemed to favor after he returned to West Germany in 1951. Some of the criticisms leveled at Rothfels reveal a lack of understanding of how US research universities operated in the 1940s and 1950s, and other scholars have defended Rothfels as being a decent, serious scholar who had no intention of covering up the heinous record of the Nazis. Surely one of the most ironic features of the Riezler-Rothfels connection was Rothfels’s attempt to prevent Kurt Riezler and then his brother Walter Riezler from publishing the secret diaries that the former had kept between 1914 and 1918, which seemed to implicate Germany in the outbreak of the war.

Whatever one’s views of Rothfels’s subsequent scholarship, both sides of the recent debate have drawn attention to the fact that the University of Chicago did have a strong impact on this particular refugee scholar who eventually opted to return to Europe. Yet, ironically, Rothfels’s original appointment was unplanned for and very much owing both to the Department of History’s almost desperate personnel situation after years of demoralizing feuding with the Hutchins administration and to the cunning of a brilliant, but lame-duck dean who knew how to get things done.

If Hans Rothfels was an inadvertent appointment initiated by a divisional dean, two cases involving refugee German Jewish jurists demonstrated the role that personal relationships and ideological perspectives could also play. The one, Max Rheinstein, was extremely successful and had an enduring impact on the Law School, while the other, involving Hans Kelsen, became caught up in a complicated story of territorialism and ideology. Because Max Rheinstein became one of the most successful cases of a refugee scholar at Chicago, it is worth examining his saga in more detail. A veritable model of adaptation and assimilation, Max Rheinstein studied law at the University of Munich and Berlin, specializing in civil law and comparative law.


Columbia University Law School, wrote to Dean Harry A. Bigelow of our Law School in February 1934 describing a bright German refugee scholar who “is probably the most promising man available for comparative law work in the United States. While I should not care to be quoted on this, I think that he would do a substantially better job for us than some of the persons who are now on our staff.” In addition, Bigelow received a supporting letter from Karl N. Llewellyn of Columbia insisting that Rheinstein “possesses one of the most acute minds I have run into, an effective teaching personality, a rather remarkable command of English, and a range of interest which is little less than amazing.” Bigelow was sold on the case, and arranged Rheinstein’s appointment as a visiting assistant professor as of January 1, 1935, partly on the basis of temporary funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation. (These funds, it should be noted, were an early example of Rheinstein’s entrepreneurship, in that Rheinstein himself was involved in negotiating them.) Rheinstein was renewed as an assistant professor until he was promoted to an untenured associate professorship in 1937. Solid funding for Rheinstein’s job was finally secured with a new endowment, the Max Pam Fund, to which the Law School gained access in 1936. Harry Bigelow praised Rheinstein to Hutchins as someone with a “vigorous but pleasant” personality and “very high” potential as a researcher. Both Bigelow and Wilbur G. Katz (who succeeded Bigelow as dean of the Law School in 1939) encouraged Rheinstein’s growing intellectual ambitions, and Katz especially appreciated Rheinstein’s good citizenship, calling Rheinstein in 1941 an “indefatigable worker” and someone who was doing “an excellent volunteer job” in teaching military law, and whose “volume of … publications is extraordinary.” In the summer of 1938 Rheinstein was joined by a second German refugee scholar, Friedrich Kessler. Both Kessler and Rheinstein were ideal candidates for the Law School, since both had prior knowledge of American law. Both proved intellectually flexible and culturally adaptable, and both quickly came to be liked by the senior faculty of the school.

Harry Bigelow quickly realized that in recruiting Rheinstein he had secured someone who could open up a “field which has never been adequately taken care of in the history of the Law School, namely the field of Comparative Law.” Rheinstein quickly developed a very ambitious program to establish comparative law as a primary subject of interest at the Law School. Rheinstein’s passion for comparative law arose from multiple sources. His own hybridist scholarship and his life story as a wanderer between two continents were part of the motivation, but he also believed that contemporary legal education in the United States was too narrow and unimaginative and that a more rigorous and general approach would give a young lawyer “a detailed knowledge of the problems of social life which the rules of law are destined to regulate. He must be able to draw upon the stock of experience the world has made in centuries of legal regulation. He must be familiar with the lessons of legal history, as well as with the experiences made in parts of the world other than that in which he lived.”
happens to live.” Precisely because lawyers exercised so much power in the US political system, they needed a more comprehensive and cosmopolitan training. To achieve this end, Rheinstein proposed that courses be developed that would move beyond teaching future lawyers the law as it prevailed in the United States by incorporating comparative elements of Roman law and continental European law. Rheinstein was convinced that “courses organized on such lines would give the students both a full knowledge of positive American law and a deeper, critical insight into the tasks and functions of the law.”

Finally, Rheinstein’s conviction about the importance of teaching comparative law within the university system reflected his broader beliefs about the international power and attractiveness of great universities. From the very beginning of their existence in the twelfth century, European universities drew students and teachers from all over Europe; and in the modern period, the great European and American research universities of the late nineteenth century became “centers of attraction for the ambitious young people” from Asia and Latin America. Universities for Rheinstein were bearers of the Great Tradition of the higher humanistic learning, a tradition that had an essential “supranational character”; and in the twentieth century, the American universities had begun to assume this role of international flash points of creativity. To articulate and sponsor international exchanges and comparative scholarship was for Rheinstein, therefore, an intrinsic part of the fundamental mission of a great university.

Rheinstein had little opportunity for systematic interventions in international and comparative law until after the end of World War II. After his return from military government service in Germany, however, Rheinstein received a small grant ($10,000 to $20,000 annually) to establish a Comparative Law Research Center. Rheinstein also encouraged foreign law students from Germany and elsewhere in Europe to spend a postgraduate year at the Law School, many of whom qualified for a master’s of comparative law (MCompL). Under this program talented younger jurists from Germany, Italy, Spain, and other European nations were invited to Chicago for an intensive year of study, primarily of American law and political and legal institutions. Wolfgang von Marshall remembered his yearlong experience at Chicago as one of cultural transformation and intellectual intensity, and the importance of individual responsibility—“reading assignments” may be the greatest American contribution to higher education in the twentieth century. Student autonomy and self-responsibility, always a hallmark of Chicago’s learning systems, were now deployed to students whose prior

142. Max Rheinstein, “The Law School,” n.d. [most likely 1940 or 1941], Hutchins Administration, box 129, folder 10.

143. Rheinstein to Ernst W. Puttkamer, April 6, 1955, Max Rheinstein Papers, box 48, folder 2.

144. The MCompL was similar to the LLM program that had begun at Chicago in the early 1950s, which offered a one-year master’s degree in legal studies to students who had graduated from an approved law school. Until 1951, the first degree offered by the Law School was the LLB, with the JD degree reserved as an advanced degree. In that year the faculty voted to make the JD the first degree, based on three years of full-time study. The LLM degree was then created as additional one-year program of advanced legal studies, beyond the now standard JD. See the Max Rheinstein, Bernard Meltzer, and Harry Kalven, memorandum [authored by Rheinstein] to the faculty, April 9, 1951, Rheinstein Papers, folder 4.

training had been much more regulated and controlled, and the advantages were obvious to the participants.

Then, with the support of the Ford Foundation, which in January 1956 gave him $45,000 a year for ten years, Rheinstein was able to launch a major initiative in comparative legal studies. This was the Foreign Law Program, which he developed in 1955 and 1956 for law students who had graduated from a US law school. The Foreign Law Program involved a two-year sequence of training, under which the US students would devote one year at the University of Chicago studying German or French civil law and then spend a second year in the country whose civil law they studied, undertaking additional practical and academic training. The purpose of the program was to “train graduates of American law schools for effective work in the legal system of a Civil Law country and thus to facilitate the conduct of American legal business abroad and to enrich the student’s understanding of his own system in his work either as a practitioner or a teacher.”

Although Rheinstein received an attractive offer from the University of Heidelberg in 1955, he confided to Arnold Bergsträsser that he preferred to stay at Chicago, because “every year we shall have with us a small number of highly qualified young Americans who will stay at Chicago for one year and then will be sent under our auspices to some foreign country. Upon their return we hope they will be really competent to do comparative law work and to work for the establishment of intellectual contacts between the so-far-isolated world of American law and the civil law countries.” Rheinstein was convinced that “American law teaching and learning have long suffered from provincialism. Our lawyers are hardly aware of the fact that there are legal systems other than ours, and they are frequently unable to read any foreign legal publications, even though they may hold highly suggestive ideas for us.” His plan was, in this sense, a large-scale effort toward transcultural and even trans-civilizational understanding, with the ultimate benefit being to “inject into the teaching and learning of American law all those ideas which of necessity will be engendered through their contact with the legal institutions and solutions of other countries, which have problems similar to ours and have developed them in their own ways through traditions of many centuries.”

Rheinstein sustained a wide-ranging program of scholarship in the 1950s and 1960s on divorce law reform and on the development of family law in America, and these publications had an enduring impact. He also produced an English translation (with Edward Shils) of the sections relating to law from Max Weber’s great work *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. But the professional gambit that seems to have been closest to Rheinstein’s heart was the creation of new ways to sponsor the comparative study of the law. Rheinstein’s Foreign Law Program was the work of a visionary teacher. In fact, Rheinstein was fifty years ahead of his time; only very recently have legal scholars come to appreciate the salience and intrinsic scholarly value of the kind of systematic comparative legal studies, grounded in deep knowledge of different world legal systems, that Rheinstein advocated after 1945. In all of his projects and courses, Rheinstein sought to encourage in his students intellectual self-confidence,

146. See Rheinstein to the Members of the Law Faculty, March 1, 1956, Rheinstein Papers, box 49, folder 1.

147. Rheinstein to Arnold Bergsträsser, January 9, 1955, Rheinstein Papers, box 9, folder 5.

148. Ibid.

curiosity, and independence of thought.\textsuperscript{150} This came through rather strikingly in a letter that he sent to Peter Siemens, a German student he met in Berlin in 1947. In tones that are reminiscent of the final pages of Max Weber’s *Science as a Vocation*, Rheinstein replied:

There is another point which I sense somewhere in your letter and which I should like to warn you about. Perhaps I can best tell you what I mean by indicating an experience which I had with some students in Marburg. In our conversation they repeatedly deplored the lack in present day Germany of any ‘exemplary personality’. I asked them what they meant and it turned out that they were anxiously searching the horizon for some man who would have impeccable character and such outstanding intellectual qualities that the German youth would really look up to him and could not only find in his idea, but quite particularly in the example set by him, the lacking guidance in their own lives. I have found similar thoughts in a good many places and I now sense them in your letter. I can understand them well. They are thoroughly natural but they are dangerous and utopian. The impeccable personality for which so many young people in Germany are now searching does not exist. There certainly does not live anywhere any human being which would be free of shortcomings of character or mind. Man is neither an angel nor a god nor even a demi-god. … They were shocked by my reaction and in some despair asked me whether there was anything left for them to do if there could not be found anybody in whom they could have absolute confidence.

It was a great surprise when I told them that the one person in whom everyone should have confidence was everyone for himself and that they should, therefore, do their utmost to develop their own minds both as to ability of reasoning and as to knowledge of the world. The realization that one has to rely upon one’s own mind and character and that one, therefore, has to discipline and train it, is in my opinion the only way.\textsuperscript{151}

If Rheinstein’s example revealed how intrinsic talent and energy, an appealing personality, carefully cultivated networks, and local fit could all merge into one stunningly successful appointment, the story of Hans Kelsen demonstrated the contingent and idiosyncratic features that could easily doom a case. Kelsen was one of the most distinguished Central European jurists and legal philosophers to end up in the wave of Jewish refugees from Hitler’s Europe, and he was one of the most important legal minds of the twentieth century. The author of a series of major works, including *Main Problems in State Law Theory*, *The Pure Theory of Law*, and the *General Theory of Law and the State*, Kelsen was perhaps the leading advocate of legal positivism in interwar Europe. Coming to intellectual maturity in late imperial Vienna—the capital of a multiethnic imperial state that was plagued by nationalist, religious, and class conflicts but which also enjoyed strong apolitical civil service traditions of supranational imperial governance—Kelsen devoted his career to a series of brilliant attempts to protect the autonomy of the law from partisan political manipulations or ideological colorations. Kelsen’s intellectual roots in the apolitical administrative state of the Habsburg Empire influenced the whole course of his subsequent career. A dedicated liberal in his political


\textsuperscript{151} Rheinstein to Siemens, July 8, 1947, Rheinstein Papers, box 42, folder 5.
temperament, Kelsen insisted upon a strict differentiation between the political “is” and the judicial “ought,” arguing that the positive law was a hierarchically organized system of consequential norms, the ethical value of which could not be inferred from social or economic or ideological factors extrinsic to its logical structures. Opposing any attempts to link the idea of law to metaphysical constructs or natural rights theories, Kelsen was much criticized by natural law theorists who sought to justify reified systems of natural rights, by legal realists who wanted to integrate insights from sociology and economics into the shaping of the law, and by right-wing statists like Carl Schmitt who insisted that executive power could be legitimately exercised by praesidial decrees independent of the democratically elected legislature. Kelsen was also a staunch democrat in the Central European world of the 1920s that was alternatively impatient with and hostile to democracy. Dean Roscoe Pound of the Harvard Law School, who nominated Kelsen for an honorary degree on the occasion of Harvard University’s Tercentennial in September 1936, believed that Kelsen was “one of the outstanding figures in the science of law in the world.” His work continues to provoke interest from legal philosophers and political theorists in our time as well. Because the files on Kelsen’s non-appointment at the University of Chicago survive in considerable detail, it is also possible to reconstruct the paths through which this case traveled, revealing the role that personal ideology, timing, and jurisdictional rivalries often played in the fate of these refugee scholars.

Hans Kelsen’s proposed appointment originated in the spring of 1938 when Charles Merriam suggested to Robert Redfield that Kelsen could be attracted to Chicago. Merriam had first met Kelsen in Geneva in August 1934, reporting to colleagues in Chicago that “Kelsen, who drafted the Austrian democratic constitution, later went to Cologne, and still later was ousted as a non-Aryan, regards the American experiment [the New Deal] as the most important in the world, and its successful outcome as the only alternative to catastrophe in the Western world.” Charles Merriam greatly admired Kelsen’s scholarly work on public law and the state, believing it to be a major contribution to the theory of democracy. It is important for the full story that Merriam, who was a premier academic entrepreneur and also had a broad knowledge of German political theory and jurisprudence, seems in fact to have been interested in securing for Kelsen a longer-term appointment, the first step toward which would be a visitorship. Redfield consulted several local colleagues, including the young assistant professor in the Law School, Edward Levi, who was interested in exploring linkages

152. Pound to Eric C. Bellquist, January 9, 1942, Roscoe Pound Papers, Harvard University Law School, Cambridge, MA. I am grateful to my colleague, Dennis J. Hutchinson, for his assistance in helping me gain access to the Kelsen-Pound correspondence at Harvard.


between law and political and social theory. Levi responded: “After a little more consideration I still think that Kelsen would be an admirable choice and I definitely rate him higher than [Gerhart] Husserl.” Based on Levi’s and other positive evaluations, Redfield decided to support the initiative, writing to Hutchins: “So far as I am able to judge from consideration of various views of Professor Kelsen that have been presented to me, his coming to this University to teach in the Department of Political Science for a year is likely to improve the scholarly character of the work of that department. His presence here should also be a favorable circumstance in developing a connection with the more theoretical interests of members of the Law School.” Hutchins approved the recommendation, authorizing Merriam to offer Kelsen $7,000 for the 1938–39 academic year. Kelsen responded in July 1938 to Merriam that he was grateful for the “great distinction” of an appointment at Chicago and that in Chicago “I could find no other place in the United States better suited for my work of an ideologically-critical analysis of the idea of justice on which I have been working since many years,” but that he was not in a position to abandon so suddenly his existing commitments at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva. In the aftermath of the Munich Crisis in October 1938, Kelsen decided that he did want to move to the United States, and he wrote to Merriam asking if an appointment in 1939–40 academic year would be possible. He also wrote to other prominent US contacts asking for assistance, including Felix Frankfurter at Harvard, who sent a copy of Kelsen’s letter to Hutchins. Hutchins remained sympathetic, but now sought outside financial backing for the proposal, instructing James Stifler, the secretary of the University, to approach the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars to ask for $2,000 in support of the initiative. Stifler’s appeal of November 15, 1938, signaled that “it would be our hope, of course, that the experiment might result in a permanent addition of a great scholar to our faculty, but with regard to that we cannot say more.” When pressed by the committee as to whether the University did in fact intend to offer Kelsen a permanent position, Stifler wrote again a month later reporting, “We now believe that Dr. Kelsen’s abilities are such that, unless something develops that we cannot now foresee, we shall be able to offer him tenure of an indefinite length.”

156. Levi was involved in 1938 with several other colleagues in proposing a new entity within the Law School to be called the “Department of Law and Politics.” The purpose of the new unit would be to explicate the “underlying assumptions made in those branches of knowledge which deal with man and his place in the social order.” Levi also reported that he had conferred with Robert Redfield about this project as well. See Hutchins Administration, box 128, folder 1; ibid., box 335, folder 8.


160. Stifler to Whyte, November 15, 1938, Hutchins Administration, box 287, folder 5.

161. Stifler to Betty Drury, December 27, 1938, Hutchins Administration, box 287, folder 5.
So far so good, but problems soon ensued. In seeking to revive the proposal, Charles Merriam requested that the Law School endorse the proposal. But when the law faculty met in mid-January of 1939, serious reservations emerged. Harry Bigelow reported to Hutchins: “Numerous motions were made and votes taken, the first attempt being to secure a commitment on the part of the faculty to take Professor Kelsen if necessary on a fulltime basis and for a definite part, presumably one-half, of his time. This motion was defeated. Other motions working in the general direction of a diminution of the extent of the commitment were also successfully defeated. The final motion was that Professor Kelsen should ‘be offered an appointment to the Law faculty not to exceed one year with no budgetary charge on the Law School budget and with Kelsen not to give more than one-half of his time to the Law School’. This motion was carried by a vote of 6 to 4.” Bigelow then reported that Merriam, who was present during these discussions, suggested that the Department of Political Science would be willing to take full financial responsibility for Kelsen’s appointment, and this proposal led to the suggestion that “Mr. Kelsen [would] come in that way with the possibility then of making either a year to year or some other arrangement for his cooperation with the Law School, without a definite engagement for any particular length of time or any particular amount of work.” Bigelow supported the latter idea, although he had “a little reservation as to whether he is still going up or now leveling off in his achievement. I should be very reluctant to make any permanent commitment on the part of the Law School with respect to his membership in this faculty.”

162. Bigelow to Hutchins. January 24, 1939, Hutchins Administration, box 287, folder 5. Edward Levi prepared summary minutes of this meeting that suggest there was strong disagreement among the faculty over the issue of hiring another legal philosopher. One motion that was offered was that “it was the sense of the

Bigelow’s memo did not provide any substantive explanation of the reasons for majority’s opposition to Kelsen, but a subsequent memo that Wilbur Katz, who succeeded Bigelow as dean of the Law School in July 1940, submitted to Leonard White provides more concrete information. Katz confessed to White: “I am sure you realize what our problem is. Bluntly put, it is the problem of a third refugee and that of ‘another philosopher’. With Adler, Levi, Sharp, Rheinstein, and Kessler all interested in the philosophy of law, many members of the faculty feel that the addition of another legal philosopher does not represent our most pressing need if any University funds whatever are required.” It was difficult to proceed because of intramural jurisdictional issues over the role of legal theory in the Law School’s curriculum and because of concerns among some faculty members that, with the refugee scholars Max Rheinstein and Friedrich Kessler already having been appointed, the Law School did not need additional refugees.

Charles Merriam then tried to proceed only on the basis of political science, but he now encountered financial hurdles. Specifically, the faculty that no additional legal philosopher is wanted on the law faculty at this time.” This motion was defeated by a 5 to 4 vote. See “Minutes of the Meeting of January 19, 1939,” Law School Records, Addenda 95–84, box 7. It is impossible to reconstruct who voted on which side, but it seems likely that Rheinstein and Kessler would have voted against the negative motion relating to legal philosophy, and it seems equally plausible that they would have joined the final majority in favor of a one-year visit by Kelsen.

163. Wilbur Katz to Leonard D. White, July 30, 1940, SSD Records, Hans Kelsen File. Lest this quote suggest parochialism on the part of the faculty it should be mentioned that, by hiring both Rheinstein and Kessler, the Law School at Chicago had already generated an extraordinary record of openness to foreign refugee scholars, much more so than most of its peer law schools. See Kyle Graham, “The Refugee Jurist and American Law Schools, 1933–1941,” American Journal of Comparative Law 50, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 801–2.
Emergency Committee felt that the University’s intended salary for Kelsen exceeded what it could reasonably support, and they declined to contribute. Similarly, the Rockefeller Foundation raised questions about whether Kelsen was indeed in urgent need of relocation from the relative security of Switzerland, and it was not immediately supportive either. Under these circumstances, and with no real support from the Law School, Merriam reported to Kelsen that the University could not renew its prior offer for the new academic year.

In the interim, the New School for Social Research offered Kelsen a visiting professorship for 1939–40, but Kelsen again decided to try to remain at Geneva, since he was unable to obtain visas for his children to come to the United States.\(^{164}\) With the outbreak of the war in September 1939, Kelsen determined that he had to leave Europe permanently. He might have availed himself of the New School’s short-term offer, but Kelsen was clearly interested in a more prestigious position, and upon arriving in New York in June 1940 he again wrote to Charles Merriam and Quincy Wright that he was now in New York City, having decided that conditions even in Geneva had become impossible for him and that “these circumstances urge me to look for a new position in this country.”\(^{165}\) He also reported that he had been in contact with officials at the Rockefeller Foundation who were now willing to provide half of his salary for a transitional three-year period. For the 1940–41 academic year, Kelsen had received and already accepted an invitation from Harvard University to give the Oliver Wendell Holmes Lectures. The question became whether he could accept both a Chicago appointment and the lectureship at Harvard.

Kelsen learned by early September from the Rockefeller Foundation that he could not hold both appointments simultaneously, so Wright and White then shifted their efforts to securing another offer for the 1941–42 academic year to teach political theory.\(^{166}\) In this they found little support from Robert Hutchins and Hutchins’s vice-president, Emery Filbey. Although Leonard White, chair of the Department of Political Science, sounded out Kelsen as to whether he would accept a visiting appointment at $7,000 in September 1940, White was forced to reduce the intended offer to $5,000 by November. In White’s final (and official) offer to Kelsen in February 1941, he was able to commit only to $4,000, and this for only one year. Indeed, White sounded almost somber in reporting, “It is clear that the finances of the University will not be such in the immediate future as to make it possible for us to make an appointment on the regular University budget.”\(^{167}\) The University’s offers to Kelsen had thus declined from $7,000 in 1938 to $4,000 in 1941, with the latter containing no University funds at all (as White took pains to explain to Kelsen). Instead of the three-year offer originally proposed by Dean Redfield, Kelsen was to get only one year with no guarantee of what would happen thereafter.

What had happened? Granted that budgets were tight, the University of Chicago did have the financial resources in 1940 and 1941 to make those faculty appointments that Robert Hutchins felt to be in the interests of the institution (such as an appointment for the French Thomist scholar Jacques Maritain, which Hutchins tried to engineer, without success). Clearly,  

\(^{164}\) See Kelsen to Merriam, November 21, 1939, Merriam Papers, box 51, folder 7.  

\(^{165}\) Kelsen to Merriam, June 23, 1940, Merriam Papers, box 51, folder 7; Kelsen to Wright, July 7, 1940, SSD Records, Hans Kelsen File.  

\(^{166}\) White to Redfield, September 4, 1940, SSD Records, Hans Kelsen File; Kelsen to White, September 7, 1940, Quincy Wright Papers, Addenda I, box 16, folder marked “Hans Kelsen.” The lectures were published as *Law and Peace in International Relations: The Oliver Wendell Holmes Lectures 1940–41* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942).  

\(^{167}\) White to Kelsen, February 19, 1941, SSD Records, Hans Kelsen File.
Leonard White and Charles Merriam had not lost their enthusiasm, for White confided to Redfield’s associate dean, John D. Russell, that his and Merriam’s real hope continued to be bringing Kelsen for a permanent position. Their positive views were shared by Louis Wirth of the Department of Sociology, who tried to raise money for Kelsen’s appointment from the Jewish Welfare Fund. For Wirth, Kelsen’s appointment represented a chance for Chicago to recruit a “leading political theorist and jurist in continental Europe” whose appointment would be “a rare opportunity to secure [a] man of such eminence for American academic work and to save a great spirit.”

Robert Redfield, too, was much taken by Kelsen. In late July 1940, Redfield recommended that the University renew its offer with a three-year appointment at $7,000, arguing that Kelsen “is one of the very few living eminent men in the fields of general jurisprudence, international law, and political theory” and that “the availability of this distinguished scholar and teacher, an expert in a field where the University has a particular need of an appointment, presents us with a great opportunity.”

As the Department of Political Science scrambled to put together a follow-up offer for the 1941–42 academic year, Robert Hutchins was now less sympathetic to a multiyear offer, and indeed to any offer at all. The Law School’s continuing lack of enthusiasm may have played a role, but trouble emerged on another and rather unexpected front as well.

As the case percolated in the late summer of 1940, Hutchins must have raised questions about Kelsen, since Nathan Leites, a young instructor in the Department of Political Science, generated a long defense of Kelsen in the face of criticisms offered against Kelsen’s work by a minor German legal theorist, Edgar Bodenheimer, in a book that the latter had recently published that (among other topics) strongly defended natural rights theory. Following this exchange, Robert Redfield then received two rather remarkable memoranda from Robert Hutchins. In the first, Hutchins sent Redfield a long quote about Kelsen taken from an anonymous letter that a “friend of mine has received from a German political scientist.” The author of the letter to Hutchins was Jerome Kerwin, a mid-career member of the department and a scholar with deep Catholic intellectual convictions and social contacts. Kerwin had contacted Waldemar Gurian of the University of Notre Dame in early August for an opinion about Kelsen. Gurian was an émigré Catholic political scientist who had developed close connections to John U. Nef and through University will dig up the half of his salary necessary to match the Rockefeller grant.”


169. Louis Wirth to Samuel Goldsmith, August 8, 1940, SSD Records, Hans Kelsen File.


171. Wilbur Katz predicted to Edward Levi that “I doubt very much if the
For Gurian, Kelsen was a terrible choice, and he did not mince words:

May I express frankly my opinion? I would not understand if President Hutchins invited Kelsen to lecture on political science. He has written much; his ideas were widely discussed—but read only the article on Kelsen in the “American Political Science Review,” April 1937. Kelsen is a positivist applying a supposedly Kantian approach to law. On the one side he believes in a kind of abstract formalistic normativism, on the other side in a kind of blind decisionism. As the article in the “American Political Science Review” puts it nicely (p. 226): ‘His theory, as a theory, is indifferent to its possible political consequences’. He has characterized democracy by [the] absence of belief in absolute truth, based on relativism and skepticism. (Cf. his “Vom Wesen und Wert der Demokratie,” Tübingen, J.C. B. Mohr, 1929). He is without doubt a brilliant legal technician, but without any understanding of political realities; though he “understands” everything, he is in his most important works opposed to natural law, metaphysical concepts, etc. I think he represents a mentality which is completely out of date and which is responsible for the threatening breakdown of European civilization by the victory of primitive political religions. These religions rose partially in opposition to the empty logicism and relativism of an attitude a la Kelsen.

Gurian’s striking imputation that Kelsen’s “relativism” was part and parcel of the reason why National Socialism succeeded requires some elaboration. Before coming to America, Gurian had worked as a journalist and sometime university lecturer in Germany. Gurian was a student of the German philosopher Max Scheler and, in addition to his journalistic work, the author of a book on the social and political ideas manifest within French Catholicism from 1789 to 1914 and of a second study on Bolshevism. Once lodged in the University of Notre Dame in America in 1937, Gurian founded a political journal, The Review of Politics, which he used to publish the writings of authors who were sympathetic to his own intellectual dispositions. Gurian was a trenchant and striking writer, known for his fear of what he called “the total state.” As a Catholic convert, and especially as a converted German Catholic, Gurian was fiercely opposed to the modern secular state, and he was extremely hostile to anticlerical Liberals who sought to deemphasize the Church’s rights in civil society. Given Hans Kelsen’s prominence in Austrian politics of the 1920s as a secular liberal and a member of the Austrian Constitutional Court who defended the right of divorce and remarriage and the hegemony of state over church and as a theorist whose legal theory was noted for its staunch rejection of natural rights theory, it is hardly surprising that Gurian would react by launching

175. Gurian to Kerwin, August 23, 1940, forwarded to Hutchins with a cover note by Kerwin on August 27, 1940, Hutchins Administration, box 287, folder 5.

a kind of reverse *Kulturkampf* rhetoric against Kelsen. This was in spite of the fact that Kelsen himself believed that, as Brian Tamanaha has recently noted, “democracy is more compatible with moral relativism than with natural law ideas.”¹⁷⁷ The ideologies of early twentieth-century Central European liberalism and modern German Catholicism collided in this exchange, having sojourned from Cologne and Vienna to South Bend, Indiana, and Chicago, but no less intense for the duration of the journey.

However, in the face of Kerwin’s and Gurian’s interventions, Redfield refused to buckle under. He wrote back to Hutchins:

Thank you for the quotation from a letter written by a German political scientist with reference to Kelsen. I understand that the writer intended to express an adverse criticism. Except for his last six lines (which express a very personal judgment) I do not see how what is there said about Kelsen supports an adverse opinion. Perhaps you will some time tell me why it is adverse to a man to say he is a positivist, or to say that his theory is indifferent to the political consequences. I am directly interested in this myself, because I have been called a positivist, and because I understand such theories as I work with to be indifferent to political or social consequences.¹⁷⁸

Hutchins then sent Redfield a second comment that Kerwin had received from Gurian, which was again dismissively negative:

Concerning K. I am not astonished that there is a pressure [from the Department of Political Science] for him. But I think that it would be much better to invite a man like George Gurvitch who is one of the most interesting political sociologists and who just lost his chair in Strasbourg. He is, of course, not a Catholic, but I think his views are very interesting.¹⁷⁹

In both of these exchanges Hutchins did not overtly associate himself with Gurian’s negative evaluation, but given his subsequent unwillingness to provide any University funds to support hiring Kelsen and the fact that he discreetly sent Redfield’s reply to John Nef, asking Nef what he made of Redfield’s rejoinder defending Kelsen, it seems likely that a combination

¹⁷⁷. Brian Z. Tamanaha, *Law as a Means to an End: Threat to the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101, as well as Hans Kelsen’s classic defense of his position in “Absolutism and Relativism in Philosophy and Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 42, no. 5 (October 1948): 906–14. It is important to remember that Kelsen, who was born in 1881, grew up in a world in which the idea that one would see a major Central European state become a totalitarian regime and be responsible for mass murders would have been unimaginable. Kelsen was a liberal from a multinational, nineteenth-century empire whose most prominent state legal theorists conceived of the imperial state’s liberal administrative ethos as rising above the discordance of ethnic or partisan political disputes and whose basic liberal legal values in the face of such partisanship were stunningly resilient. For importance of Kelsen’s intellectual context, see Peter C. Caldwell, *Popular Sovereignty and the Crisis of German Constitutional Law: The Theory and Practice of Weimar Constitutionalism* (Durham: NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 45–46; and Raphael Gross, *Carl Schmitt and the Jews: The “Jewish Question,” the Holocaust, and German Legal Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 171. In this sense, Kelsen’s work might have been more appealing to US legal theorists, who would presumably have similar expectations about the resiliency of the (liberal) US political system, but this has never proven to be the case.


¹⁷⁹. Hutchins to Redfield, September 7, 1940, SSD Records, Hans Kelsen File. Kerwin clearly supported Gurian, since he insisted: “I have great confidence in Gurian’s judgment of European scholars.” Kerwin to Hutchins, September 6, 1940, Hutchins Administration, box 287, folder 5.
of the Law School’s resistance and Gurian’s accusations had an impact. In deploying Gurian as a stalking horse against Kelsen, Hutchins revealed the extent to which European—and in this case Austro-German—political controversies, conveyed in person via refugees from across the Atlantic, were still able to influence the framework of ideological discourse in which American academics worked in the 1930s and 1940s.

Further, as the Law School dean at Yale who in the later 1920s had vigorously supported the ideas of legal realism, a powerful movement in twentieth-century American jurisprudence that insisted that modern social and behavioral science had much to contribute to the formulation of legal principles and legal doctrine, Hutchins himself would have been unsympathetic to Kelsen’s philosophical perspectives, and on the margin, this too likely contributed to the final negation. Hutchins’s later flirtation in the 1930s with neo-Thomism and natural rights, via Mortimer Adler, would have simply compounded his uneasiness with a body of jurisprudence developed without explicit reference to moral sensibilities. When Hutchins argued in No Friendly Voice that “law is a body of principles and rules developed in the light of the rational sciences of ethics and politics. The aim of ethics and politics is the good life. The aim of the law is the same,” he set himself directly against Kelsen’s insistence about the necessary (structural) divorce between ethics and the law. Indeed, one of the few points on which legal realists and neo-Thomists of the later 1930s might agree was that legal positivism was, as Karl Llewellyn once put it, “utterly sterile,” either because of its immorality (pace natural rights) or its seeming ineffectuality and impracticality (pace legal realism). Still, as Louis Wirth, Leonard White, and Robert Redfield all insisted, Hans Kelsen was a figure of extraordinary importance in European jurisprudence in the twentieth century. To have recruited him would have been a major achievement, and quite prestigious, for the University of Chicago.

In any event, Robert Redfield certainly understood the implications of Hutchins’s message, and he replied to Hutchins that he would now concentrate on looking for non-University support for Kelsen. This essentially meant that Hutchins refused to support the initiative, to the extent that money was involved. In the end, all that the Department of Political Science was able to cobble together was a one-year offer at $4,000, $1,500 of which came from the Jewish Welfare Fund and $2,500 from the Rockefeller Foundation. This involved no money from the University of Chicago’s own budget, which Vice-President Emery

180. See Hutchins to Nef, September 5, 1940, Nef Papers, box 23, folder 4.
182. Robert M. Hutchins, No Friendly Voice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), 48. Edward Purcell has argued of Hutchins and others like him in the late 1930s: “There was … a growing conviction by the late thirties that any legal theory that did not focus on moral foundations and aims of the law was an incomplete theory and, even more, a dangerous theory.” See Edward A. Purcell Jr., The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1973), 172.
184. Redfield to Hutchins, September 13, 1940, SSD Records, Hans Kelsen File.
Filbey explicitly refused to commit. Kelsen must have sensed the patent lack of enthusiasm, noting to Quincy Wright that he was now being offered “almost half of the sum that was originally intended by Professor White,” and he eventually rejected Chicago’s offer in order to remain for an additional year at Harvard. In the fall of 1942 Kelsen accepted a temporary offer at the University of California, Berkeley, that was converted into a full professorship in 1945, and he remained associated with Berkeley until his death in 1973.

Kelsen did have two subsequent satisfactions in relation to the Department of Political Science at Chicago, however. First, Charles Merriam nominated him for an honorary degree on the occasion of the University’s fiftieth anniversary celebration in September 1941, preparing a commendation that cited him as “one of the most brilliant living students of law and philosophy.” Secondly, in 1943 a much younger German refugee, who was recruited to teach international law and politics in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago on a temporary basis (as a visiting associate professor), offered Hans Kelsen as one of his references. Kelsen reported that the young scholar had worked assiduously in his seminar at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva and that he was “an excellent young man with a special and extraordinary talent in political theory.” The young teacher performed quite credibly, and in October 1945 Hans J. Morgenthau’s appointment was converted into a tenure-track position. Although his theoretical perspectives differed from Kelsen’s views of international law and political sovereignty, Hans Morgenthau owed Hans Kelsen an enormous professional, intellectual, and personal debt in that it was Kelsen’s vigorous advocacy of Morgenthau’s tenure book on La Réalité des Normes that enabled Morgenthau to habilitate against the opposition of other senior faculty at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva in 1934. In many respects, Hans Morgenthau ended up in the full professorial slot that was intended for Hans Kelsen several years earlier.
that Merriam and White had originally imagined for Hans Kelsen. Had Kelsen been appointed in 1940 or 1941, Morgenthau might not have been appointed two years later, and the subsequent history of political theory and international relations at Chicago would have been strikingly different. Morgenthau, in turn, understood the debt that he owed Kelsen, and it was without exaggeration that he would write to Kelsen near the end of the latter’s life and in midst of Morgenthau’s dogged and controversial opposition against the war in Vietnam: “Your life has meant one thing for me: the consistent fearless pursuit of truth regardless of where it may lead to. Your example has taught me what it means to be a scholar. For that lesson I owe you a debt of gratitude which can only be discharged by following your example.”

Some European refugee scholars who appealed for assistance from Chicago had no luck at all. On Christmas Day in 1938 Dr. Hermann Ungar, a Viennese Gymnasium professor, wrote to Robert Hutchins appealing for help from the University of Chicago. Ungar was a forty-three-year-old teacher, with a wife and two young children, who lived in a middle-class neighborhood in the Landstrasse district in Vienna. He had studied mathematics, physics, and chemistry at the University of Vienna. Until the arrival of the Nazis in March 1938, he had taught science at a Viennese Gymnasium—a position from which as a Jew he had now been dismissed. Ungar was clearly desperate, and in somewhat marginal English he assured Hutchins that he was willing to accept any kind of job, however menial, in exchange for help. Ungar insisted that he could work as a lab assistant or even as a car driver. If those possibilities did not work out, he continued, “I should also willingly take the job of a valet, parlor-man or caretaker or well qualified worker in any technical factory in the line of physics or chemistry, and I should content myself with the lowest salary sufficient to maintain myself and my two children of 8 and 4. For my wife, 31 years old, is a clever baby-nurse, or might get a job as a housemaid or washer-woman or cook, so that she would contribute to the maintenance of the little ones. For the sake of these children I ask you to comply with my request. If they only were grown up, our own persons would not be of importance.” Hutchins responded that he had no way of assisting Ungar, because “the number of intellectual Europeans who are seeking employment in the University far exceeds the opportunities that are open to them, especially under present economic conditions.” But Ungar persisted and wrote again in May 1940, informing Hutchins that he had found someone in the United States to sponsor his visit but asking for help with the cost of transporting him and his family from Vienna. Again, Hutchins responded that the University could not provide such aid but forwarded the case to the Jewish Welfare Fund and to the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, which also proved unable to help. The final place of appeal was the National Refugee Service, whose acting director Augusta Mayerson reported in early November 1940 that her organization had also been approached by Ungar, but that they too had no money with which to provide him.

The University’s file on this case ends at this point, but the story does not, for in the painstaking reconstruction of Austrian victims of the Holocaust recently assembled by the Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstands in Vienna, a Hermann Ungar was deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp on October 10, 1942. The last listing that we


have for him is the date of his subsequent deportation to Auschwitz on September 29, 1944, where he, his wife, Ilse, and his son, Robert, were murdered. Of course Hutchins had no way of knowing that this would be the outcome, and Ungar had tried other US contacts who were also unable or unwilling to offer assistance. But the story of Hermann Ungar stands as a stark reminder of what was at stake behind the European wave of refugees seeking the hospitality and support of American universities like Chicago.

Did the European refugee scholars change American universities in a systematically profound way, similar to the impact of German structural models in the 1880s and 1890s? In individual fields individual scholars could have very considerable scientific impact—witness the later influence of Hans Morgenthau and Leo Strauss in political science or Max Rheinstein in law—but it would be an exaggeration to argue that their collective ethos was equivalent to the structural modeling effect that had transposed the social imaginary of the nineteenth-century German university onto the imagination of American university leaders before 1914. Too much political, institutional, and economic water had flowed under the bridge of American higher education in the first half of the twentieth century to permit that.

Still, Chicago profited from an infusion of extraordinary talent from scholars who brought new ways of thinking about venerable problems and who, in a few cases, even established major schools of thought at Chicago. It cannot be the case that the refugees were necessarily better teachers, for we had too many examples of homegrown success stories. But it could well be the case that the combination of broad erudition, anchored often in classical learning and humanistic sciences, and the personal experience of having crossed powerful and deep and painful boundaries gave these men a sense of fate and of the all-too-fragile fabric of intellectual tolerance and civility that they conveyed to their students in powerful, if often subtle, ways. Like their nineteenth-century predecessors, this generation of Europeans affirmed the ideal of the dignity of the academic calling. Through the distinction and erudition of their teaching and mentorship and through their deep commitment to the values of academic freedom, they had a powerful impact on thousands of young American students. Max Rheinstein once remarked that he had become an academic as a result of “my activities as a research assistant to a great scholar, and I was attracted to remain in academic life because it was congenial to me, and by the high esteem in which members of the academic professions were held in Germany.”

When Hans Kelsen died, his colleagues at Berkeley wrote “of his unstinting willingness to debate his ideas with students—juniors and seniors as well as advanced graduates,” but they also praised the fact that, as “a victim of totalitarianism himself, he showed us a way of retaining this balance, of not abandoning his role as a scholar when others yielded to the

193. Ungar was deported on September 29, 1944, whereas his wife, Ilse, and his son, Robert, were deported on October 4, 1944. See Mary Steinhauser, ed., Totenbuch Theresienstadt: Damit Sie Nicht Vergessen Werden, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Junius, 1987), 145. His daughter, Hanna, was deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp and survived the war. She died in Australia in 2005.


temptation to fight evil with ideology disguised as science.” It is remarkable how many similar stories are associated with men like Gerhard Meyer, Christian Mackauer, Leo Strauss, Hans Morgenthau, Max Rheinstein, Karl J. Weintraub, and many of the other refugees who came and stayed at the University of Chicago.

What was most intriguing about the impact of this newest stage of the University’s experiment with internationalism, moreover, was the relative ease with which the newcomers embedded themselves in our culture. At the beginning of the exodus, there were many fears that the wave of Jewish refugees would spawn professional and personal resentments; and even Julius Stieglitz, a senior chemistry professor at Chicago, who had studied in a German Gymnasium in Karlsruhe from 1881 to 1886 and who then spent another four years at Göttingen and Berlin (and who was himself Jewish), feared in 1936 that the arrival of German-Jewish chemists would provoke a backlash of antisemitism. Beyond lurking antisemitism, there was also the issue that the refugees were displacing promising American scholars, and, as the decade wore on, many university officials felt subtle or not so subtle pressures to support the careers of the Americans first. Professor John A. Fairlie of the University of Illinois in Urbana reported to Roscoe Pound in early 1939 that “there is a strong and growing opposition in this part of the country to the appointment of anyone who is not already an American citizen.” Happily, it was the sense of contemporary foundation and refugee aid officials and the general assessment of subsequent historians that, when the refugee scholars did make it through the eye of the appointment needle, most encountered respect and fair treatment, eventually gaining sympathy and support. Marjorie Lamberti is correct in arguing recently that “despite the fears and gloomy forecasts, displaced German and Austrian scholars peacefully penetrated the discriminatory barriers and joined the faculties of American colleges and universities.”

A university like Chicago, whose faculty culture once looked to Germany for the ideals of scientific learning and scholarly prestige, was now sufficiently mature to be able to incorporate leading German refugees into its ongoing programs of study, as well as to profit from the intellectual capital and cultural values that these scholars brought with them to the New World. Shaped by a remarkable confluence of midwestern American and European values, Chicago proved to be much more cosmopolitan than the German and Austrian universities from which these scholars were forced to flee. The skills and creativity that the refugee scholars brought with them were acknowledged not only by obvious honors of the academy but by the loyalty and affection of generations of students. Part of this reception may also have been related to the more informal social customs of Americans in welcoming strangers who came as refugees, but who were quickly treated (often to the astonishment of the Europeans) as personal friends on a first-name basis. See the charming memoir about her sojourn in Chicago by the wife of Otto von Simson, Louise Alexandra von Simson, Happy Exile (Darmstadt: Roetherdruck, 1981), esp. 133–42.

199. Lamberti, “The Reception of Refugee Scholars from Nazi Germany in America,” 176.
200. Part of this reception may also have been related to the more informal social customs of Americans in welcoming strangers who came as refugees, but who were quickly treated (often to the astonishment of the Europeans) as personal friends on a first-name basis. See the charming memoir about her sojourn in Chicago by the wife of Otto von Simson, Louise Alexandra von Simson, Happy Exile (Darmstadt: Roetherdruck, 1981), esp. 133–42.
for the heirs of the first faculty to reaffirm the early internationalism so manifest in the first decades of the University, but on terms of benefactor and patron, and not simply as advocate and consumer.

This second stage of internationalism, which was driven by singular incidents and palpable accidents and often was inadvertent and reactive, prepared the way for another wave of internationalism after World War II. This third wave would again deeply mark the University’s self-consciousness of its peculiar greatness as a place not only of ideas and debate, but also as a place where such ideas have no relationship to the limitations of passports and national citizenship but instead have a relationship only to the intrinsic creativity and imaginativeness of those who have the courage to advocate new ways of looking at the world.

n the aftermath of World War II international currents revived, and new forms of education emerged that incorporated the non-European world into the study of culture. The end of World War II also brought crucial efforts on the part of American universities, foundations, and other academic organizations to reengage the world of international learning and student exchanges that had been abandoned during the later 1930s and early 1940s. Robert McCaughey has designated the immediate postwar period as the “take off” of American international studies.”

The Fulbright Act (1946), National Association of Foreign Study Advisors (1948), Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) (1950), Ford Foundation’s International Training and Research Program (1953), and Fulbright-Hays Act (1961) signaled a new appreciation of the values of international education on the part of higher education leaders. Moreover, American scholars now realized that the world included domains of cultural life beyond the European subcontinent. The 1950s saw faculty researchers at Chicago begin to write world histories (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] world history project led by Louis Gottschalk and William McNeill’s *The Rise of the West*; explore non-European cultures via new interdisciplinary programs (e.g., Marshall Hodgson’s *The Venture of Islam*; Milton Singer’s *Introducing India in

Liberal Education); and, with the massive resources of the Ford Foundation, Robert Redfield and Milton Singer launched a new interdisciplinary program in comparative cultural studies in 1949 to support graduate education and faculty research. The germ of this initiative lay in a paper that Redfield prepared in April 1944, as a part of an evaluation of wartime area-studies training programs. Redfield believed that the area-studies model that emerged during World War II afforded promising intellectual possibilities to integrate the study of the customs, language, institutions, and literature of major civilizational areas under the larger heading of culture, and that one university or another might well seriously make an effort in that direction with an Institute of Far Eastern Studies, or Russian Studies, or Latin American Studies. Such an enterprise would look to the long future, and would be content to develop a few first-rate scholars dealing with one aspect or another of the region chosen, and talking often with each other about their work. Such an enterprise would combine the study of books and texts with field study of the people living in the area today. The organization would include both representatives of the humanities and social scientists. For the conception which would give unity to the effort would be not so much the spatial fact that China or Russia or Latin America is one part of the earth’s surface, as the fact of culture. These students would all be concerned with a traditional way of life that had maintained a distinguishing character over long time, to great consequence for mankind. A literate people expresses its traditional way of life in what is written; and every people expresses it in institutions and customs and everyday behavior. Ultimately the conception of culture as a naturally developed round of life and the conception of culture as enlightenment through mental and moral training, go back to the same reality: a people with a way of life that is or can be a subject of reflective study. The regional program of research may take the form of long study of the great world cultures.

With the support of the Ford Foundation, Redfield and Singer sought to explore ways by which world civilizations might be compared and classified, but their project also supported research ventures in the study of specific historic civilizations. With the additional support of the Carnegie Corporation, the comparative civilizations project resulted in the creation of several of the great world civilizations courses in the College (e.g., courses covering the history of Islamic civilization, the history of East Asian civilization, and the history of South Asian civilization) that have had a profound impact on the scholarly work and academic studies of several generations of Chicago faculty members and students since the late 1950s. It is striking, moreover, that the Redfield-Singer project in the comparative study of world civilizations gained traction at the University of Chicago at precisely the same time that Max

202. For the history of this project, see John W. Boyer, Three Views of Continuity and Change at the University of Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago College, 1999), 93–118.

203. “Area Programs in Education and Research,” April 27, 1944, 3, 8, 14, Robert Redfield Papers, box 60.

204. Robert E. Streeter, “Report of activities carried on by the University of Chicago under grants from the Carnegie Corporation in support of undergraduate courses dealing with non-Western Civilizations,” April 25, 1960, Milton Singer Papers, box 40.
Rheinstein’s theoretical initiatives in the comparative study of the law also began to be implemented.\textsuperscript{205}

Beyond these new theoretical and pedagogical initiatives in the study of world civilizations after 1945, the University also quite literally returned to Europe by launching an extremely ambitious international program with the University of Frankfurt, a collaboration that ran from 1948 to 1961. Ever the enthusiastic entrepreneur, Max Rheinstein, together with Nathaniel Kleitman of the Department of Physiology, proposed in the summer of 1945 that the University of Chicago should establish a campus in Munich to provide higher education resources to the families of US Army and civilian occupation personnel who would be stationed there and to the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons who were stranded in Germany in 1945. Kleitman was sure that the US Army would make available a suitable physical plant for the branch campus, thus freeing the University from having to make any serious investments, and he was equally confident that “just as it has organized expensive expeditions to dig into the ruins of past empires with a view of advancing our knowledge, it now has the opportunity, without cost to itself, to dig into the present day ruins of the German state and derive from its studies lessons valuable to all, as well as incidentally helping to fulfill an adult need of the Army of Occupation and of the Military Government in Germany.”\textsuperscript{206} Rheinstein was also certain that a German branch would be a timely investment, since it would “fill a need which will be felt very seriously within a short time.”\textsuperscript{207} Rheinstein tried to lobby Laird Bell, an influential University trustee who was then serving as an assistant deputy military governor of the US military government based in Frankfurt, but this gambit backfired, for Bell thought the idea was terrible, given the “depressing atmosphere” of defeated Germany.\textsuperscript{208} Instead, Bell believed that if the University wanted to become involved in higher education in Germany it should do so in a serious, non-propagandistic way. He argued:

I, do, however think that there is a job to be done, and I’d like to see the University do it, although I don’t think it should be a joy ride for professors or students. A lot of bunk is being talked about re-educating Germany. We are spoon feeding the Germans denatured text books and harmless movies (and incidentally treating them to radio crooners as a feature of our Kultur). I don’t believe the Germans are going to be re-educated from the outside. They’ve got to be given a chance to do it themselves. And despite the depressing moral collapse of the German intellectual world I have a notion that there is a kernel of sound stuff in the educational world that can be built on. I believe there are scholars that want once more to be associated with free scholars of other countries. I believe that the German people with their energy and industry will respond to an opportunity for education for their young … If they can’t have some intellectual opportunities, German youth will have nothing to hope and work for but revenge.

\textsuperscript{205} The Ford Foundation’s annual report for 1951 discursively linked the Redfield project with the Chicago-Frankfurt project, citing both under the same heading of advancing “international understanding through the exchange of ideas and the exchange of persons.” See \textit{The Ford Foundation: Annual Report for 1951} (New York: Ford Foundation, December 31, 1951), 13.

\textsuperscript{206} Nathaniel Kleitman, “Memorandum to the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago Concerning the Creation of a Branch of the University in a German City,” Laird Bell Papers, box 2, folder 2.

\textsuperscript{207} Rheinstein to Hutchins, September 26, 1945, Rheinstein Papers, box 26, folder 9.

\textsuperscript{208} See Rheinstein to Bell, August 22, 1945, and September 3, 1945, Bell Papers, box 2, folder 2.
The University of Chicago with its tradition of pioneering should undertake to lead them out of the wilderness—both the scholars and the students. More specifically, I’d like to see a branch of the University set up primarily for Germans with courses given by both Americans and Germans, with no propaganda except what will follow from a good example, and aimed at the deficiencies of German education.

Bell was certain that the “[US] Military Government might entertain an application for a serious university project” and added: “I don’t think a happy holiday kind of school will be welcome for a long time.”

By 1947, Max Rheinstein had come around to Bell’s idea. In early April 1947, Rheinstein wrote to Wilbur C. Munnecke that the War Department’s plans to sponsor lectures by US professors at various German universities had fallen through and that “an appeal has been sent to educational organizations and institutions to raise the funds for the implementation of this program and quite particularly to send to Germany visiting professors. This appeal seems to me to constitute the entering wedge for our plan of a ‘University of Chicago’ in Germany.” By June 1947, Rheinstein had refined this idea by urging Robert Hutchins to consider a “University of Chicago Faculty in Germany,” but one now attached to a local German university. Hutchins decided to support this plan, and in July 1947 the University requested US government approval to enable Chicago to collaborate in the reconstruction of the west German university system by sending a group of faculty to teach at a leading German university. Hutchins believed that “the presence at a German university of such a group of American scholars is regarded as a considerable help in the reconstruction of German higher education, not only through the instructions they will give to the students, but also by the personal contacts they will establish with their German colleagues.” After initial misgivings on the part of General Lucius Clay, the US military governor in Germany, who thought that the Germans might resent foreign professors as little more than propaganda agents, the War Department approved the University’s request, having received notice from the Office of Military Government in Germany that “we are very anxious to take advantage of this very generous offer of the University of Chicago.” The University then applied in late December 1947 to the Rockefeller Foundation for a grant to support the initiative. The final

209. Bell to Hutchins, September 10, 1945, Rheinstein Papers, box 26, folder 9. Bell sent a copy of his critique to Edward Y. Hartshorne, who was stationed with the US occupation forces in Marburg. Hartshorne responded that he agreed that the idea of “Munich Midway” was “utterly fantastic,” but, he went on to say, “Your proposal for a Chicago supported educational scheme for Germans, in conjunction with a currently operating German university, can and should be realized. … Perhaps we could work out a tentative plan to propose if Hutchins bites.” Hartshorne to Bell, October 14, 1945, Bell Papers, box 2, folder 2. On Hartshorne, see idem, Academic Proconsul: Harvard Sociologist Edward Y. Hartshorne and the Reopening of German Universities: His Personal Account, ed. James F. Tent (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher, 1998), esp. 133.


211. Rheinstein to Hutchins, June 9, 1947, Rheinstein Papers, box 26, folder 2 and Bell Papers, box 2, folder 1.


213. Ray J. Laux to Hutchins, August 6, 1947; and Colwell to Havighurst, September 17, 1947, SSD Records, box 30. The original proposal seems to have taken the form of yearlong visiting appointments, but the final structure of the Chicago plan, under which Chicago faculty would come for one term only, may have been a concession to Clay’s other concern that “he would have to extend similar facilities to every welfare organization which desired to send a staff into Germany and that this Military Government facilities would not permit.” For Clay’s initial opposition, see the report of Thomas B. Stauffer to the US ambassador, July 16, 1947, Richard McKeon Papers, box 36, folder 8.
proposal was formulated in early 1948 by a faculty advisory committee consisting of Earl Hamilton, Robert J. Havighurst, Philip M. Hauser, Richard P. McKeon, Wilhelm Pauck, Max Rheinstein, Otto von Simson, and Robert M. Strozier. Although other universities were initially considered as possible partners (e.g., Munich, Göttingen, and Heidelberg), after vigorous debates the faculty committee finally decided in late January 1948 to work with the University of Frankfurt on the grounds that it was centrally located, and that, as a newer and smaller university founded in 1919 that had suffered devastating losses during the war, it desperately needed outside assistance. At a general faculty meeting held in February 1948 to drum up support for the program among the faculty, Max Rheinstein (as was recorded in an after-the-fact report) was unusually blunt in setting the practical and ideological parameters of the initiative. Rheinstein cautioned against using the word ‘re-education’ or ‘denazification’. He declared that the Germans do not want a program of ‘re-education’ and that they will regard the use of the term by Americans as evidence of hypocrisy and condescension. Furthermore, he cautioned applicants [who wished to teach in Frankfurt] not to expect Germans to be confirmed democrats. He declared that most of them had fought and suffered for nationalistic goals and should not be expected to abandon those goals too quickly. Others who had looked to democracy for liberation have subsequently experienced utmost disappointment, he said. The key to the program, he stated, should be the solidarity of scholarship and learning and the reestablishment of professional and human contacts. If the University of Chicago faculty members exercise infinite personal tact and patience, Mr. Rheinstein declared, they will discover that under ‘the rough nationalistic façade’ which the majority of Germans have adopted as ‘protective coating’ they are in reality skeptics who seek faith. He concluded that the task is to break through this skepticism and to give again a sense of scholarly ideals.

Using support from the Rockefeller Foundation and, after 1951, from the Ford Foundation, Chicago agreed to send a delegation of six professors during the spring of the 1948–49 academic year, plus a few graduate students, to teach at Frankfurt, with the expectation that eventually Frankfurt faculty would reciprocate and visit Chicago. In his original proposal to Walter Hallstein, the rector of the University of Frankfurt, Hutchins argued that “the presence at the University of Frankfurt of such a group of American scholars, and the possible future exchange of similar groups of German professors with this University, will help to reestablish the interchange of ideas through reopening channels of communication between German and American universities.” Each Chicago faculty member taught a course in his or her area of specialization and was available for seminars and workshops with interested local faculty and students. During the first two years of the program twenty-seven Chicago faculty

214. See Robert J. Havighurst to E. C. Colwell, September 28, 1947, SSD Records, box 30. Havighurst suggested: “The boldest thing and possibly the most rewarding in the long run is to take the University of Frankfurt. The reasons for this are: Frankfurt will probably become the economic and perhaps the political capital of western Germany; Frankfurt is a big city, and offers opportunity for the kind of approach to problems of modern urban civilization which the U. of C. has worked out in the city of Chicago; the University of Frankfurt is structurally more like the U. of C. than is any other German university.”


visited Frankfurt, and their reactions were exceedingly positive. Wilhelm Pauck of the Divinity School reported:

We resisted the temptation to become propagandists of any sort and conscientiously confined ourselves to perform academic work by teaching in our special fields and by cultivating professional and personal relationships with German professors and students. The Germans soon recognized that we were serious and honest in our intention to bring about a closer academic relationship between our own University and that of Frankfurt, and they heartily received us into their community, treating us as equals in all respects. We were made regular members of the respective faculties, invited to attend faculty meetings and to participate in their deliberations. … Being thus accepted as full members of the University of Frankfurt we had the opportunity to interpret American institutions and attitudes in the context of natural academic relationships. Moreover, the Germans came to consider our presence in Frankfurt as a symbol of friendship and understanding inspired by no other purpose than good will.


After 1951 the program became more formally bilateral, concentrating on jointly-agreed-upon themes for interdisciplinary seminars attended by faculty and graduate students. The seminars were held at both universities, with fall and winter being organized by Chicago and spring by Frankfurt. Paul Weiss, another refugee scholar who participated in the exchange, described this revision in structure as a shift from individual lecturers providing “relief and rehabilitation” to a new and more mature “community of interests” generated by scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.218 The numbers of faculty participating in the seminars continued to be somewhat lopsided in Chicago’s favor, but most of the participating Chicago faculty believed that the University was providing far more than formal learning experiences to the German students. Louis Gottschalk noted in 1950 that “another by-product of these objectives will be, we trust, a growing respect in Frankfurt in particular and in Germany in general for American scholarship and for American institutions and ideals of higher learning.”219 Bruno Bettelheim observed that the most fascinating part of a seminar he taught on the social psychology of groups in Frankfurt in 1955 was that German students learned a new way of thinking, and that the exchange encouraged habits of intellectual independence and questioning that heretofore had been sorely lacking in German universities:

It is hard for me to say what attracted the students more—what I tried to teach or the way I tried to teach it. It seemed a new experience to the students that the whole course was pitched to what they wanted to learn and were eager to understand, rather than formal lectures on what the professor thought they ought to know and learn. After some initial anxiety and hesitancy, they responded very well to the breakdown of hierarchical walls separating the professor from the students and the students from each other. The spontaneously formed small discussion groups stayed long after the lectures.


219. Gottschalk to Exchanges Division, Office of the High Command for Germany, July 1, 1950, SSD Records.
to talk over what had gone on. Both the German upbringing and, even more, their experience in the Hitler and post-Hitler period, had tended to isolate individual from individual, particularly in social situations where they were not well known to each other. Teaching about the phenomena of group interaction led them to recognize their social isolation from each other and their need for relating to each other. Probably to me the most gratifying result of my efforts was that on my leaving, the group decided to continue meeting regularly on the days of my classes without me to continue the group discussions. 220

Professor Willy Hartner, the director of the Institute for the History of the Natural Sciences at Frankfurt, described a similar effect of the informal workshops and seminars run by the Chicago faculty, commenting that they were “an extraordinarily efficient means for propagating the idea of a supranational community and making the younger generation understand that the only way out of the fetters of nationalistic seclusion and self-conceit is to work in common for a common aim.” 221

In some respects, Bettelheim’s and Hartner’s comments reveal a fascinating coming full circle of the collective institutional experience of the University of Chicago between 1890 and 1960, from a fledgling university dependent on nineteenth-century German concepts of academic science and professorial authority to a mature twentieth-century American institution that had developed powerful democratic teaching methods that it was now eager and willing to send back to the German universities. Along with those methods came a willingness to help rebuild the academic credibility of a once-fabled university system that had been alluring to visiting American students before 1914, but that had shamefully collapsed in the Nazi period and its immediate aftermath into academic institutions enduring bombed-out buildings, fiscal penury, and moral despair. Robert Redfield eloquently captured this sensibility during his short visit to the Frankfurt program in May 1949 when he wrote to his wife:

This leads me to remark how in this short time certain of these people have come to make so strong a claim on my sympathies. The best of them have shown themselves so genuinely disposed to welcome me into their confidences, and to admit me as a friend and associate. Really it has been a very warming experience. It is warming because the visitor—I as visitor—feels himself needed. They really do want people with their own humanistic and scientific interests to work with them, they want to show themselves not what the Nazis made all Germany appear to be. In France I greatly enjoyed and admired the French intellectuals I met. But I never felt at all admitted to their lives, nor, of course, did I feel needed. I was just graciously received. In Germany, among these battered and half ashamed intellectuals, one feels needed. 222

With the support of the Ford Foundation, Redfield and other faculty leaders embraced the study of world civilizations and the comparative


221. Hartner to Gustav E. Von Grunebaum, March 22, 1955, Chauncy Harris Papers, box 5, folder 1.

222. Redfield to Margaret Park Redfield, May 7, 1949, Redfield Papers, box 1, folder 1.
study of cultures in the 1950s and 1960s as suitable faculty research domains in the humanities and the social sciences. This initiative in turn led to large numbers of Chicago graduate students undertaking doctoral research projects in non-European and non-American areas of the world. But Chicago’s operational and locational conception of undergraduate liberal education still remained firmly restricted within the borders of Hyde Park. This meant that few of our undergraduate students had an opportunity to undertake an international education program abroad, or even to learn a foreign language by living in another society. Before 1990, there were many more foreign students who came to Chicago each year than University students who studied abroad. In 1990, for example, the University welcomed 1,185 foreign students to our Hyde Park campus, but only forty-one College students participated in international programs—eleven of them in Paris. A few visionary pioneers did try to create new paradigms—dean of the College F. Champion Ward sought in vain to create a summer program of foreign study during the Hutchins College era, and it is not surprising that, after leaving Chicago, Ward devoted much of his career to international development and education programs at the Ford Foundation and at UNESCO. But Ward’s efforts were still-born, and it would take another forty years before the University was willing to follow up on his bold ideas.

223. See Minutes of the College Committee on Policy and Personnel, April 1, 1952, and April 3, 1952. Ward was a principal contributor to the UNESCO report Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow (New York: UNESCO, 1972), which argued, “Students able to travel overseas to become acquainted with other societies remain in the minority, but all students should have the opportunity, through their study programmes, to understand cultures other than their own and so gain some awareness of the unity of mankind, the fundamentally similar conditions and aspirations true of all men” (240).

224. Between 1992 and 2002, the number of US college students engaged in international study programs more than doubled, from 71,000 to over 160,000.
Mixing with the world has a marvelously clarifying effect on man’s judgement. We are all confined and pent up within ourselves, and our sight has contracted to the length of our noses. When someone asked Socrates of what country he was, he did not reply, “of Athens,” but “of the world.” His was a fuller and wider imagination; he embraced the whole world as his city and extended his acquaintance, his society, and his affections to all mankind; unlike us who look only under our own feet.225

The new University of Chicago Center in Paris that opened in 2003 was at the core of the larger strategy designed by the faculty of Chicago to encourage our students to gain a firsthand cultural and linguistic knowledge of major European and other world civilizations. The various programs and initiatives attached to the Center in Paris constituted a “bundled strategy,” with faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students all participating within one dynamic model. By 2019 Paris was hosting three hundred College students annually in clusters of instructional programs. Yet, the Center in Paris was also designed to support the scholarly work of numerous Chicago graduate students and faculty. A partnership agreement with the University of Paris VII, which occupies a newly constructed campus directly across the Rue Thomas Mann from our center, provided still more productive linkages. Our College students had the opportunity to register at Paris VII as external students, and seven Paris VII undergraduate students were accepted each year as visiting students to our College. The creation of the Center in Paris resulted in many other valuable collaborations between individual Chicago faculty members and French and other European colleagues, all of which presented to us a new style Chicago-Frankfurt exchange—this time located on the left bank of the Seine in the heart of Paris.

Yet, for all its success and benefits for the intellectual life of the University, the operations of the Center in Paris have touched only a fraction of the possible synergies with other European institutions. It had become apparent by 2010 that, to continue its evolution, the center would need to support more collaborative work with research centers and academic communities in other parts of Europe. The original facility had been designed for a modest set of activities and lacked the space to sponsor the creative projects that continued to happen in Paris. Hence, beginning in 2018, the College undertook a systematic effort to urge the establishment of a new Center in Paris. Working in close cooperation and collaboration with our Parisian colleagues, the University participated in an international competition in November 2018 to select an architect and

Figure 12: Rendering of new Center in Paris, Studio Gang

construction company to design and build a new center. The winning proposal by Jeanne Gang articulated a vastly expanded and more ambitious site for research and teaching, with a field of vision that encompasses all of Europe and endeavors to be as transformational as the encounters that defined our earlier waves of internationalism (see figs. 12, 13, and 14).

Located on the Avenue de France, just two blocks from the current site, the new facility has been designed to capture and amplify the convergence of global innovation in Paris, not only between Chicago and Europe but also Africa and the Middle East, connecting our local research culture with more remote networks of innovation. Tripling the University’s space in Paris, the new facility will provide critical capacity for instruction, research, and public outreach programming, with a dedicated conference auditorium for 125 participants, a large reception space, twenty-five research offices for faculty, doctoral students, and postdoctoral scholars, special workspace for research teams, a library, various student spaces, and many other attractive features. It will also feature six classrooms, including three that will hold thirty students and three that will accommodate fifteen to twenty students. With this expansion the University can finally accommodate the dynamic symbiosis of interests that has animated the life of the current center since 2003. Not only will the College be able to add one hundred students each year to the cohorts who now study in Paris, but there will be greater support for our many graduate students who use the center as the base for their doctoral research, and facilities for an expanded number of international scholarly conferences. Given the growing number of alumni who reside in Europe, the Paris center will provide suitable amenities for alumni and admissions activities by all units of the University, including our professional schools, graduate divisions, and the College.

Finally, the Center in Paris will be the home to a new Research Institute
for International Collaborations that will establish the University of Chicago as an effective partner in many newly emerging scholarly networks in Europe. Like its predecessor, the new center reflects an internationalism that is appropriate to our time, yet it comes at a very different historical moment when we are witnessing a reinvention of higher learning across Europe. In the two decades since the initial planning for the Center in Paris (2000–20) European universities have responded energetically to the challenges of a globally competitive system of higher education, with its recognized international hierarchies of prestige and competitions to attract talent and resources that are increasingly mobile. For the one hundred leading research universities in the world, over one-third (thirty-five) are located in either Britain or on the European continent. If one expands the list of potential research partners to include the Max Planck Institutes and Helmholtz Research Centers in Germany, the grandes écoles and the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in France, and many similar institutions in Spain, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, the Benelux countries, and Scandinavia, the possibilities for future research collaborations between Chicago scholars and their European counterparts are outstanding.

Many European universities are now participating in a variety of national and regional models to pool resources, especially in scientific research. Some of these research networks have formed with clearly articulated links to local knowledge economies. The European Commission in Brussels has also become a sponsor of interuniversity research networks as a policy to stimulate higher education on the continent as a whole, encouraging the adoption of the common framework for research excellence as well as the formidable ambitions of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities, founded in 1997 to foster innovation within member institutions. These developments have also highlighted the work of longstanding research centers with missions to bringing together international cohorts of scholars to explore
consequential issues in the humanities and the social sciences, such the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, and the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies.

Taken as whole, these consolidations of scholarly resources and networks play an ever more important role in the European system of higher education and have contributed to a research landscape that is increasingly “European-wide” in its scope. Highlighting systemic reform and an insistent openness to the world that, for now, well surpasses that of the United States, the continent of Europe will continue to sponsor many dynamic hubs for research in the decades to come. These are some of the reasons that we have given priority to a new Research Institute in Paris, designed to help Chicago faculty build research collaborations across Europe and to expand programs for visiting scholars and faculty-led research groups that have drawn scholars from France and the broader region to the current center. The research institute will provide support for short-term projects, such as conferences and roundtables; long-term residencies and recurring visits over time for individual scholars; and even multiyear collaborations. The institute will also have the capacity to include in these programs scholars from the Middle East and North Africa, for whom adverse political conditions and visa restrictions have made the United States inaccessible. Our ability to reach out to the global community in this way will be unmatched by our peers, creating a seedbed from which promising ideas and collaborations are transplanted back to our home campus in Hyde Park. Additionally, the research institute can act as a disciplinary amplifier at a time when many departments and fields are shrinking nationally, with ever fewer scholars working on critical topics. This extension of our faculty networks presents diverse opportunities to be realized at many levels, including the provision of graduate seminars, summer schools, and research residencies for graduate students that can be co-taught with partner institutions or invited scholars, and the possibility for postdoctoral fellows and researchers of other statuses to build out their international profiles. A particularly exciting opportunity will be the creation of programs in American policy studies and social science theory, filling the huge need for a major American university to establish effective programs in democratic theory and in global social sciences in Europe.

At present more than thirty projects led by University of Chicago faculty in a wide range of disciplines already operate in the collaborative space envisioned for the center, from disciplines as diverse as physics, classics, organismal biology, and near Eastern languages and civilizations. The menu of existing research partnerships at the Center in Paris suggests templates for other exciting collaborative projects with international partners that could flourish with the resources of the research institute.

Finally, the research institute will afford our faculty new spaces to interweave their scholarship with the academic and civic development of our undergraduates, marking a new stage in that integration of research and education that came alive during the Sonnenschein Administration. If our Civilization Abroad model worked to infuse undergraduate education with the place-based expertise of our faculty, the research institute signals parallel alignments in which undergraduates will contribute meaningfully to the research process itself. In Chicago, our College Center for Research and Fellowships has developed programs to acquaint undergraduates with the research methods of our faculty in all fields. The research institute in Paris will offer facilities to include the skills of our talented undergraduates in components of faculty research that take place in Europe, and even in connection with their study-abroad coursework. As one example, we will have the opportunity to bring to Europe the highly successful program of course-based research grants currently offered on campus, where thematically focused courses lead to short-term
positions or to funded research assistantships that intersect with larger projects or major requirements.

While all of these prospects are enriched by a distinctive location in the heart of Europe, it is a sign of the power of the Center in Paris that it has been a model for the University’s subsequently opened global centers in Beijing (2010), Delhi (2014), and Hong Kong (2018), the last of which constitutes another University-owned campus with the facilities to support major programs in research and education. Founded to support the same kinds of linkages that have taken shape in Paris, with their own bases in the faculty, these centers will underwrite the University’s global engagement strategy in Asia throughout the twenty-first century.

The Hong Kong Center (see fig. 15) offers a special counterpart to the Center in Paris in the sense that the former will function as a dynamic hub for research, educational innovation, and collaboration that capitalizes on the resources and institutions of the broader region. A commitment to these partnerships has been wisely included in the founding of the Hong Kong Center as it relates to student and faculty exchanges and collaborative research across a range of economic issues. In its first two years, Hong Kong has also mobilized the curricular and programmatic imagination of our faculty in ways that meet the academic and professional ambitions of our undergraduates. The Colonizations sequence in the Core has found at the Yuen Campus of the Hong Kong Center an ideal site for illustrative and experimental pedagogy, while the Human Rights Program has recast its Civilizations sequence to be offered there during the September term. The Kenneth C. Griffin Department of Economics has begun to explore new directions for undergraduate study by developing a major-specific, study-abroad term in Hong Kong, which will pair coursework and language study with internships and other possibilities for career development. As a parallel initiative to the Center in Paris, the Hong Kong Center is a second, defining pillar for an internationalism of the twenty-first century, which situates the University of Chicago within the cross-cultural flows of the world’s great global cities in Europe and Asia.

Figure 15: The Hong Kong Jockey Club University of Chicago Academic Complex and Francis and Rose Yuen Campus
PART VI: CONCLUSION

riting to Robert Hutchins at the end of a visit to the University of Chicago in June 1950, the émigré German philosopher Kurt Riezler remarked, “I have enjoyed my visits to Chicago and especially the temper and the spirit of the students. Whatever may be the deficiencies, more is done here than in any other place I know to uphold standards of judgment, taste, and honesty, while triviality and irrelevancy flood the universe of published discourse.” The Chicago that Riezler encountered seventy years ago was the product of a remarkable melding together of various streams of educational ideals and practices, some midwestern American, others European. Our community of learning, further amplified by an even wider engagement with the worlds beyond Europe and America since 1950, still cherishes and defends those values today. William Rainey Harper’s vision of 1904—that universities should constitute a force for spreading democratic enlightenment, articulating knowledge, sponsoring inquiry, and defending truth—is no less compelling now than it was a century ago.

The University of Chicago was born as a republican institution in 1890, and our own charter comes not from an emperor but from a group of capitalist businessmen. But as we strengthen our commitments to Europe, exactly 130 years later, we as members of Chicago should find it all the more delightful to affirm the original impulse of our predecessors when they judged that our European cousins had created truly extraordinary institutions of higher learning and research, which a young American university might well want to emulate and to admire.

This challenge and opportunity is particularly appealing in the context of the future mission of our newly expanded Center in Paris, situated in a cosmopolitan city with universal aspirations that has exerted such a powerful pull on the imaginations of other Europeans and Americans through the centuries. Paris has been the source of many of the institutional and conceptual innovations that have shaped Western culture. Roman law is such a force, and all the more formidable for having become the subject of intense scholarly inquiry in the French and the German universities over the course of the nineteenth century. I am reminded of its perennial quality by Goethe’s comment to Johann Peter Eckermann in 1829 to the effect that Roman law is like a diving duck that hides itself from time to time under the water, but in fact is never quite lost and always comes up again in a very lively state. But like many of the key intellectual schemes and policies that have shaped our culture, the lively impact of law (Roman and other) in the modern world has been charted, explicated, and shaped in university-based institutes and seminars, not merely in courtrooms and civil service offices. The great traditions of public and private law that we encounter today have been shaped by the probative opinions and scientific theories of generations of university-based Gelehrten. Peter Stein has argued that “when it came to legal science, in the sense of the interpretation of law by jurists, German scholarship reigned supreme. Students flocked to the great German law faculties in the way they had gone to Italy in the twelfth century, France in the sixteenth century, and the Netherlands in the seventeenth.”


230. Peter Stein, Roman Law in European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 123.
professional and scientific elites, but to create the very knowledge that those elites would then deploy in governing and managing the complex societies of the modern world. Their successor institutions in the United States enlarged and expanded the realm of their intellectual and scientific hegemony over the course of modern life in the twentieth century.

We should be proud to have a university of such universal distinction in Chicago, and we should not take it for granted, nor forget that it arose because of our artful and dedicated engagement with the global world, beginning in Germany. This growth is a tribute to the ambitions of our students and to their increasing willingness, under the guidance and inspiration of our faculty and our curriculum, to think and work beyond the borders of the United States and even of the English-speaking world. Clearly, our undergraduate and graduate students profit enormously from steady and ongoing interactions with other university students elsewhere in the world. And it is important that we encourage our students to learn other languages and to study, to understand, and to respect the integrity of other cultures. Scientific and humanistic research has become, moreover, irrevocably international. Individual faculty scholars and students in distant parts of the globe can help each other in significant ways, but those exchanges must occur in person and in real time—not just via videoconferences, email, and FedEx shipments. We should not seek to become a “borderless university,” but we are on the threshold of a genuinely exciting time in international scientific cooperation and humanistic collaboration.

As the world grows smaller, or at least more integrated, then it makes sense that the research universities, institutions that have become the classic motors of innovation and creativity in modern postindustrial societies, must lead the way—and this time around, the process must include undergraduates, together with graduate students and senior faculty.

Finally, America in 2020 finds itself in a fascinating, but unsteady, economic and political equilibrium with Europe and Asia, with the industrial and postindustrial societies on all three continents facing remarkably similar social and cultural challenges. Our university is more than most others a product of generations of interaction with academic models and ideals drawn beyond American borders. Each generation of faculty has managed to reengage the world on terms somewhat different from its immediate predecessors, yet over time the cumulative effect of these collective encounters has been very powerful in shaping our institutional identity. Equally important, this process was undertaken by the faculty itself and not simply dictated by the central administration. This has led to patterns of faculty engagement with international venues and scholarly and pedagogical opportunities that have become over time more complex, more diverse, and more creative. The Frankfurt-Chicago program of the 1950s is not intelligible without acknowledging the powerful impact of the generation of refugee scholars who came in the 1930s and 1940s, several of whom helped to organize and run it. Nor is the successful integration of the refugee generation of the 1930s and 1940s understandable without Chicago’s earlier and profound connection to European and especially German models of learning that were operational before 1914. Robert Redfield’s international initiatives after 1945 reflected not only his own ethnographic research in Mexico in the 1930s on the folk-urban continuum but also his involvement with the many thorny issues relating to the study of world cultures that he faced as dean of the Division of the Social Sciences in the later 1930s and 1940s.231

Many of the key cultural concepts with which we have endowed our institutional distinctiveness and with which we continue to articulate our pride in Chicago as a special academic community are deeply anchored in the structural interactions and personal interconnections with European scholars and scholarship that occurred between 1890 and 1914 and 1933 and 1950. Yet during the same decades the University also developed remarkably open, nonhierarchical systems of teaching and learning, treating our students as partners rather than subordinates or automatons. This more open and democratic style of teaching and learning became and remains a remarkably attractive form of education that should be of continued interest to the world and that, in a reciprocal sense, will continue to draw credibility and authenticity as it encounters and tests itself in the world. As the refugee scholar Otto von Simson put it in 1949, writing to Robert Hutchins about his teaching experiences in the Frankfurt program and how they meshed with the revolutionary ideas about undergraduate education articulated by Hutchins in Hyde Park, “I have never experienced the possibilities and responsibilities of education, so often outlined by you, as vividly as I have over here [in Frankfurt].”\(^{232}\) For Simson, in a modest way and in an unlikely environment, the borders separating different styles of education between Europe and America had collapsed, and a kind of transnational citizenship of learning had now assumed a place of honor—but a citizenship in which uniquely American educational ideals and deeply democratic educational practices now gained renewed authenticity and value. Our challenge is to continue to undertake an internationalism appropriate to our time, in the hopes that like Otto von Simson we and our students will experience, vividly and without timidity, the potential for their own intellectual growth that must result from thoughtful encounters with other cultural and educational traditions. This is what Robert Redfield meant when he suggested in 1947 that
to describe this process of getting acquainted with people with a culture different from our own is to recognize the experience as liberalizing. We are all limited in our understanding of our own conduct and that of our neighbors because we see everything by the preconceptions offered by our own culture. It is a task of education to provide a viewpoint from which the educated person may free himself from the limitations of these preconceptions. We are all islanders to begin with. An acquaintance with another culture, a real and deep acquaintance, is a release of the mind and the spirit from that isolation. It is to learn a universal language.\(^{233}\)

The University has profited enormously from its connections to the wider world of scholarship and teaching, and its identity as a place of learning and discovery has been fundamentally shaped by these relationships. This characteristic was evident during the visit of the former

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\(^{232}\) Simson to Hutchins, August 13, 1949. Simson was appointed an assistant professor of art in the Committee on Social Thought in March 1945. After fleeing Germany, he taught at Marymount College in Tarrytown, New York, and at St. Mary’s College in South Bend, Indiana. While still in Germany he had published an essay in the German Catholic periodical Hochland on Robert Hutchins’s *The Higher Learning in America* and *No Friendly Voice*. Given the intellectual constraints of the time in Nazi Germany, the essay was remarkably positive about Hutchins’s educational ideals. See Otto von Simson, “Reform-Bestrebungen an den amerikanischen Universitäten,” *Hochland* 35, no. 2 (1938–39): 468–76.

president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker, some years ago. After his tour of the University of Chicago, I asked President von Weizsäcker what he thought. He paused, for a moment, and then said simply, “I am delighted, before I die, to have seen a real German research university.”

Thank you very much for your dedication and support of the College.

April 30, 1996

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

No scholar comes to the University of Chicago without an awareness of its brilliant past. I write to you today to describe a course of action that I believe can lead to an equally brilliant future.

Excellence in research and education has been and must continue to be the source of our brilliance. But among the universities known for the outstanding quality and breadth of their scholarly contributions, what distinguishes Chicago is a fierce commitment to ideas and intellectual community. We draw strength from these values, and we represent them to the world. Faculty and students choose this university because they recognize the importance of these values for their scholarship and learning.

The task before us is to sustain and enhance the quality of our University in the long run. Beyond insistence upon excellence and adherence to our distinctive values, a critical ingredient in achieving this goal will be our ability to generate necessary resources. We must provide faculty with outstanding research space, materials, and equipment; pay top salaries; support new intellectual initiatives; build and maintain superb libraries and computing facilities; furnish teachers and students with modern classrooms and laboratories; and offer appropriate and competitive financial aid.

As you know from discussions over the last two years, our current path does not provide sufficient resources for these essential investments, either in the near term or in the future. As the Task Forces on Graduate and Undergraduate Education noted, we are the only university in our peer group in which the divisional and college faculty wage base (excluding BSD clinical faculty) exceeds net undergraduate tuition. Our smaller number of undergraduate alumni has led over time to fewer contributors to the University and fewer dollars for the endowment. A structure in which tuition does not cover salaries and in which endowment does not grow at a robust rate is not sustainable over the long term. In short, despite our hard and successful work to bring the operating budget into balance and to expand fundraising, it remains the case that faculty salaries and start-up packages, fellowship support, and facilities are not what they must be and we are not investing adequately in our capital base.
I am recommending a course of action that I believe will significantly strengthen the basis for long-term support of education and scholarship at the University. At the center of my recommendation is a heightened priority to collegiate education both inside and outside the classroom, with the objective of improving the quality of the education we offer and of making the College more frequently the school of choice for the most talented and committed students. Our success will allow us to effect a rather significant expansion of the College, from our current 3550 undergraduates to 4500 within ten years. I cannot overemphasize, however, that an increase in demand for the College must precede any growth in its size, and that we must continue to be known for the intellectual ability of our students and the seriousness with which they approach their education. I would leave open for now the number and mix of graduate students, but my strong presumption is that this number will remain larger than is the case at peer institutions. What matters most is that our graduate students be the very best and that we provide the support that this requires. In the near term, I envision a faculty that is slightly smaller, but I hope that the faculty can grow in the long run. The path I propose will require some redirection in the overall work of the faculty, but it will not fundamentally change what we are about.

Rather than proceeding directly to a discussion of how to implement this course of action, I would have us first consider whether this path is consistent with the values and history of the University and whether it will contribute to the betterment of society. I want us to consider if this is a course that we can embrace; one that deserves resources as opposed to one that simply requires resources; one that fits with our continued excellence in scholarship as opposed to one that simply furnishes financial support for such excellence. Success in improving the education we offer and in making the College more frequently the school of choice depends on our belief in the value of doing this work well. Hence I devote a considerable portion of this letter to discussing the value of such an education and to attract the most talented and committed students. This is important, not just because the very best students deserve the best education, but because when students who could attend any college or university choose the place that is known for providing the best liberal education, it is a victory for the cause of liberal education.

The university that offers the very best liberal education has the opportunity, and I would argue the responsibility, to demonstrate the value of such an education and to attract the most talented and committed students. This is important, not just because the very best students deserve the best education, but because when students who could attend any college or university choose the place that is known for providing the very best liberal education, it is a victory for the cause of liberal education.

I believe we are the university best positioned to offer a truly exemplary liberal collegiate education. In important ways, we represent the idealized picture: a well-deserved reputation, proudly confirmed by our alumni, for teaching students to think and for transforming lives; a faculty that is unsurpassed in making important discoveries; a faculty that is known for engaging in work that spans disciplines; a faculty that comes together to consider and implement curricular changes; a faculty that has crafted a Core that is a benchmark for a general education; and a significant number of faculty who consider liberal education to be among their most important activities and who give generously of their time to students.

But I believe we can provide an even more outstanding liberal education. That is why I was heartened by the task forces’ calls for the faculty, individually and collectively, to make an intensified commitment to our College. They were correct to stress the need for the departments in particular to take greater responsibility for the concentrations. The Core is also continually in need of renewal and strengthening, both through the introduction of wonderful new courses and through more faculty becoming engaged in defining its goals and shaping its content. The Core belongs to all of us and it should be a source of institutional pride for each of us.

The foundation of an outstanding liberal education, of course, is the quality of our teaching. Good teaching in each and every class is not just an individual responsibility, but a departmental and indeed a University-wide responsibility.
A poorly taught course hurts us all, while superbly taught courses, like outstanding research, enhance our reputation.

In thinking about how to improve all aspects of our students’ educational experience, I have found the report of the student life task force and my discussions with current students and alumni particularly illuminating. They are enormously proud of their Chicago education, but all too frequently they speak of unrelenting academic pressure interfering with their ability to learn and to make the most of their time here. Some academic pressure is a natural and productive part of a serious education. But I am concerned that the sum total of our academic requirements (each of which may have considerable intellectual merit), compounded by the pace of our academic calendar, is too often unmanageable, even for our best students.

This is not a call for less rigorous intellectual standards. It is a call for us to recognize that a student’s life encompasses more than course work, and to make sure that our students have time for other activities that lead to personal growth. Consider, for example, the remarkably talented mathematician-cellist who each week spends 20 hours in practice and five additional hours in lessons with the principal cellist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

As faculty we must convey to students that we respect the taste and maturity they have shown in choosing to come here and that we applaud their seriousness of purpose. We must also recognize that our College students will pursue many career paths – this is a normal outgrowth of a liberal education. We do not fall short of our aspirations as educators and our students do not fall short of their aspirations as learners when they decide to become bankers or film producers instead of professors. Our true measure as teachers is whether we have nurtured in our students a lifelong commitment to critical inquiry and learning. We should take pride in all students who demonstrate this quality.

Moreover, we must be dedicated to our students’ success both before and after graduation. Our curriculum – especially our concentrations – should offer paths that attend to their intellectual interests and goals. By asking what we as scholars can do to help our students unlock their talents and realize their dreams, we demonstrate the same generosity of spirit that is at the heart of great teaching.

Let me now address how I would have us begin to implement the course of action I am recommending:

• I endorse the recommendation of the graduate and undergraduate task forces that each department undertake a comprehensive review of its undergraduate program. I ask for these reviews to emphasize how departmental faculty, individually and collectively, can address the points I have raised in this letter.

• The current review of the Core by the College Council should lead to a broader discussion in a variety of fora about the content and role of general education in the College curriculum.

• I would like us to consider changes to our calendar that could improve the manageability of the educational experience, and perhaps offer faculty more flexibility in scheduling teaching and research.

I am asking the Provost, working with the deans of the divisions and the College, to develop specific mechanisms for accomplishing these tasks and to share their recommendations with me by early 1997.

The Task Force on the Quality of Student Experience has demonstrated the need for paying attention to our students’ lives outside the classroom and in particular the need to build a stronger sense of community. It recognized that much has been accomplished during the past year in career counseling and in enhancing space for student activities. However, more needs to be done. Accordingly:

• We will press ahead with improvements to our dormitories, food service, non-academic programming, and recreational facilities. These efforts will be led by Vice President Arthur Sussman, who will report on these initiatives to the Council of the University Senate in the Fall.

• We must begin planning now the infrastructure that will be needed to accommodate a larger undergraduate student body, for example, classrooms and teaching laboratories. This must fit with our plans for the entire campus, including faculty research space. I am asking the Provost to launch the development of a comprehensive physical master plan for the University. This planning effort, which will require faculty involvement and leadership, should be completed by July 1998.

Progress along the path that I have described also requires that we be more successful in communicating the profound worth of what we have to offer. I am concerned that while the University receives the same attention for faculty scholarship as its peers, we are much less familiar to large members of prospective students or to the broader public. This must change. Therefore:

• We must devise more effective means of reaching potential applicants and convincing them to apply to – and then matriculate at – the College. Dean Boyer and I will report to the College Council in the Fall on our progress in this area.

The course I am recommending is not without risk, but the greater risk is to remain on a course that will not sustain excellence. Belief in the values that make the University of Chicago distinctive must be translated into actions that provide the necessary support for these values. I ask the faculty of the University to come...
together, as we have always done, to confront the challenges facing us. Consistent with that tradition, I welcome the robust debate that I know will follow about how best to proceed.

I am confident that the course I have described, when pursued with understanding, dedication and enthusiasm, will enable us to achieve our highest aspirations. I foresee a University of Chicago that is widely known for drawing the most outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, who come to it for the exceptional education that it provides; a University that is generating resources at a level necessary for long-run support of excellence and where this capacity is understood as a strength. When one adds to the mix an institutional culture that is truly dedicated to ideas, to discovery and to intellectual community, we assure our continued leadership in scholarship and education.

I look forward to joining with you to realize this promise.

Sincerely,

Hugo F. Sonnenschein

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