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“THE KIND OF
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WE DESIRE TO
BECOME”

STUDENT HOUSING AND
THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

JOHN W. BOYER

XVIII

OCCASIONAL PAPERS
ON HIGHER
EDUCATION XVIII

THE COLLEGE
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO



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*Student Housing and the Educational Mission
of the University of Chicago*

INTRODUCTION



We meet today at an important moment in the history of the College. The College suffered a reversal of fortune in the early 1950s, and the ill effects of this lasted for over forty years. The crisis was most visible in light of our enrollment. We were a College of substantial size and presence on campus before the World War II (when we were also as large or larger than our academic peers), but by 1953 we had lost half our enrollment and had fewer than 1,400 students by 1954. We did not return to our pre-1940 size until the mid-1980s. In conjunction with the enrollment crisis, and accelerating in its wake, came a crisis of resources. A small and often embattled College became a kind of de facto self-fulfilling prophecy, and as a result it was all too easy to ignore the kinds of investments that would have allowed the College to grow back to robust health.

The College's demographic collapse occurred exactly at the time that other top private universities began to expand in the 1950s and 1960s. This collapse disadvantaged the College, creating a campus culture marked by high attrition rates, low graduation rates, and a milieu that many students found unsupportive, especially in the world beyond

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the classroom. This cultural situation also hurt the University badly, both because of loss of tuition income and alumni support, and also because of a loss of national visibility in undergraduate admissions.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the dual challenges of demography and disinvestment in the College began to be overcome. Over the last decade, a new student culture has emerged that is very positive about the University. The admissions situation of the College is vastly improved, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. Current students are talented as well as strongly loyal and happy, and prospective students see this immediately when they visit campus and meet them.

Current figures on admissions speak clearly in support of these claims: applications to the College have increased from 4,128 in 1992 to 12,382 in 2008. Our acceptance rate has declined from 71 percent in 1992 to 28 percent in 2008. The number of students enrolled in the College has increased from 3,425 in 1992 to just over five thousand in Autumn Quarter 2008.

No one who has taught our students can dispute the claim that they are talented, intellectually curious, and ambitious, and fully worthy of the faculty's aspirations for them. There are many ways to measure their achievements, but let me highlight just a couple. Twenty College students were awarded Fulbrights for the 2008–09 grant period—our second extraordinary year in a row. We rarely had more than three Fulbrights a year in the 1990s, and one per year was typical in the 1980s. This success is a tribute to the talent of our students, to the faculty colleagues who prepare and encourage them, and to the staff members devoted to publicizing these opportunities and encouraging and coaching applications. That three-part investment is essential to the College's success: talented and ambitious students, dedicated faculty, and a well-organized staff infrastructure. The same point is made by recent successes in national

scholarship competitions. In 2007–08, College students won three Rhodes Scholarships, one Marshall, one Churchill, two Goldwaters, and a Gates-Cambridge Scholarship.

As to student satisfaction, we can point to the fact that our six-year graduation rate has increased from 81 percent in 1992 to 92 percent in 2008. In addition, first-year College-student retention rates have increased dramatically, from 87 percent in 1992 to 97 percent in 2007, and the contribution rate to the senior class gift has increased from 21 percent in 1992 to 80 percent in 2008.

Our students are more successful and more at home in the College for many reasons. First and foremost, of course, is the education we offer. Chicago offers a form and structure of liberal education that is both challenging and deeply satisfying to our students and faculty alike. The Core curriculum provides a crucial realm of general learning that is not beholden to strict disciplinary vested interests but is designed to stimulate lifelong skills of self-education among our students. We must and will do all that we can to sustain and strengthen faculty teaching in the Core. But our majors also provide critical places of intellectual growth and scholarly training, introducing our College students to the passions and the pleasures, the risks and frustrations, the courage and ultimately the fearlessness of original research. One natural advantage of being a College at the heart of a great research University is that our students can learn research methods and skills from an internationally distinguished faculty. Over the last several years, the College has increased its support for collaborative research between College students and faculty on several fronts. For example, our new F. Champion Ward third-year international summer research program supports up to fifteen students each year with grants of \$3,000 to do BA research overseas in contexts that require use of a language other than English. The grants

are named for Champ Ward, a former Dean of the College and the Dean who first conceived of the kind of rigorous study abroad opportunities that we now offer our students. In Ward’s era—the early 1950s—these were opportunities that the College simply could not afford, and it is fitting now to honor Ward for the ideas that he was sadly unable to execute.

We are also supporting summer research grants in specific departments and programs. Departments and programs offering summer research support to College students include art history, biological chemistry, biological sciences, chemistry, classical studies, comparative human development, English language and literature, history, mathematics, philosophy, physics, psychology, and public policy studies. Most of these programs were created in the last ten years with funds from College alumni or parents for the specific purpose of providing research support directly to our students and thereby encouraging both student creativity and student-faculty collaboration.

If we combine our support for research with the support that the College provides for internships—through the Metcalf Program (230 internships annually in both not-for-profit and for-profit settings), SummerLinks (thirty internships annually in community service organizations), and Human Rights (nineteen internships annually)—along with more than one hundred summer Foreign Language Acquisition Grants (FLAGs) annually and several volunteer opportunities managed through the University Community Service Center, we fund approximately four hundred summer learning, research, and internship positions.

In the aggregate, these programs make it possible for about 25 percent of our students to graduate with at least one of these experiences. That might sound impressive and, given that none of these opportunities existed ten years ago, they are impressive. But it is important for us to keep

pushing forward and making more progress. We would like to double the number of special research grants and internships available to College students in the next five years, so that by 2012–13 no less than 50 percent of the students in the College will have access to one of these special opportunities.

On other fronts, we have seen considerable progress in the development of programs organized and managed by Career Advising and Planning Services (CAPS) that are designed to help College students prepare for careers in the health professions, in law, in business, and in journalism. Student response to these CAPS initiatives has been both deeply positive and broadly impressive. I am also pleased to report that we have secured approval from the State of Illinois for a new BA/MAT Program that will provide certification for secondary school teaching in biology and mathematics and that will be operated in conjunction with our existing program for elementary teaching. We will begin to recruit students this year for biology and mathematics teaching. Secondary education is one of the most crucial and vital domains of teaching in our nation, and we should enable more of our students to bring their academic skills, their disciplined hard work, and their enthusiasm to bear in the important task of improving our schools.

The guiding principles of all these efforts are two-fold. First, we believe that the rigorous liberal education provided by the College is excellent preparation for any career, but that the University should help students help themselves to create successful linkages between that education and professional achievement after the College. Second, we want to engage not only faculty and staff but also College and University alumni in these efforts; such engagement is good for our students, involves alumni in volunteer activities, and encourages deeper and even philanthropic connections with the institution. What all these efforts

have in common is that they are a part of larger, broad-based effort to construct *enabling structures* around and linked with our distinguished academic programs—structures that can help our students negotiate for themselves successful transitions from the world of the College to the world of academic and professional careers.

Enabling structures are just as important for the faculty colleagues teaching our College students, and we have invested in the faculty this year as well. In 2007–08, we inaugurated a program of grants to support faculty innovation in teaching in and beyond the Core. Most faculty members got into the business of higher education because they found teaching to be intellectually stimulating. We need to support faculty so that they continue to find intellectual stimulation and personal enjoyment in their teaching. To this end, we have created a program of competitive grants to support teaching innovations at all levels of College instruction. We provided twenty-four small grants in the inaugural year for faculty projects, ranging from video materials for language instruction to equipment for instructional laboratories in anthropology, biology, chemistry, and geophysical sciences. The faculty colleagues who received these grants were grateful, not only for the pragmatic support they received but also because the College was able to intervene in a direct and practical way to help them improve and enrich their teaching. Going forward, we will have the funds to offer about twelve Teaching Support and Innovation Grants each year.

In addition, we received two grants in 2008 that will enrich both the teaching our students receive and the academic community of the humanities and social sciences faculties. The Mellon Foundation will support a four-year program of visiting professorships for young scholars from Vienna, Paris, and St. Petersburg or Moscow. The Mellon visitors will teach courses and conduct research on new ideas of Europe and will

contribute through conferences to the programming at the Center in Paris. A similar grant from the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation will support three years of visitors, also early in their careers, from universities in central Europe, especially Romania, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, the Baltic states, and Austria. These visitors will teach in the Core and also participate in a conference in Paris. We hope with these programs to enrich our contacts with the next generation of scholars in Europe and at the same time to raise the visibility of the Center in Paris as a pan-European academic center.

As faculty we educate our students in the Core and in the more advanced programs that follow from the Core, but we also want to do all that we can to ensure that each student is empowered to use her or his educational achievements to achieve a high level of professional and personal success. This is why we teach and why we are determined to build and nourish the kinds of enabling structures that I have highlighted today. These commitments follow from the strongly democratic and meritocratic nature of our academic culture, but these commitments also serve us well as a practical matter because they help create a body of loyal and successful alumni. All of our students will have a fair chance to benefit from the full range of these opportunities only if we can offer each student equal membership in our College. That in turn requires financial aid and a community life in which all can participate. Therefore, our ability to provide generous financial support for students in the College who come from families with low or moderate incomes is an essential one, both for the character of our community and for the competitive position of the College on the national scene.

The current arms race in financial aid is not a race we are going to win with dollars alone, but it is a competition in which we must engage because we want talented students from low and moderate income fam-

ilies to enroll in the College. As we move forward on this front, both internally by making decisions about admissions and about aid programs and about programmatic budgets, and externally in our fund raising, it is important to keep in mind that financial aid is not simply a device for social equity. It is also an essential component of our ability to create and sustain a truly democratic educational community of merit. Financial aid policies and resources allow us to make sure that all students, regardless of their family financial circumstances, are able to participate fully and effectively in all of the resources and all of the opportunities of our campus culture and our academic community. Reductions in loan and work requirements are particularly effective in this regard because they help give aided students the day-to-day freedom that students from affluent families can take for granted.

The current Odyssey Scholarship Challenge is essential to our success in the competition for needy students. We owe a great deal to our anonymous donor for the imaginative generosity of this program, but we must raise at least \$50 million by 2010 in endowed matching funds for the Odyssey Scholarship Challenge to bring us all of the benefits that our donor has offered. Our progress has been good so far, with over \$11 million in gifts from alumni and parents to date, but we must step up our efforts between now and the June 2010 benchmark as the Odyssey Challenge ceases to be new news. At the same time we also need to be thinking about financial aid beyond the Odyssey Challenge. Our planning for financial aid policies over the next decade should include as a goal the elimination of all student loans from our financial aid packages. As more of our peers adopt this policy, we should be carefully weighing our options for making a competitive response.

Chicago is one of the nation's most important centers for many cultural heritages, particularly African American and Latino. We have

made great strides recently in making our campus a more welcoming place for students from minority groups, but we can do more; and central to that effort will be competitive financial aid policies. We have already benefitted from the Odyssey Scholarship Program in our recruiting of low income students and students of color: the number of students with an annual family income below \$60,000 is up by 22 percent for the Class of 2012 compared to the Class of 2011, and the Class of 2012 has 18 percent more African American students and 20 percent more Latino students than the Class of 2011. The competition on this front will only get more intense in the future. And we cannot forget that retention and student success, which are as important as recruitment, also require resources. This is only one place where financial aid and student services and residential life intersect.

The opportunities, services, and programs of financial aid that I have sketched here will be effective in the long run only if supported by a physical infrastructure large enough and diverse enough to accommodate the energy and variety of a College of approximately five thousand full-time undergraduate students. Such a College deserves a vibrant, densely integrated campus culture—one that pays special attention to encouraging students to live within walking distance of campus and become deeply involved in an array of academic, para-academic, and extracurricular activities. The magnificent new College Learning Center in Harper and Stuart, which is nearing the end of its design phase, will be a part of that infrastructure. By merging together the existing Stuart and Harper Libraries, restoring their historic architectural luster, and developing exciting new support facilities, the College Learning Center will become a key central destination point for students living north and south of the Midway. The Harper/Stuart renewal is timed to coincide with the opening of the new residence hall south of Burton-

Judson Courts. Somewhat further in the future is the Reva and David Logan Center for Creative and Performing Arts.

Student residential life presents us with another extraordinary opportunity to enhance the work of the College, and I believe that the historical remarks to which I now turn will justify the claim that we need to develop a concrete plan that will enable the College to house at least 70 percent of its students in high-quality College housing within easy walking distance of campus by 2013–14. All of the initiatives that I have mentioned today, and many more as well, raise questions about strategy and about priorities—questions that are even more important in perilous economic times. The question of priorities in turn raises the question of what we are trying to accomplish as a College and as a University. To quote the title of this lecture, which comes from a presentation made by President Lawrence A. Kimpton to the Board of Trustees in 1958, “What kind of university do we want to become?”

The example of student housing, to which I just alluded, provides a fascinating case study of the intersection of our values, our self-understanding, and our institutional practices. The case of student housing illustrates the complex way that strategy and tactics can be mobilized, either to defend those values and strengthen our identity and core mission or to compromise our values and weaken our ability to accomplish our mission as a University.

A major event of the past academic year was a report of a special committee of faculty, students, and administrators staffed by Kieran-Timberlake Associates that was charged by the University Dean of Students Kimberly Goff-Crews to consider the future structure of the College’s housing system. The report offers a comprehensive survey of current housing resources for undergraduate students in the College and, confirming the recommendations of earlier University committees, rec-

ommends that the University make a strong effort to provide suitable housing for at least 70 percent of our College students within a short walking distance of campus.¹

The University of Chicago now ranks as the lowest among top private universities in the United States in its rate of housing undergraduate students in our own residential system, having relied for many decades on the ability of (and willingness of) our students to garner cheap flats or rooms in the neighborhood. Over the years this process (and practice) of exporting our students off campus came to be naturalized and habitual in terms of expected behavior. Yet, at the same time, we have strong evidence that our students love the College's housing system and that they warmly remember it after they have left the College as young alumni. If the faculty believes that our housing system affords our students strong social and cultural support for their academic development and their growth as intelligent and socially responsible adults, why should we not provide more opportunities for more of our students to live in our Houses? Our academic peers offer a much denser and more engaging residential experience than we do. We house only 56 percent of our students on campus, including students housed in what are clearly sub-standard buildings, and this number will not change when the new building south of Burton-Judson Courts opens; that facility will do no more than replace the loss of Shoreland Hall. By contrast, Yale and Brown house 88 percent and 85 percent of their students, and the percentages are well into the nineties at Columbia, Princeton, and Harvard. Our circumstances are such that an on-campus residence rate of 90

1. KieranTimberlake Associates, "The University of Chicago. Undergraduate Residential Policy Study, 2 volumes, July 2008." I am very grateful to Naomi Vaughan, Peter Simons, and John V. Bowlus for research assistance for this project and to Thomas Christensen for bringing relevant materials to my attention.

percent is not feasible and perhaps not even advisable, but that we would benefit from a rate closer to that of Yale or Brown is certain.

The social and political history of undergraduate housing at the University of Chicago is a complex narrative. It is fascinating not only because of the insights that it provides about the history of the College as an educational and social community, but also because it affords a helpful window to the wider world of University attitudes toward and policies relating to the College over the past century.

THE EARLY STUDENT BODY OF THE COLLEGE



Given the complex interrelationships between family background and residential choice that informed and helped to define the quality of student life at the early University—including the decision to leave home and seek residence in a University dormitory, a rooming house, or a fraternity house—it is important to gain some insights about the student body of the University of Chicago in the first several decades of its existence. Unfortunately, the University kept rather fragmentary and often disorganized records about the social backgrounds of our students, and often these extant records do not answer the questions that we wish to bring to them. Still, enough information does survive to present a general social portrait of the early undergraduate student body at Chicago. Students seeking admission to the University of Chicago were typically expected to have graduated from a high school. Many of our students were transfer students from other universities and colleges, and the same condition likely held in their cases as well. As George Counts demonstrated in his classic study of selective secondary

school admissions in the United States, although enrollments at the secondary school level increased dramatically between 1870 and 1910, the odds that a young boy or girl of high school age in the United States would attend high school in 1920 were not more than about 25 percent. Counts found that students attending high schools of any kind were much more likely to come from families with significant cultural and financial resources (for example, students in high schools were more than two and a half times likely to come from a home that had a telephone, and their parents were much more likely to be employed in a white-collar professional or commercial career as opposed to having a working-class job). Once students were enrolled in high school their family backgrounds continued to influence whether they would undertake a college preparatory course or a more commercially and industrially oriented vocational curriculum.² The population of private high schools in 1920, slightly over 158,000 in the whole of the United States, tended to come from even more affluent and propertied classes.

The size of the undergraduate student population at Chicago (Autumn Quarter enrollments) increased from 1,488 students in 1908 to 3,401 students in 1929. Chicago was co-educational from the beginning, with the number of first-year men and women undergraduates ranging from a ratio of 54 percent to 46 percent in 1908 to 57 percent to 43 percent in 1929 to (again) 56 percent to 44 percent in 1940. Until 1911, admission to the University on the junior college level required students taking an entrance examination that presumed four years (fifteen yearlong courses) of full-time course work at the high school level. Beginning in 1911–12, the University accepted students who had grad-

2. George S. Counts, *The Selective Character of American Secondary Education* (Chicago, 1922), pp. 72–73, 141–48.

uated from a four-year high school accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (or, in other parts of the country, by similar accrediting bodies), subject to the student's record meeting certain quantitative and qualitative requirements.³ Once at the University, academic achievement tended to correlate strongly with prior success in high school, and with parental occupation as well. Reeves and Russell found, for example, that 84 percent of the students in 1926 whose fathers were employed in professional careers attained a satisfactory academic record during their freshman year, but that this value fell to 57 percent for children of fathers who worked in the trades.⁴

Financing an undergraduate education at the University of Chicago required significant financial commitments. In spite of the extraordinary endowment support provided by John D. Rockefeller and later from the Rockefeller boards, University officials from the very beginning were forced to rely on student tuition fees as a significant source of operational revenue, a form of dependence that would grow far greater of over the *longue durée* of the twentieth century. By the mid-1920s fully one-third of the annual budget of the University was covered by income from student tuition fees. Eliminating the expenses and revenues associated with the medical school and University clinics, student fees (42 percent) by the later 1930s exceeded endowment income (36 percent) as the single largest source of revenue for the

3. In 1930, the University required that a student "shall have an average in high-school non-vocational subjects higher than the passing mark of the school by at least 25 per cent of the difference between the passing mark and 100. For example, if the passing mark is 75, the average of at least 81.25 is required." See Floyd W. Reeves and John Dale Russell, *Admission and Retention of University Students* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 16–17.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

general budget of the arts and sciences.⁵ Between 1918 and 1930, student enrollments at the University grew by 59 percent, but the institution's annual operational and educational expenditures increased by 323 percent.⁶ Given the financial pressures experienced by the University after World War I, when our student population surged and when the faculty argued for a massive expansion of instructional and research resources, it was understandable that the cost of attendance increased by over 100 percent between 1917 and 1926, with annual tuition charges (full-time and for three quarters) increasing from \$150 in 1917 to \$300 in 1926. By 1933, annual tuition increased to \$306; by 1939, it increased still further to \$325. If a student did not live at home, additional expenses would be incurred by room and board costs on or off campus. Within our residential system, room and board charges varied depending on the quality and location of the dorm. The lowest cost for room and board in Burton-Judson Courts in 1931 was about \$445 for a full academic year. In older residence halls like Snell and Hitchcock, room and board might be obtained for slightly less than \$300 per academic year (these are minimums, and wealthier students could gain better rooms for higher fees). Students living off campus might reduce living expenses still further by cooking for themselves, although it seems very unlikely that one could rent a room, feed oneself, and buy books in Hyde Park for less than \$250 a year. Thus, assuming that a student did not live at

5. "Sources of Support for the General Budget, 1938–39," *Office of the Vice President Papers*, Box 9, folder 26. Unless otherwise noted, all of the archival materials used for this report are located in the Special Collections Research Center, The University of Chicago.

6. Floyd W. Reeves, Ernest C. Miller, and John Dale Russell, *Trends in University Growth* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 176–77.

home, the real cost of attendance at the University of Chicago at the onset of the Depression was probably somewhere between \$550 and \$800 a year.⁷ To put this latter figure in the social context of the times, the average salary of a full-time associate professor at the University of Chicago in 1930–31 was about \$4,000 to \$4,500 a year. A male high school teacher with a degree from a land grant college would have earned about \$2,900 after ten years of service. Professions like law and medicine did considerably better: average salaries in law, medicine, and engineering for graduates of a land grant college after ten years were about \$6,000, \$5,700, and \$4,200 respectively.⁸ In contrast, a skilled worker employed in a manufacturing industry in 1929 might have earned about \$1,700 a year.

The University offered scholarship assistance to undergraduates from the very beginning of its history, but in very modest amounts and almost always on a competitive merit basis. Scholarships were offered on the basis of competitive evaluations of student achievement within specific fields (prize or competition scholarships) and on the basis of a student's academic record in high school or at the College (honor scholarships). About ninety partial tuition grants were also available to students from the La Verne Noyes Foundation for veterans of the armed forces during World War I or for their descendants. In 1930, the University awarded scholarship aid to 167 freshmen (19 percent of all new matriculants) and to 517 upper-class undergraduates (14 percent of all

7. W. H. Harrell to W. J. Mather, February 27, 1933, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 70, folder 7.

8. Earl W. Anderson, "Salaries in Certain Professions," *Educational Research Bulletin*, January 11, 1933, pp. 1–9. Most of Anderson's data came from the years 1926 to 1930.

full-time upper-classmen).⁹ Many of the freshmen awards covered full tuition, but a large majority of the upper-class scholarships covered only partial tuition. Even students with aid encountered increasing financial pressures after their first year. Many students therefore had to earn part or all of their tuition and living expenses by working. Based on a survey of 2,065 College students in 1920, Harold Lasswell and Theodore Soares estimated that 42.5 percent of male undergraduate students and 31 percent of female undergraduates worked part- or full-time jobs.¹⁰ A team led by H. A. Millis surveyed 1,786 undergraduates in early 1924 and came to roughly similar conclusions: 36.6 percent of the students carrying a full load of four courses per quarter had gainful employment, while 46.7 percent of those taking two courses a quarter had outside jobs.¹¹ In addition, almost one-third of those polled reported that they were living under stress because of the pressures of combining their studies with work. Reeves and Russell also found in 1930 that a very large number of students with full or partial scholarship assistance (who were, in turn, a distinct minority of the total Chicago college population) had to work on a part-time basis. Since many scholarship winners came from outside

9. Floyd W. Reeves and John Dale Russell, *Some University Student Problems* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 15, 18, 30–32, 65.

10. Harold D. Lasswell and Theodore G. Soares, "Social Survey of the Undergraduates of the University of Chicago," *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*. Records, Box 78, folder 1. Hereafter cited as *HJB Administration*.

11. H. A. Millis et al., *Report of the Faculty-Student Committee on the Distribution of Students' Time, January 1925* (Chicago, 1925), p. 84. Millis also found that the fact of being a commuter was directly related to the course load that a student could carry. Students carrying a two- or three-course load (per quarter) were much more likely to be commuters than students carrying a four-course load (p. 24).

the Chicago area, they often experienced higher living costs than did local students.¹² The onset of the Depression further complicated the situation. In 1939, over 56 percent of undergraduate men and 30 percent of undergraduate women reported that they expected to be either fully or partially self-supporting during their tenure at Chicago. Equally important, 54 percent of the men and 18 percent of the women reported that they had contributed to their own support while in high school.

Perhaps the most difficult factor to analyze with precision is the class and socio-economic status of Chicago undergraduate students. George Counts suggested in 1922 that most high school graduates who had taken college preparatory programs came *ipso facto* from (at the time) relatively advantaged social and cultural backgrounds, and since most matriculants at Chicago were highly intelligent students who attained strong academic records in their (predominantly) public high schools, one might expect that Chicago undergraduates, as a rule, came from solidly middle-class to upper-middle-class and occasionally even upper-class social backgrounds. The median score attained by Chicago freshmen on the American Council of Education's Psychological Examination (an early examination of intelligence) revealed that Chicago undergraduates ranked fourth in the nation out of a group of 151 colleges and universities in 1931.¹³

12. Reeves and Russell, *Some University Student Problems*, pp. 65–68. Using representative samples, John Kennan found in 1933 that 61 percent of entering freshmen on scholarship aid were commuters, whereas 75 percent of non-scholarship students were commuters, presumably living at home. John C. Kennan, “A Comparison of the Two-Year Honor Scholars Winners with a Non-Scholarship Group in Respect to Finances, Study, Recreation, and Sleep,” February 1933, *Archive of the College*, Box 15, folder 7.

13. Floyd W. Reeves and John Dale Russell, *The Admission and Retention of University Students* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 68–69.

However, we have a number of other data points that suggest a more complex story. First, we have reasonably good data about parental occupation and education from the 1920s and 1930s. Reeves and Russell found, based on a representative sample of 3,769 undergraduate alumni from 1893 to 1930, that a substantial majority (almost 70 percent) came from families in which the father owned a proprietary business of some kind or worked in professional services or commercial services. Only 13 percent came from families in which the father was employed as an artisan or worked in transportation, public service, building trades, or printing trades. However, these occupational designations covered a wide diversity of compensation levels and jobs within each category (for example, “professional services” encompassed social workers, librarians, and public school teachers, as well as physicians, engineers, and pharmacists).¹⁴ Data from the 1930s also revealed that, in terms of parental education, fathers of approximately 35 percent of Chicago undergraduates had not graduated from high school, while fathers of another 21 percent had graduated only from high school. Such data, together with the parallel data on the large numbers of students who needed to work, may suggest that the majority of the undergraduate population of the College came in fact from families who were more lower-middle to middle-class in terms of income status, along with a smaller number of working-class students and a still smaller number of students from wealthier families. The financial impact of the Depression after 1930 on the lives of our students and their families has never been studied, but it is noteworthy that undergraduate enrollments slowly declined at Chicago between 1929 and 1938: from a historic high point of 4,097

14. Floyd W. Reeves and John Dale Russell, *The Alumni of the Colleges* (Chicago, 1933), p. 8.

in 1929 to 3,976 in 1931; 3,532 in 1934; 3,382 in 1936; and 3,341 in 1938.¹⁵

If the early student body of the University was socio-economically diverse, it was distinctly less diverse in its geographical distribution. From the beginnings of the University until well into the 1940s, the majority of undergraduates came from Chicago and its close-in suburbs. In 1902, 56 percent of first-year undergraduates came from City of Chicago and another 15 percent from the State of Illinois outside of Chicago. Since some portion of the latter group were probably residents of one of Chicago's suburbs, the Chicago metropolitan area figure was likely slightly higher.¹⁶ Over the next thirty-five years our dependence on Chicago students increased rather than decreased: by the later 1930s, almost 70 percent of our first-year College students came from the Chicago metropolitan area, with only 5 percent from the rest of Illinois and 25 percent from the rest of the country.¹⁷ Until the 1950s, therefore, an early prediction of William Rainey Harper about the University's undergraduate student admissions pool remained truer than ever: “after due discount, it is evident that the great work of the Colleges is being done in Chicago and Illinois, and that the institutions outside of Chicago have little to fear in the way of competition for undergraduate students.”¹⁸

15. These data reflect the total number of different undergraduate students who registered during these academic years and not merely Autumn Quarter matriculations. See *The Registrar's Report to the President, 1938–39*, Table 6, p. 10.

16. *The President's Report, July 1902–July 1904* (Chicago, 1905), p. 3.

17. “Statistics on the Freshman Class Entering Autumn Quarter, 1940,” *Hutchins Administration*, Box 204, folder 8.

18. *The President's Report, July 1902–July 1904*, p. 3.

Given the College's heavy dependence on the local Chicago market for the majority of its students, it is interesting to compare the religious and/or confessional identities of the student population with the religious structure of the general Chicago population. In 1937, 72 percent of the entering undergraduate students at Chicago classified themselves as gentiles and almost 27 percent reported that they were Jews. Of the undergraduate alumni who graduated between 1920 and 1930, 16 percent were Presbyterian, 16 percent were Methodist, 15 percent were Jewish, 8 percent were Baptist, 9 percent were Congregational, 8 percent were Episcopalian, 7 percent were Roman Catholic, 7 percent were Lutheran, and 7 percent belonged to other smaller denominations, with the remainder expressing no religious preference.¹⁹ In the city as a whole in the 1930s, it is estimated that approximately 50 percent of the citizens with a religious affiliation were Roman Catholics, with Jews making up about 8 percent and various Protestant denominations making up the rest.²⁰ This meant

19. Reeves and Russell, *The Alumni of the Colleges*, p. 15; "Statistics of the Freshman Class Entering Autumn 1937," p. 4, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 204, folder 8.

20. Harold F. Gosnell estimated that in 1937 Catholics constituted slightly more than half of the population of Chicago over thirteen years of age who had a religious affiliation, with Protestants and Jews making up the rest. Cardinal George Mundelein also put the figure at over 50 percent. See Harold F. Gosnell, *Machine Politics. Chicago Model*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1968), p. 104; and James W. Sanders, *The Education of an Urban Minority. Catholics in Chicago, 1833–1965* (New York, 1977), p. 249, note 15. See also Edward R. Kantowicz, "The Ethnic Church," in Ellen Skerrett, Edward R. Kantowicz, and Steven M. Avella, eds., *Catholicism, Chicago Style* (Chicago, 1993), p. 12; Marvin R. Schafer, "The Catholic Church in Chicago. Its Growth and Administration," Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1929, pp. 11–15; and Stephen J. Shaw, *The Catholic Parish as a Way-Station of Ethnicity and Americanization. Chicago's Germans and Italians, 1903–1939* (Brooklyn, NY, 1991), pp. 16–17, 25, 27.

that Roman Catholics were seriously underrepresented in the College, and Protestants and Jews were overrepresented in the undergraduate student body, compared to the city population as a whole.

All of these variables may have influenced and helped to shape the market for residential facilities on our campus.²¹ Given the predominance of Chicago-based students at the College and given the absence of attractive (and affordable) on-campus alternatives, it is not surprising that for decades a huge number of undergraduate students lived at home, with their parents or with other relatives, or in rooming houses in the neighborhood. In Autumn Quarter 1928, only 8.3 percent of our undergraduates lived in University residence halls. Of the remaining, 59 percent lived at home and 18 percent lived in rooms or apartments in the neighborhood. In addition, 14.5 percent (all men) lived in fraternity houses.²² The fact that almost 60 percent of our students thus lived at home in 1928 paralleled the substantially local nature of the University's undergraduate admissions pool. Twelve years later, the statistics were strikingly similar: in Autumn Quarter 1940, over 60 percent of entering College students opted to (or were compelled to) live at home.²³ Student motivations for living at home were doubtless complex, and not in all cases related to finances. H. A. Millis found in 1924 that of 662

21. My colleague Bertram J. Cohler has also suggested that ethnicity may have played a role in the decision not to live on campus, since students coming from specific ethnic backgrounds may have felt more comfortable continuing to live with their families, instead of making the (semi-) clean cultural break that moving into on-campus housing would have involved.

22. “Student Housing—Autumn Quarter 1928,” *Mason Administration*, Box 8, folder 3.

23. “Statistics on the Freshman Class Entering Autumn Quarter, 1940.”

undergraduate students who lived more than thirty minutes travel time to the University, two-thirds had a preference for living at home, but one-third reported that they would have preferred living on or near the University's campus, had they been able to find affordable and inexpensive housing.²⁴

**R E S I D E N T I A L F A C I L I T I E S —
P R O P O S A L S F O R E X P A N S I O N
A N D R E O R I E N T A T I O N**



hen the University of Chicago opened its doors in 1892, among the first buildings constructed on our campus were two residence halls for Divinity School students (Middle and South Divinity Halls) along Ellis Avenue and a hall for men graduate students (North Hall or Graduate Hall). Middle and South Divinity Halls were constructed with money from John D. Rockefeller as part of the agreement under which the Baptist seminary in Morgan Park, Illinois, agreed to merge with the new University and become the Divinity School. North Hall, also constructed with Rockefeller support, was dedicated to male graduate students in the arts and sciences. The total capacity of these three halls was 184 beds. North, Middle, and South Halls were renamed in honor of Frederick Gates, Nelson Blake, and Thomas Goodspeed in early 1924, when the construction of Swift Hall was announced. The latter was named in honor of Anna M. Swift and was to function as the new home of the Divinity School.

24. *Report of the Faculty-Student Committee on the Distribution of Students' Time*, p. 86.

The University's first dormitory for undergraduate men was constructed with a gift of \$50,000 from Henrietta Snell in honor of her late husband, Amos J. Snell. Snell Hall was opened in April 1893 and provided accommodations for sixty students. One additional men's hall, Charles Hitchcock Hall, was added in 1901, costing \$150,000 and becoming our largest dorm with a capacity of ninety-two students. Hitchcock Hall was a gift from Mrs. Annie Hitchcock. She insisted that the University use this building as residence hall in perpetuity and that it function not merely as a place to sleep but rather as a “college home” for men, creating more family-like conditions and providing social and cultural support for its residents. The hall was equipped with, for the time, an impressive array of public spaces and club rooms, as well as a cloister that ran along its south front and united the five residential wings of the hall. So attractive did Hitchcock Hall prove that William Rainey Harper was forced to rule that requests from unmarried faculty members for rooms should be limited so as not to disadvantage students.²⁵

Harper was equally interested in providing suitable accommodations for women students, and the securing of funds for women's dormitories became a key component of the early fund-raising campaign

25. “One problem that perplexes me is just how far we should permit instructors to occupy rooms in the hall. They are of course desirable tenants. They are quiet and keep their rooms attractive. On the other hand Dr. Parker feels, as I think we all must, that after all the University dormitories are designed for the use of students and that inasmuch as the number of rooms is not adequate to meet the demands, we ought not to keep students out of the few at our disposal. For the present therefore, a policy has been adopted of giving to students the preference, if not altogether excluding instructors in the assignment of rooms in Hitchcock.” Harper to J. M. Thompson, November 9, 1904, *HJB Administration*, Box 41, folder 7.

to establish the University in 1891–92.²⁶ Elizabeth G. Kelly provided \$50,000 to construct our first women's dormitory in May 1892. Kelly Hall, which housed forty-two students, opened in July 1893. A second hall for women was made possible by a gift of \$50,000 from Mary Beecher. Sited along University Avenue, just south of Kelly Hall, Beecher Hall also housed forty-two students and opened in the summer of 1893. A third hall for women, which was made possible by a gift from Nancy S. Foster, was constructed on the corner of University Avenue and 59th Street. Foster Hall, which opened in October 1893, cost a total of \$83,000 and was slightly more elaborate than its mates. After more rooms were added in 1900, it housed sixty-eight students. The final structure of the University Avenue complex, which soon came to have the name of the C Group, was Green Hall. Opened in January 1899, it was made possible by another gift from Elizabeth Kelly in honor of her parents. Constructed at a cost of \$72,000, Green Hall linked Kelly and Beecher Halls. It was slightly larger, providing housing for sixty-seven students.

Together these early residence halls, and several smaller off-campus buildings, offered accommodation to about six hundred students, the majority of them graduate or professional school students.²⁷ An increasingly large number of undergraduate men resided in fraternity houses, which began to be organized in the mid-1890s. But the great majority of our undergraduate students lived off campus, with over 50 percent of our undergraduates living at home with their parents or other relatives

26. *An Appeal on Behalf of Women Students by the Women of Chicago* (Chicago, 1892). Filed in *ibid.*, Box 85, folder 42.

27. In 1928, approximately 39 percent of the available rooms were occupied by undergraduates. Sixty-one percent were assigned to graduate and professional students. See "Student Housing—Autumn Quarter 1928."

in 1910.²⁸ Thus, from the beginning of our history, most of our undergraduate students were not accommodated in campus housing. Too many other needs loomed on the horizon, and the University managed to build only a few residential halls, which had to be shared among the graduate, undergraduate, and professional school students.

Still, President William Rainey Harper had a clear sense of the value of residential living for undergraduates. In October 1896, he argued:

The term “residence in The University” ought in reality to be restricted to residence within the walls of The University, or more definitely to residence in University Houses. The student who lives in a private family does not enjoy the full advantages of university life. The student who lives at home, though enjoying for this reason special privileges, nevertheless loses many of the important privileges of university life. Although I appreciate the fact that many entertain a different opinion, I do not hesitate to say that *ideal* college and university life will be attained only in those cases in which the life of the individual is brought into closest contact with the lives of many other individuals, and this is impossible when students isolate themselves and maintain associations in large measure with those who have no connection with The University. The time will come when every student will be a member of a University House. This time, however,

28. A small number of Chicago-based students—varying between 10 and 25 percent—also opted to live in the University dorms. Their habit of going home on weekends led to a request from the Heads of the women’s Houses in 1920 that priority be given to students who “signify their intention of not absenting themselves frequently.” Letter to Judson, January 3, 1920, *HJB Administration*, Box 41, folder 8.

cannot come until more University Houses have been built, and until provision is made for residence at The University during the day of those who from necessity must live at home or with friends in the city. The development of University life is largely dependent upon the growth of The University Houses, and the increase in the number of students who live upon The University grounds.²⁹

On the eve of his death, Harper presented a proposal that undergraduate students in the first two years at Chicago be divided into eight administrative and curricular groups (four for men; four for women) to be called “colleges” within the larger framework of the University’s junior college that would be no larger than 175 students. Harper’s plan also assumed the future construction of a series of residence halls in which each group of students would be housed, or, if commuters, to which they would be attached: “The students of each college should ultimately form a residential community with an assignment to each college of a building for class rooms and offices, and likewise buildings for dormitories. The latter should include special suites for groups of students whose homes are in the city.”³⁰ Richard Storr has suggested that Harper’s plan must be seen in the context of a fascination for Oxford and the English collegiate system that intrigued the Trustees after 1900 (e.g., the design of Hutchinson Commons, the construction of the Reynolds

29. William Rainey Harper, “Sixteenth Quarterly Statement of the President of the University, October 1, 1896,” *University Record*, October 9, 1896, pp. 381–82.

30. Harper, “To the Trustees of the University of Chicago,” 1905, *HJB Administration*, Box 28, folder 11.

Club).³¹ But it also demonstrated Harper's interest in expanding the University's residential system for undergraduates and his intense engagement with undergraduate life on the campus of the University in the last stages of his Presidency.

A number of early faculty members pressed this issue of strengthening residential facilities, including Dean of Women Marion Talbot and Professor James Westfall Thompson of the Department of History. Talbot was a long-standing advocate of the view that suitable housing was a critical variable in making women students feel comfortable and safe at the University. She believed that while young men might feel comfortable obtaining rooms in the neighborhood, young women found such transactions more awkward and uncomfortable, and they thus needed more support than strange boarding houses could provide.³² Thompson was a young medievalist who served as the Director of University Houses. In 1902, he drafted a report for Harper that stressed the importance of a well-organized and coherent social life of students in a residential context as a part of the broader educational mission of the University and openly admired the Oxford system of residential

31. Richard J. Storr, *Harper's University. The Beginnings* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 320–27. Storr notes that Dean George E. Vincent brought the new book by John Corbin, *An American at Oxford* (Boston, 1902), to Harper's attention in February 1903. Corbin called for the American universities to combine English residential colleges with the German university spirit and thus to produce “the most perfect educational instruction in the history of civilization,” p. 309. See also the comments about Harper's devotion to residential colleges in John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition* (New York, 1958), p. 324.

32. See Talbot to C. E. Parmenter, February 21, 1924, folder 9, and “The New Women's Building,” folder 12, *HJB Administration*, Box 41.

colleges.³³ Perhaps the faculty member who most influenced Harper's notions about Chicago as a residential community was Ernest Dewitt Burton, a New Testament scholar who was one of Harper's closest collaborators. In the fall of 1902, Burton visited Oxford for a month. Over the next year, he discussed the advantages of the Oxford model before several public audiences. To James Taylor, president of Vassar College, he wrote that "[t]he most interesting thing that I did while I was abroad was to spend a month at Oxford in a leisurely study of the University and Colleges, and especially its methods of education. I had facilities beyond those of ordinary visitors to Oxford for seeing the inside, and had many talks with members of the teaching staffs of the Colleges. On my return I prepared a talk on the subject for our students here, and am to repeat it at Dr. Strong's request at Rochester next week."³⁴ Although Harper's death in early 1906 closed down any immediate action on Burton's schemes, these ideas were to be of great moment after 1922, when Burton himself assumed the Presidency of the University of Chicago.³⁵

Harper's successor, Harry Pratt Judson, affirmed his predecessor's support for residential housing, but did little to try to implement it. Judson believed that residence halls should not be constructed with general University funds, but rather should only be built upon the receipt of

33. James W. Thompson, "The House System at the University," *President's Report 1892–1902* (Chicago, 1902), pp. 387–95.

34. Burton to Taylor, February 12, 1903, *Ernest DeWitt Burton Papers*, Box 69.

35. Burton himself later explicitly linked his ideas from 1902 and those that he developed in the 1920s. See his "The Relation of the Colleges and the Graduate Schools," p. 2, 1923, *Harold S. Swift Papers*, Box 144, folder 7.

special gifts from donors. He also believed that the residence halls should show a modest profit for the larger operations of the University (at least 3 percent).³⁶ During Judson's tenure as President, a number of new buildings opened on our campus—Classics, Rosenwald, Ida Noyes, and Harper Library—but no additional residence halls.

In the halls that did exist, vigorous residential communities developed. Students developed charters for the halls, and exercised self-governance. Particularly in the women's halls one encountered a fabric of traditions and customs, as well as patterns of deep friendship formation and sociability, that must have had a formative impact on the feelings of those students toward the University.³⁷ An early statement of the rules governing the various Houses for men and women made it clear that the University viewed the halls as more than mere bedroom communities: “each House will have a certain permanence, independence, and individuality, being ruled by its own representatives and laws, advised by its own elected Councillor in the faculty, and its self-chosen members being united by friendliness and common interests. It is hoped in this way to secure something of the dignified social life, and the habits of self-guidance and self-control which the American College Dormitory often lacks . . . and more warmly to attach the alumni to the University through pleasant memories of their old Houses.”³⁸ Early students also complained about room rates, which many felt were high compared with outside

36. See Judson to Frank Strong, February 10, 1916, *HJB Administration*, Box 41, folder 8.

37. For examples of the traditions of these halls, see *The Cap and Gown 1925*, pp. 372–74.

38. “Regulations for Dormitories,” *HJB Administration*, Box 41, folder 7.

rooms in the neighborhood, and there were the usual complaints about the selection and quality of food served in the halls.³⁹

An early solicitation of prospective students, urging them to consider entering a hall, insisted that “[t]he University believes that the benefit of college life is necessarily greater to the students living together in a House on the campus than to those scattered about in neighborhood boarding places. For the University House is in the midst of the college atmosphere; in touch with every college interest. And besides this advantage of situation, there is another far greater advantage of association to the student—membership implies acquaintance with all his fellow members, and it offers the best chance for acquaintance with the members of other Houses. This is an opportunity which, in a large university, the detached student often seeks in vain. To put it in a word, then, the whole aim and object of the University House is—Fellowship.”⁴⁰ The early halls were also the sites of racial contestation and rank prejudice, however, with instances of white residents refusing to allow African American students to accept housing in their dorms.⁴¹

39. In 1898, the quarterly charge for a room in Foster Hall was \$31, or \$93 for a full year. In 1938, the cost of a room in the same hall ranged from \$126 to \$222, with board set at \$246.

40. Handwritten solicitation, *HJB Administration*, Box 41, folder 7.

41. See the case of D. W. Woodward, in *ibid.*, as well as the handwritten memoir by Sophonisba Breckinridge concerning her attempt to mediate a controversy among white students from the South when an African American graduate student tried to reside in Kelly Hall during a Summer Quarter. Breckinridge was summoned to the office of Harry Pratt Judson, who informed her that “the halls were for white students.” *Sophonisba Breckinridge Papers*, Box 1, folder 8. See also Breckinridge to David Stevens, August 9, 1928, *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 9.

Student experiences in housing were thus laced with and framed by late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century normative values and social forms. Younger women were housed with older, graduate students, creating a mixed age community, but also one that was important for role modeling. As late as 1924, Marion Talbot would emphasize the socializing force of residential life on young women who came without proper social skills or with bad habits (such as smoking): the Resident Heads “are quite amazed at the social standards some girls bring from their homes and the frequent disregard on the part of parents of what the University tries to do . . . we will endeavor to do even more to train our students to examine very carefully the new conditions in which they find themselves and to act with deliberate judgment rather than impulse.”⁴² Still, President Ernest Burton took pride in the fact that “[f]rom the beginning, over thirty years ago, the University has made it its policy to allow the largest practicable measure of freedom, and to trust to discussion and suggestion rather than rules to maintain high standards of conduct.”⁴³

The early residential halls also incorporated system of faculty participation, with each House—the residence halls were officially called Houses since 1893—having a faculty member or full-time staff member as a Head. These offices provided free rooms in the House. By the 1920s, most of the Heads were junior faculty or advanced doctoral students who found the free accommodations appealing. The Heads were not so much disciplinary authorities (although they could play that role) as they were conveners of the residents to establish House rules and customs, as well as to organize social and educational activities for the

42. Talbot to Burton, March 13, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 58, folder 14.

43. Burton to Mrs. Ira M. Price, March 20, 1924, *ibid.*

members of the House. President Max Mason's chief administrative assistant David Stevens (who later went on to become vice president of the General Education Board and director of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation) thought that presence of faculty in the dorms was so important that it should figure in evaluations for promotion: "Social leadership through hall living must always be a strong secondary ground for retention and promotion," because of the value to the University.⁴⁴

Intense systems of self-governance developed in some halls, including a rule that members of a given hall had to vote to accept new residents or they could not remain in the hall after their initial quarter of residence. The halls were also considered to be sites where proper moral behavior should be enforced—hence the charming correspondence between Marion Talbot and President Ernest Burton as to how to respond to a request from students to allow card playing in the dorms. Although card playing was traditionally prohibited, in the mid-1920s Talbot came to have doubts about the wisdom of trying to prohibit a leisure activity that more and more students wanted to pursue. She now concluded that "[i]t is quite possible that the time has come to change our position although I wish it might have been at the initiative of the Houses rather than of a group of students. . . . The chief difficulty, perhaps I may say the only one, which I really see, is that of excluding playing for money, or, in plain words, gambling. I am told it is so prevalent that it would be very difficult to enforce any prohibition. Even prizes introduce an element of chance which some would consider objectionable. I shall be glad to have your opinion at your early convenience." Burton responded, "Personally

44. Stevens to Edith Foster Flint, February 1, 1929, *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 9.

I feel about card playing (not gambling) much as I do about smoking. It is a matter of taste rather than of morals, and I think that our houses should cultivate good taste, but not as a rule undertake to prescribe it. Gambling is quite another matter. The moral effect of a game in which money is won or lost by chance has long been recognized as distinctly bad.” That said, much like Emperor Trajan writing to Pliny about how Pliny should deal with early Christians whom he might come upon, Burton urged Talbot not to issue general statements about a prohibition of gambling “unless the general practice is such as to necessitate it.” Burton was confident that if a discussion about gambling in the halls did prove necessary, the Resident Heads would be able to modulate it: “I should be fairly sure that a discussion participated in and reasonably guided by the Heads of the Houses would come out somewhere near right.”⁴⁵

Demand for suitable campus housing outpaced resources, and almost no one was happy with this situation. In the face of burgeoning student enrollments after World War I, complaints about the unsatisfactory housing conditions facing students who did not live at home, who often encountered high-rent levels and ill-kept conditions, became increasingly common. John Moulds informed Burton in 1923 that “[s]ince we have rooms for only about one third of those who would like to live in the Women’s Halls, it seems entirely logical to me that we ought to give the protection of the halls to the younger girls who need it most. The isolated and rather depressing type of rooms available in the neighborhood are very much less desirable for young girls who need the group life than they are for older students whose ideals and standards have become settled. Under our present system it is almost

45. Talbot to Burton, March 17, 1924, and Burton to Talbot, March 24, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 58, folder 14.

impossible for a freshman girl to obtain a room in the Halls unless she has made application more than a year in advance.”⁴⁶

The shortage of appropriate residential facilities soon became the subject of political maneuvering among the academic Deans. The Dean of the Undergraduate Colleges Ernest Wilkins complained in March 1926 that “the tenants of the residence halls are largely graduate students.”⁴⁷ A year earlier Wilkins had tried unsuccessfully to garner more residential resources for undergraduates. In April 1925, he wrote to President Burton arguing that Hitchcock Hall had too many diverse constituencies—44 graduate students, 7 junior and 25 senior College students, 1 student from Education, 6 from Commerce, and 10 from the Law School. He also insisted that “[s]ocial life in the men’s residence halls now suffers from the heterogeneity of the constituency in each case” and that “[s]o long as such conditions persist the residence halls cannot play in either graduate or undergraduate life the constructive educational and social part which they ought to play.” Wilkins wanted Hitchcock to evolve into a completely undergraduate dorm, a proposition to which Burton apparently agreed, as a preliminary step toward the creation of a set of exclusively undergraduate dorms on the South Campus. Gordon Laing, the Dean of the Graduate School, took umbrage at Wilkins’s suggestion, however, and instead wanted Hitchcock to be given over completely to graduate students. Laing also wanted Green Hall given over totally to graduate students as well. In the end, Wilkins was forced to agree instead to a plan in June 1925 to divide Hitchcock Hall into five

46. Moulds to Burton, March 29, 1923, *ibid.*, Box 41, folder 8.

47. Wilkins to Nathaniel Butler, March 6, 1926, *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 10. This is in the context of Wilkins not wanting to recommend Resident Heads, since the residence halls did not involve undergraduates.

sections, three of which were primarily for graduate students.⁴⁸ Dean Shailer Mathews viewed both Goodspeed Hall and Gates Hall as also belonging to the patrimony of the Divinity School, and when he learned in 1928 that the then current Head of Gates seemed uninterested in organizing House activities, he insisted "in the future the Divinity School [should] be permitted to nominate the Head for both of its dormitories."⁴⁹

FRATERNITIES



fraternities played a crucial role in housing undergraduate men. For many years before 1945, more men lived in fraternity houses than lived in undergraduate residence halls. According to Harold Lasswell, social life on campus in the early 1920s was dominated by the older and wealthier fraternities, with members who lived close to campus and "who monopolize the strategic social positions on the campus. The selection of leaders of the university dances and the selection of personnel of the honorary fraternities is governed by them." In contrast, a student who lived at home was "cut off from participation in full campus life, since he must leave the campus early in the day and carry on his part in family life [at home]," a situation that many students who lived in rooms beyond walking distance of the Quadrangles

48. Wilkins to Burton, April 24, 1925; Laing to Butler, May 5, 1925; Wilkins to Laing, May 12, 1925; Wilkins to Butler, June 4, 1925, *ibid.* Wilkins agreed to this compromise because he was confident in 1925 that the University would build large undergraduate dorms for men on the South Campus, so in effect he was actually conceding very little.

49. Mathews to D. H. Stevens, July 3, 1928, *ibid.*, folder 8.

also probably endured. In his survey of student time allocations from 1924, H. A. Millis found a minority of students “who are addicted to a ‘social life’” on campus, set against “a considerable percentage of the men and women participate little or not at all in college affairs.” The general portrait that emerges from data collected by Lasswell and Millis is student culture bounded by two extremes: a minority of students with more financial resources living in fraternities or residence halls who dominated the campus social culture set against another minority who had almost nothing to do with student life outside the classroom, and with the majority of students having more occasional interactions in campus social events. The many students who found themselves forced to spend valuable time commuting to and from home, all the while trying to balance their studies with the burden of work obligations, were likely to have little time for campus student life.⁵⁰

When more fraternities in the mid-1920s sought to buy houses on Woodlawn Avenue between 56th and 58th Streets, the Board of Trustees did not intervene, even though George Fairweather, the assistant business manager, brought the issue to their attention. When Fairweather suggested that the University might consider acquiring some or all of these properties, the Board decided to take no action.⁵¹ The gingerly attitude of the University toward the fraternities was starkly revealed when L. R. Steere, the business manager, proposed in March 1929 that all freshmen men be required to live in dormitories if they did not reside

50. Lasswell and Soares, “Social Survey of the Undergraduates of the University of Chicago,” p. 14; H. A. Millis et al., *Report of the Faculty-Student Committee on the Distribution of Students’ Time, January 1925*, pp. 88–90.

51. “Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds,” June 10, 1926, *Swift Papers*, Box 6, folder 10.

at home. Steere's position was supported by Dean of the College Chauncey Boucher, who also believed that deferred pledging would be better for freshmen, both academically and culturally.⁵² Vice President Frederic Woodward rejected Steere's proposal, however, noting that “[t]o require freshmen to live in dormitories would immediately antagonize the fraternities and their alumni at a time when we are using every effort to increase the goodwill of everyone toward the undergraduate college.”⁵³

As valuable as the fraternities may have been in their ability to provide a parallel system of on-campus housing and to foster campus-based friendship groupings, the impact of fraternity membership on the academic success of the students was a matter of concern to the faculty. As part of another survey of a student housing conditions in 1926, College officials included a comparison of the academic performance of students living in fraternity houses with students living in rooming houses or at home. Of the 198 male students who pledged a fraternity in 1925–26, 36.9 percent failed to assemble a satisfactory academic record and were not in good standing at the end of the year. Within a parallel group of 213 men who did not pledge a fraternity, only 25.4 percent were found to have a deficient academic record. The authors of the report then

52. See Chauncey Boucher's appeal to Frederic Woodward, May 29, 1929, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 71, folder 4.

53. Woodward to L. R. Steere, March 6, 1929, *ibid.*, Box 70, folder 10. Harold Swift too was against a radical change. He wrote to Hutchins and Woodward, “Some time, too, I hope there will be less fraternities at the University than at present, but this, too, I hope to be a gradual development. After all, we owe the fraternities a lot. They have done our job in supplying housing accommodations for a good many men for a long time and I believe that we can't chuck them overboard by precipitate action.” Letter of November 4, 1929, *ibid.*, Box 71, folder 4.

examined psychological achievement test results for both groups, finding that the fraternity and non-fraternity men had relatively similar median test scores. They concluded that “[t]hese facts indicate clearly that the fraternity group was easily the equal of the non-fraternity group in ability, and that the greater failure rate [of the fraternity men] was due to other factors, and may possibly be connected with the fact of fraternity membership.”⁵⁴ The University of Chicago Survey Project undertaken by Floyd Reeves, John Dale Russell, and others during 1930–32 also investigated the relationships between housing and student academic achievement more broadly, using two cohorts of freshmen students entering in 1929–30 and 1930–31. This survey found that students who were most likely to achieve high grades lived in University residence halls but were not members of a fraternity. Interestingly, non-fraternity-affiliated students who lived at home, as opposed to those living in a dormitory, also achieved significantly higher grades. The authors concluded, “The results indicate that, for men, the type of living environment associated with the highest average grade points for the Spring Quarter of the freshman year was residence in dormitories combined with the absence of fraternity connections.”⁵⁵

54. “Preliminary Report of a Survey of Housing Conditions for Students of the University of Chicago,” May 19, 1930, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 106, folder 7.

55. Reeves and Russell, *Some University Student Problems*, p. 136.

BURTON'S DREAM OF THE COLLEGES



hen he became President of the University in 1923, Ernest DeWitt Burton was "considerably troubled" with local housing conditions in Hyde Park for both students and faculty, including the "extremely unfavorable" housing conditions experienced by students.⁵⁶

Soon after taking office, Burton recuperated Harper's themes about the importance of residential life and articulated a comprehensive vision for the undergraduate programs, which he called his "Dream of the Colleges" plan. Resisting the opposition from key faculty and pressure from the University's traditional funding sources at the Rockefeller boards—early in his tenure, Burton met with Abraham Flexner, secretary of the Rockefeller-funded General Education Board, whose evident (and increasing well-known) prejudice against the undergraduate programs of leading U.S. universities compelled Burton to write a defense of the value of undergraduate education to a research university—Burton articulated an integrated vision for the College that made it a central part of the educational work of the University, but that also accorded it a separate residential location.⁵⁷

Burton's initial idea was to develop the area south of the Midway into a separate campus for a College of three thousand students, consisting of both residential facilities and offices and classrooms to be laid

56. Burton to Wallace Heckman, July 25, 1923, *HJB Administration*, Box 50, folder 18.

57. Ernest DeWitt Burton, "The Relation of the Colleges and the Graduate Schools."

out in a series of quadrangles. As Burton put it in May 1923, "I am thinking of a time when on our quadrangles there will be a group of colleges, perhaps eight or ten or twelve, each with its own buildings, each with its own distinctive character, but all with this common characteristic that each will afford opportunity for closer contact of student with student, and of student with teacher than is possible in a college of three thousand students ungrouped except in classes that are organized for three months and then reorganized." Burton then added, "It will not be a medieval Oxford; modern Oxford has moved far beyond that."⁵⁸ Such a new residential structure would enforce and solidify the educational mission of the College, which Burton took to be both broadly cultural as well as narrowly intellectual. He insisted that "life is more than lore, that character is more than facts; that college life is the period of the formation of habits, even more than of the acquisition of knowledge, and that the making of men and women with habits and character that will insure their being in after life men and women of power, achievement, and helpful influence in the world, is the great task of the college." Burton further argued that the new residence buildings "should not be mere dormitories, but places of humane educational residence. They should provide opportunity on one hand for personal contacts, under the most favorable conditions, with older persons and fellow-students, and for

58. "An Address Delivered by Acting President Ernest DeWitt Burton before the Chicago Alumni Club, May 31, 1923," p. 13, *University Development Campaigns*, Box 5, folder 3. In July 1923, Burton repeated the Oxford motif in a letter to Wilfred C. Kierstead: "The colleges so organized on the basis of the interests of the students would be made more after the fashion of the Oxford colleges. . . . What I feel to be in any case desirable is the creation of smaller groups, say three hundred at the outside, of students whose relation to one another are closer than is possible in a body of three thousand students." Letter of July 3, 1923, *HJB Administration*, Box 34, folder 10.

the silent influences of good books and art. . . . All should be planned with a view to uniting, as far as possible, the two lines of influence which in our American colleges have been unfortunately separated in large measure as numbers have increased, namely, intellectual activity on the one hand and friendly contact with persons on the other."⁵⁹

Ironically, the idea of developing a separate campus for undergraduates on the south side of the Midway won an ally in Wallace Buttrick, the president of the General Education Board, who came to view this spatial segregation of undergraduates as a way to resolve the issues raised by his colleague Flexner about defending graduate education while also strengthening Chicago's undergraduate programs. Buttrick's concurrence may have encouraged Burton all the more to pursue his plans.⁶⁰

Burton's vision met with the approbation of a committee of faculty whom he appointed in September 1923 to consider the future curriculum of the undergraduate colleges in light of the idea of creating a separate set of residential units on the South Campus. Chaired by Henry W. Prescott of the Department of Latin, this committee presented a plan in April 1924 to divide collegiate work into two parts, the first of

59. Ernest DeWitt Burton, *The University of Chicago in 1940* (Chicago, 1925), p. 30. See also Burton's notes for speeches in the Reynolds Club on April 5, 1923, and at the Chicago-Denison dinner on March 16, 1923, stressing the importance that colleges should play in the formation of character and personality in their students. *Burton Papers*, Box 82.

60. Burton reported to Swift that Buttrick was "almost enthusiastic" about this plan. Burton to Swift, January 31, 1923, *Swift Papers*, Box 144, folder 7. A week earlier, Burton had written to Buttrick asking for this appointment and asserting, "As I have told you more than once before, for more than forty years you have been the one man to whom in any time of perplexity or adversity I should turn most quickly with most confidence that you would give me your help." Burton to Buttrick, January 20, 1923, *Burton Papers*, Box 82.

which was primarily devoted to general education and encompassing the first two years of traditional baccalaureate curriculum.⁶¹ Students wishing a traditional BA would continue on at the University, undertaking more advanced work in the several departments. This “College” of freshmen and sophomores would consist of 1,500 students, of whom 1,200 would be expected to live in new residence halls built on the South Campus in the three blocks between 60th and 61st Streets and Woodlawn and Ellis Avenues. Only three hundred students would be permitted to live off campus (presumably at home). The committee further recommended that the University construct four new residence halls with separate entrances to house not less than 1,200 undergraduates, divided equally between men and women, in groups of three hundred students each. Students in the new College would not join or live in fraternities until after completing their two-year program, and the recruitment base of the fraternities would thus shift to older undergraduates and to graduate students.

Prescott’s concerns were also supported by Ernest Wilkins, Dean of the Colleges, who in October 1924 prepared a report called “A Theory of Education” in which he too argued for a more radical distinction between the first two and last two years of undergraduate life and urged an enhanced level of residential life, particularly for undergraduate students in the first two years of college: “[T]here comes a time in the lives of most young people, generally at about the age of seventeen, when they may properly be advised to leave home and become part of a larger social unit so planned as to meet the needs of maturing youth. We therefore recommend that for students who may be expected to finish their general education within two years, residence halls be provided, and that all

61. “Preliminary Draft of the Report of the Commission on the Future of the Colleges,” April 22, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 34, folder 10.

students who possibly do so be urged to live therein.” Wilkins further insisted that residential life should be structured so as to “promote the adaptability of the individual to the community in which he lives, a simple but varied social life, a sense of social capacity, a democratic recognition of the rights of others and of social obligations. The whole effect of life in these residential halls should be distinctly democratic rather than aristocratic.”⁶²

Prescott’s plan was forwarded to the Board of Trustees, but no further action was taken on its curricular ideas until later in the decade, when Chauncey Boucher and others would revive the idea of a separate “College” devoted to general education. The plan was not made public at the time, since the University did not yet own all of the land on the South Campus which Prescott’s committee designated as the future home the new residential college buildings.⁶³ When Ernest Burton presented a general overview of the plan in his famous fund-raising brochure, *The University of Chicago in 1940*, he dispensed with the idea of specifying which undergraduate cohorts should live in the new residential quadrangles and simply noted that he wanted to provide space for 1,600 undergraduates on the South Campus.⁶⁴

These ideas met with strong support from the new Chair of the University Board of Trustees, Harold H. Swift. An undergraduate alumnus of the University, Swift wanted Chicago to move in more undergraduate-friendly directions, arguing that “we want a different tone about the place—one of distinct interest in young men and women and

62. Ernest H. Wilkins, “A Theory of Education,” pp. 15–16, October 23, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 34, folder 2.

63. See Prescott to Burton, April 3, 1924, *ibid.*, folder 10.

64. Burton, *The University of Chicago in 1940*, p. 29.

their problems, one where scholarship is neither to be taken lightly nor to be considered the all essential; in other words, we want a College Department which will put emphasis on the real development of boys and girls into fine men and women rather than exclusively on the academic interests of the University field.”⁶⁵

The logic of the plan was driven by the need to provide improved housing for the students who were then living off campus but in the neighborhood, as well as some who were living at home.⁶⁶ A blueprint from February 1925 reveals the basic features of the plan. Burton imagined a new South Campus fronting on the Midway in which men’s dormitories were to be located on Ellis Avenue and women’s on Woodlawn Avenue. The whole block was to be developed, with the central axis given to classrooms, laboratories, and libraries and with the western edge to men’s housing and the eastern side to women’s housing. Had this plan been executed, the University would have ended up with residence halls on the South Campus approximately four times as large as the present Burton-Judson Courts, capable of housing approximately 1,400 to 1,600 undergraduates.⁶⁷

65. Swift to Charles W. Gilkey, August 28, 1923, *Swift Papers*, Box 144, folder 7. Two years earlier, Swift complained to Edgar Goodspeed that “the undergraduates and graduates [alumni] of our College Department frequently feel that we are trying to stifle rather than to encourage that Department.” Swift to Goodspeed, January 7, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 156, folder 25.

66. “Problem of Housing for the (Junior) Colleges,” 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 50, folder 18. In 1923, 133 men and 251 women lived in University Houses, with 526 men and 409 women living in rooms. Another 811 men and 705 women lived at home, and 478 men lived in fraternities.

67. L.P.J., “Study for Plot Plan—The Colleges—The University of Chicago,” February 1, 1925, *Architectural Drawings Collection*, File Drawer 38, folder 14.

Burton's vision of making the undergraduate program at Chicago more thoroughly residential—and the subsequent faculty report that tried to implement this ideal by restructuring the first two years of undergraduate education into a coherent whole—were revolutionary, and they have to be seen in the context of developments at one of our leading competitors, Yale University. In 1916, the Anna M. Harkness family had given Yale \$3 million to construct the Memorial Quadrangle, including Harkness Tower and a large residence hall for 630 students designed in a series of eight courtyards (which were divided into two separate residential colleges in 1932—Saybrook College and Branford College—when Yale instituted its Quadrangle Plan). References to the original Harkness gift, and to its later and much larger supplement in 1929–30, were common in later Chicago correspondence about our residential problems, suggesting that the Yale model was unusually attractive to Chicago planners of the interwar period. Yale's influence was reinforced after 1921, when James R. Angell assumed the presidency of Yale.⁶⁸ A faculty member at Chicago since 1894, Angell had served as Dean of the Faculty at Chicago since 1911 and as Acting President during 1918, and he was clearly interested in becoming the University's permanent President. He also had strong support on the part of the senior faculty.⁶⁹ Harry Pratt Judson refused to resign to make way for

68. On Angell's presidency, see Mary Ann Dzuback, *Robert M. Hutchins. Portrait of an Educator* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 38–42.

69. When word got out that Angell was considering leaving, a group of sixty-one senior faculty sent an extraordinary petition on March 27, 1919, urging, “[I]t is of the most vital importance to the future of the University of Chicago that a way be found whereby Vice President Angell may continue to be associated with its development” and asking for “some plan whereby Mr. Angell's services may, if possible, be permanently retained.” See *HJB Administration*, Box 8,

the younger man, however, and the Board of Trustees was unwilling to force the issue, so Angell left Chicago for the Carnegie Corporation and then for Yale University.⁷⁰ Intent on modernizing Yale and making it into a real research university, Angell worked to create a culture of respect for scholarship and intellectual achievement at Yale University.⁷¹ But he proved equally inclined to revolutionary interventions on the collegiate level as well.

folder 13. The petition was signed by many local luminaries, including Albion Small, James Breasted, Shailer Mathews, John Coulter, Albert Michelson, Fred-eric Woodward, and Ernest DeWitt Burton.

70. In an autobiographical memoir, Angell later recalled, "To accept the post [the presidency of the Carnegie Corporation] meant giving up my lifelong connection with university work, it meant breaking up my friendships of more than a quarter of a century at Chicago, and it meant undertaking a kind of responsibility which I had never before faced. In making my decision, I was inevitably and crucially affected by conditions at the University of Chicago. There I had served as Acting President on several occasions. I had received a good many invitations to university presidencies, that of my own Alma Mater among them, and during the discussions of these calls influential members of the Board of Trustees had more than once expressed the wish that I should remain and, on the retirement of the President, accept the Presidency there—always provided that the clause in the University of Chicago charter, which required the President to be a Baptist, could be abrogated. In any case, however, promotion there was, for the time being at least, blocked and my frequent invitations to other positions of consequence kept my status more or less an active subject of comment and discussion in the University community. All this created a situation which I felt to be a little uncomfortable. Whether President Judson was sensitive to the same situation or not, I have no means of knowing. After painful deliberation, I decided to burn my bridges behind me. . . ." Carl Murchison, ed., *A History of Psychology in Autobiography. Volume 3* (New York, 1961), pp. 18–19.

71. See Dan A. Oren, *Joining the Club. A History of Jews and Yale*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, 2000), pp. 66–68, 96–97; George W. Pierson, *Yale: The University College, 1921–1937* (New Haven, 1955), pp. 164–89.

In January 1925, Angell articulated a visionary plan for constructing a series of residential colleges, based on Oxford and Cambridge models, in order to create a strong residential culture on the Yale campus. Angell argued that “ultimately it might be possible to try out in the College a plan of dividing the student body into a number of groups ‘somewhat resembling the English colleges’. Each ‘quadrangle’ would have its own eating facilities as well as dormitories. Such a plan could be a solution to the social problems resulting from the large undergraduate registration. He further believed that Yale offered an opportunity better than any other college for such an experiment.”⁷² Through a series of intense, complicated, and often rocky negotiations between 1926 and 1929, Angell was able to persuade Edward S. Harkness to donate an additional \$15.7 million for the construction of another eight residential halls as part of Yale’s Quadrangle Plan.⁷³ Having spent almost two decades as a faculty member and senior administrator at Chicago, Angell was well known to Ernest Burton, Harold Swift, and Frederic Woodward, and it is likely that Angell’s activities were followed closely by his former colleagues in Chicago.⁷⁴

It is also important to remember that Burton’s proposed initiatives came in the mid-1920s in the context of the hoped-for success of the first major development campaign organized by the University and in a booming national economy that made it all-too-easy to believe that the

72. Quoted in Thomas G. Bergin, *Yale’s Residential Colleges: The First Fifty Years* (New Haven, 1983), pp. 18–19.

73. Pierson, *Yale: The University College, 1921–1937*, pp. 207–252.

74. See Angell to Burton, July 7, 1919, *Burton Papers*, Box 79; and Angell’s invitation to Burton to accept an honorary degree from Yale in 1925, Angell to Burton, March 17, 1925, *ibid.*

financial future of the University was endlessly bright and that the University would be easily able to raise large additional sums of money to cover the sizable costs of new buildings. The optimism of the time found expression in small, but noteworthy calculations, such as a presentation to the Trustees in July 1927 by the business manager, Lloyd R. Steere, on the future operations for the power plant of the University. Steere estimated that demands for heating would almost double between 1926 and 1944, reflecting the in-process or planned new buildings that were to be constructed, and that the annual coal requirements of the University would increase from 34,300 tons in 1926–27 to 69,000 tons in 1944.⁷⁵ Even the Development materials developed at the time were larger than life: as part of Burton's campaign the University issued a lavishly illustrated, hard-cover book in 1925 on the University's various building projects, entitled *Great University Memorials*, which sought to connect investments in the University of Chicago's spatial expansion to projects undertaken at other distinguished private British and U.S. universities (Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, among others), and which informed potential donors, "One of the perplexing problems of our time is the effective disposal of great wealth. For not only has the number of great fortunes enormously increased in recent times, but the sense of responsibility to the public has grown with them."⁷⁶ A full-page picture of the Harkness Tower and residential quadrangle at Yale was one of the

75. "Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds," July 28, 1927, *Swift Papers*, Box 6, folder 11.

76. *Great University Memorials, with a Reference to the Plans for the Development of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1925), p. 5. The book includes a dedication by U.S. President Calvin Coolidge.

illustrations afforded a prominent place among examples of ambitious building projects undertaken by peer universities.

Ernest D. Burton died suddenly in May 1925, but his ideas of a new residential college continued to percolate during the regime of his successor, Max Mason. Prescott's idea of limiting new residential resources to students in the first two years of work never took hold, but the idea of building a new South Campus for undergraduates did continue to take shape. Frederic C. Woodward, Vice President and Dean of Faculties, published a report in 1927 that called for a radical expansion of the residential system. The report of Woodward, who was a long-standing collaborator of Burton's, is still worth reading today:

We frequently speak of the University as a large 'family'. We like to believe that a spirit of friendliness and mutual interest pervades the Quadrangles. We recognize the fundamental importance, in the educational process, of habitual discussion outside the classroom, of wholesome companionship in work and play. We know that a university ought to provide for every student a splendid opportunity to develop the qualities which will make him a good neighbor and a useful citizen. These are our ideas—but they are far from realization.

Only a small minority of our students live in University dormitories. Many live in homes distant from the Quadrangles. The majority are scattered over the Hyde Park and Woodlawn districts, some in fraternity houses, some in privately owned rooming-houses, some in small apartments, some in the spare rooms of resident families. The University, through its housing bureau, has tried to secure at reasonable rent, for all who seek its assistance, quarters which are at least decent and respectable. Even this is yearly becoming more difficult. But the point

I now wish to make is that as a result of this dispersion of our students—steadily increasing—we have far too little community life. Too many of our students, when they leave the classroom, the library, or the laboratory, leave the real atmosphere of the University. Too many of them escape almost entirely the stimulating associations and wholesome influences which should play an important part in their education.

There is only one effective way of dealing with this serious condition. We must bring together the great majority of our students, graduate and undergraduate, in comfortable and attractive residence halls, with common rooms, dining-halls, recreation space, and headquarters for student organizations. Until this is done it will be impossible to achieve the social solidarity and *esprit de corps* which are essential to the carrying out of a well-rounded educational program. When it is done our faculties and administrative officers, if they seize the opportunity, can immensely increase their effectiveness. The University will be in a far better position to attract the more promising students and to make their University experience wholesome, happy, and fruitful.⁷⁷

Woodward's slightly arcane, late-Victorian concern with "wholesomeness" notwithstanding, these remarks published in the official *President's Report* signaled a serious of purpose that was to prove both constant and deliberative. Woodward was sufficiently shrewd to couple his plea for housing reform with a parallel plea for more money to increase faculty salaries, thus anticipating head-on possible objections that he seemed more interested in investing in students than in faculty,

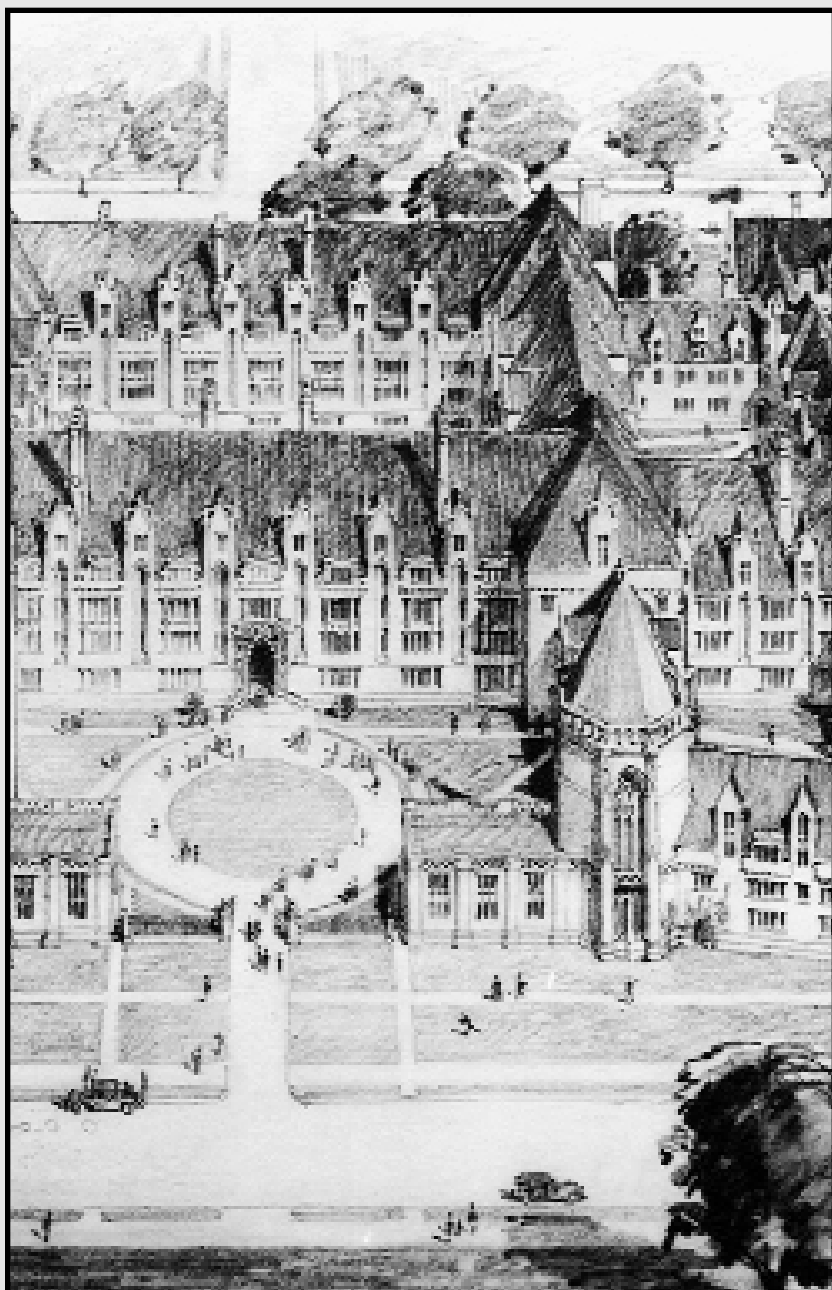
77. *The President's Report Covering the Academic Year July 1, 1926, to June 30, 1927* (Chicago, 1928), pp. 3–4.

but Woodward's remarks on student housing would soon prove to be the truly radical and controversial part of his report.

Woodward's commitment to a radical expansion of residential life was shared by Harold H. Swift. In August 1927, Swift took the initiative by writing to fellow Trustee Julius Rosenwald arguing that the “University needs a great series of dormitories and the setting is ideal to establish them there in architectural sympathy with the north side of the Midway, so splendidly improved by the new Chapel and the medical buildings.” Swift continued that “[m]any of us believe that the University of Chicago is destined to be the great University of America. If this is accomplished, it depends on three things—money for salaries, wise leadership, and coordinating of the student body, both graduate and undergraduate, which means extensive dormitories. Fortunately, a gift for dormitories is a continually living gift to the University because of the revenue it brings in, which can be used for any purpose most needed.” Swift then mentioned the source of his inspiration: “Yale has done the most beautiful and outstanding thing so far in dormitories, but it can be surpassed in Chicago with our setting. Open competition among architects to plan the most beautiful group of buildings would result in an artistic triumph and a great civic asset. I think you told me that you had never seen the Harkness Quadrangles at Yale. I wish you could see them, and think, while doing so, in terms of the University of Chicago south of the Midway,” and he attached a picture of the Harkness Quadrangle at Yale for Rosenwald's inspection.⁷⁸

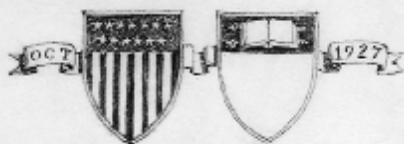
Rosenwald asked Swift for a more detailed proposal on paper and, with the agreement of Max Mason and Frederic Woodward, Swift commissioned a distinguished Philadelphia architect, Charles Z. Klauder, to

78. Swift to Rosenwald, August 30, 1927, *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 12.

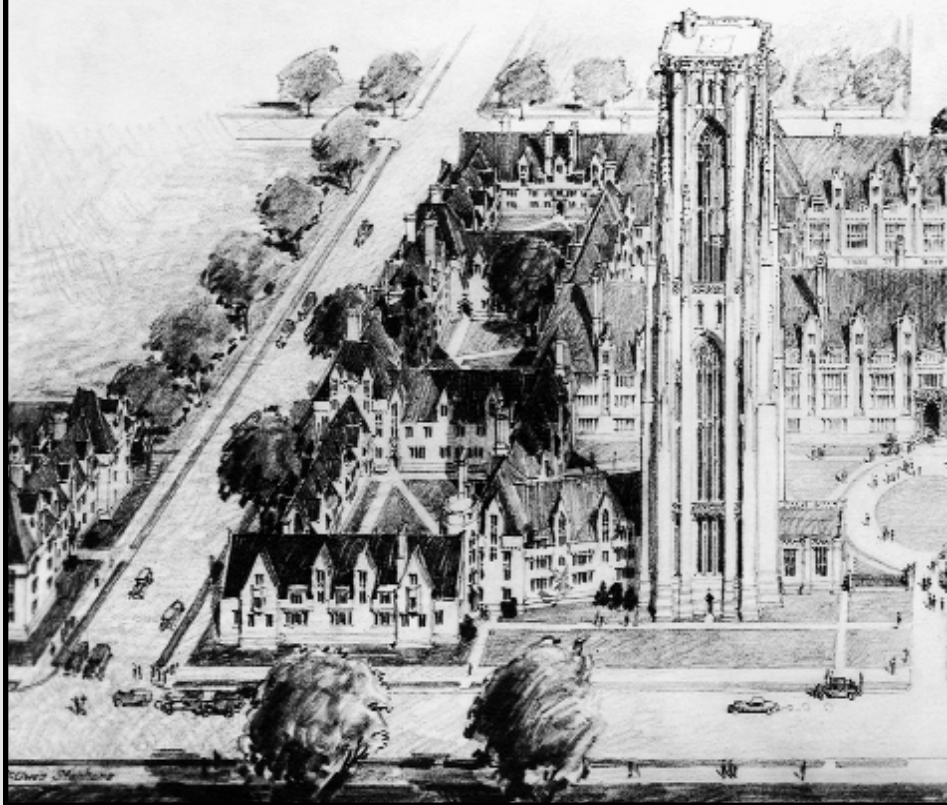


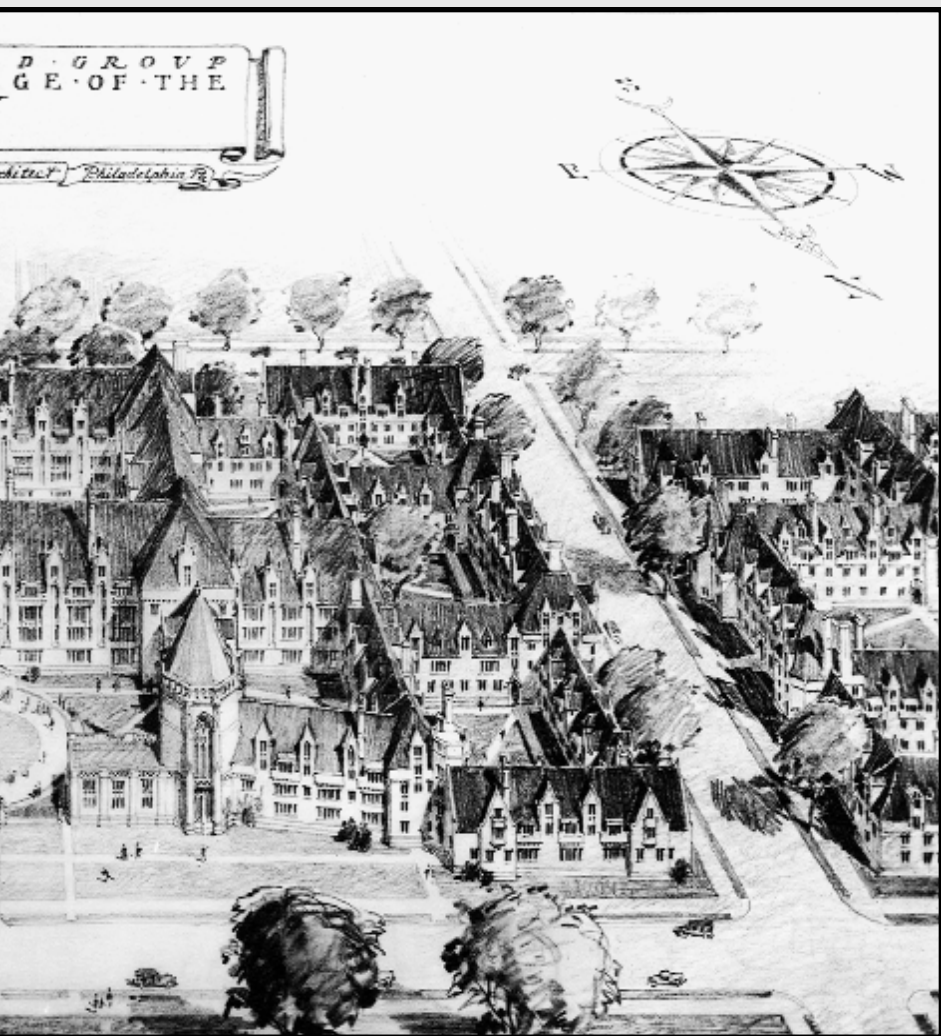
Detail — South Campus Plan for the College

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PROPOSE
THE COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY
Charles G. Klauder Archt.





South Campus Plan for the College
Charles Z. Klauder, Architect — October 1927

undertake a provisional plan to create a South Campus plan.⁷⁹ Klauder had a distinguished reputation in collegiate architecture, having designed residence halls at Princeton, Cornell, and Pennsylvania. In October 1927, Klauder submitted to Swift a set of drawings and a plan that imagined a new South Campus designed in French Gothic Style on the site between Ellis and University Avenues and 60th and 61st Streets (eliminating Greenwood Avenue) and consisting of a 300 foot tower, a central office and classroom building with one hundred rooms, a library with 44,000 square feet of space, and a series of residence halls surrounding the tower—those on the eastern side of the block for women and those on the west for men. Klauder proposed that the University accommodate two thousand students on the South Campus. Klauder also explicitly modeled the size and layout of the quadrangles he proposed on those of the Harkness Quadrangle at Yale. Klauder estimated the cost of his proposal at \$12.5 million.⁸⁰

Klauder's initial plans were radically revised over the next year, with Woodward indicating that the Board of Trustees was especially concerned with ensuring the financial profitability of the new halls and that they had decided to focus exclusively on dormitories and not a classroom and library building.⁸¹ Max Mason's resignation as President in the spring of 1928 delayed a final decision. But with the strong support of Frederic Woodward (who became Acting President of the University), Swift con-

79. Rosenwald to Swift, September 6, 1927; Swift to Charles Z. Klauder, October 8, 1927; *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 12.

80. See Woodward to Swift, October 18, 1927, *ibid.*; and the sketch, dated October 15, 1927, *Architectural Drawings Collection*, Drawer 40.

81. Woodward to Klauder, December 20, 1927; Klauder to Woodward, January 12, 1928; Woodward to Klauder, September 20, 1928; Klauder to Woodward, October 22, 1928; *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 12.

tinued his lobbying campaign, urging Rosenwald in May 1928 to agree to support the plan because “[i]t would be a feather in Mr. Woodward’s cap if he could put the plan over, and would be a very great factor in building up his morale and that of faculty people when we have no President. Also it would greatly reassure the public to have them know that they University does not stop even if there is no incumbent in the President’s chair.”⁸²

The maneuvering of Swift and Woodward paid off by the autumn of 1928 when Woodward announced that the Board of Trustees had approved a plan that deferred the idea of an office building and library but committed \$5 million to the development of four new residence halls, two for men and two for women, which in total would accommodate about 1,400 undergraduate students on south side of the Midway.⁸³ Julius Rosenwald agreed to provide \$2 million of these funds, with the University investing \$3 million from its endowment reserves to cover the balance.⁸⁴ Woodward insisted that “The implications of this program of dormitory construction and its meaning to the future of the

82. Swift to Rosenwald, May 31, 1928; as well as Woodward to Swift, September 14, 1928, *ibid.*

83. The plan was approved by the Trustees on November 6, 1928. See “Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds and the Committee on Finance and Investment,” November 6, 1928, *Swift Papers*, Box 6, folder 12. The initial authorization was for two halls, but the minutes and schematic plans suggest that the Board expected to proceed with the additional two buildings as part of the future program: “It has also been assumed that each dormitory group would be placed on a separate block, giving the opportunity for expansion to cover the entire block if the later experience should justify.” The Board assumed that the University’s investment of the \$3 million loan from the endowment would be amortized over thirty years, at an annual return rate of not less than 5 percent based on student rental fees.

84. Woodward to Rosenwald, November 9, 1928, *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 12.

University of Chicago are far-reaching, and will be gratifying to the alumni and friends of the University. At present only a small minority of our students live in University dormitories. Many live at home, a considerable number of men live in fraternity houses, but too many of our students are scattered over the Hyde Park and Woodlawn districts. Though the University, through its housing bureau, has tried to secure at reasonable rents comfortable quarters for all, this has year by year become more difficult. The new dormitories will not only in large measure solve the housing problem, but will make it possible to provide, for a large proportion of the student body, those stimulating associations and wholesome influences outside the class-room which are essential to a well-rounded educational program.”⁸⁵

Woodward also used his announcement to publicly squash rumors to the effect that the University was planning on abolishing its undergraduate college. But in arguing so forcefully and publicly for an expansion of residential halls for undergraduate students, Woodward generated enormous enmity on the part of senior faculty members like William Dodd and Charles Merriam, both of whom had been elected to the Presidential search committee charged with finding a successor to Max Mason. As Barry Karl and Benjamin MacArthur have demonstrated, the controversy over Woodward’s support of college residential expansion quickly became a key variable in the politics of the search to choose the new President. Woodward was the favored inside candidate of many of the University faculty and a majority of the Trustees; yet the faculty advisory committee to the Presidential search process—dominated by William Dodd, Gordon Laing, Henry Gale, and Charles Merriam—rebelled against his nomination, largely because of Woodward’s support

85. Announcement, December 11, 1928, *ibid.*

for Burton's college residential plan (as well as for Chauncey Boucher's plan for a new general-education curriculum for the College).⁸⁶ William E. Dodd, a distinguished historian of the American South, had already complained to Ernest Burton in 1924 that the University, with its rising undergraduate enrollments in the aftermath of World War I, faced the danger of alumni meddling to create a much more collegiate atmosphere on campus: "[T]here arises a powerful alumni interest that overwhelms us with their demands for grandstand performances, after the manner of the eastern universities and to satisfy that longing of hearts like that which underlies, if there can be such a thing, the management of *The Tribune*. . . . The way the world is now made up, it seems useless to struggle against the tide. 'After us the deluge' is the inner answer to all of us who endeavor to make our case with the public that ought to understand."⁸⁷ In 1928, Dodd insisted to Harold Swift that the Board's decision to build the South Campus project amounted to a huge mistake in the allocation of resources, and that "if we are to embark upon a building program for a 'Harvard or Yale' in Chicago and therefore a campaign of endowments, the real work of the University is doomed for the next fifteen or twenty years. It would have the same effect on us that the dilemma of the Medical School has brought upon us—a situation which has caused the failure of every recommendation in the History Department for

86. Dodd was deeply worried that the Trustees were solidly behind Woodward's ideas for the College: "This morning speech of F. C. Woodward, before a group of men brought together by Trustees, declared himself candidate for the presidency of the University. All his speech had to do with the Undergraduate Colleges—my interpretation of that is: Trustees mean to put Woodward into the presidency and then carry their programme [out]." Private Diary, entry of July 27, 1928, *William E. Dodd Papers*, Library of Congress.

87. Dodd to Burton, December 1, 1924, *HJB Administration*, Box 41, folder 4.

increase of salaries this year, except one, and that only half of what seemed to me a minimum necessity.” A long-standing opponent of moneyed wealth, Dodd feared that the new dorms would attract indifferent students “whose last purpose is to study.”⁸⁸ As late as 1934, Dodd would derisively warn against any plans to bring more (what he feared would be) lazy undergraduates to campus and insisted on the priority of more graduate students: “let undergraduate loafers go anywhere else, especially to Yale and Harvard where swaggy manners and curious accents can be learned easily. Real students should be appealed to and then genuine offerings be easily available. This would mean many graduate students [on the campus].”⁸⁹

In May 1928, Charles E. Merriam, Chair of the Department of Political Science, warned Dodd, “We are in a Hell of a fix; if we seek to do our duty, we shall have to fight [the] Board of Trustees and perhaps be beaten and then have our departments suffer under [the] new regime.” But Dodd remained stubbornly convinced that the stark alternative facing the University of Chicago was either to become a “graduate research place” or an institution that appealed to “athletics, frats, and the like,” and he closely associated the latter option with Frederic Woodward’s plan to build residential colleges.⁹⁰ In July 1928, Dodd returned to the attack, insisting to Merriam that “the scheme for a great under-

88. Dodd to Swift, September 1, 1928, *Swift Papers*, Box 144, folder 8.

89. Dodd to Bessie Louise Pierce, February 3, 1934, *Bessie Louise Pierce Papers*, Box 9, folder 10.

90. Private Diary, entry of May 10, 1928, *Dodd Papers*. See also Barry D. Karl, *Charles Merriam and the Study of Politics* (Chicago, 1974), pp. 157–58. See also Fred Arthur Bailey, *William Edward Dodd. The South’s Yeoman Scholar* (Charlottesville, 1997), pp. 142–43. Dodd also believed that Burton’s successor, President Max Mason, was too sympathetic toward undergraduate education.

graduate college is still the positive object of the group which seeks to perpetuate the Mason policy,” and in September he again complained that the “great attention and great expenditures upon a new ‘Harvard’ in the West” still defined the goals of many of the Trustees.⁹¹

Dodd’s prejudices were not shared by all of the faculty. In April 1929, Professor Edith Foster Flint of the Department of English wrote to a nervous group of College alumni who were worried that the University was not properly supporting undergraduate education, asserting that what the University needed, in addition to better (and better-paid) College teachers who would inspire their students, was “[m]ore and better residence halls, that the influence of the University may exercise itself through all the hours instead of through only a quarter or a third of them, and that thus we may not be a day school but a community.”⁹² Still, William Dodd and his fellow cabalists had an impact and, as we know, Frederic Woodward did not get the Presidency of the University of Chicago. Instead, the Board opted for a young and relatively unknown outsider, Robert Maynard Hutchins, who with his radical ideas about undergraduate education would soon challenge many of the same senior faculty who had subverted Woodward’s candidacy. The first and only building built under the Woodward plan was Burton-Judson Courts,

Robert Dallek reports that “Mason’s attention to undergraduate study in the university alienated and angered Dodd, who, by the spring of 1928, described the President as ‘arbitrary and offensive in relations with the faculty’, and, consequently, unfit for this post.” Robert Dallek, *Democrat and Diplomat. The Life of William E. Dodd* (New York, 1968), p. 164.

91. Dodd to Merriam, July 27, 1928, and September 1, 1928, *Dodd Papers*.

92. Flint to the Alumni Council Committee, April 29, 1929, *Mason Administration*, Box 1, folder 6.

which opened in Autumn Quarter 1931. Designed by Zantzinger, Borie, and Medary with Harvard and Yale models explicitly in mind, this hall offered a high-quality, well-constructed home to 390 men. In advertising the new hall to the headmasters of eastern preparatory schools, a University representative noted that “[t]he so-called ‘House Plan’ at Harvard and Yale has created much favorable comment. The ‘New Plan’ at the University of Chicago has received wide publicity. Few realize, however, that the University of Chicago will have ready for occupancy next fall, as an integral part of the ‘New Plan’, College Residence Halls for Men, which will closely resemble those at Yale and Harvard.”⁹³

The women’s residence hall was to be designed by the same architectural firm. Initially, plans called for it to be located on the Midway between 60th and 61st Streets, just to the east of the men’s hall, but various disputants intervened. Amos Alonzo Stagg insisted that the hall should be shifted to the east of Woodlawn Avenue, directly across the Midway from Ida Noyes Hall, in order to preserve a varsity baseball field that was located on the original site. Stagg alleged that placing the women’s hall next to the men’s might result in a the “grave danger of dissolving the men at the University” and that “we ought to do everything possible to prevent it.” Stagg also allowed that the women would profit from being separated from the men, since this would give them “a chance to develop their lives without having men constantly near at hand.”⁹⁴ Other administrators favored locating the hall in a field just north of

93. W. G. Preston Jr. to W. F. Taylor, May 8, 1931, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 70, folder 14. Taylor was the headmaster of the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.

94. Stagg to T. E. Donnelley, August 24, 1929, cited in “Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds,” November 25, 1929, *Swift Papers*, Box 6a, folder 13a.



*Julius Rosenwald, 1862–1932, Trustee of the University
Date of photo: December 2, 1924*

Ida Noyes Hall, thus abandoning Burton's original conception of a unified collegiate campus. Finally, in April 1930 the Trustees decided to ignore Stagg and the other objectors and place the women's hall on a site next to the men's hall on the south side of the Midway.⁹⁵ The site that Stagg had favored was eventually allocated to a new Arts Building, to be built with a \$1 million gift promised by Max Epstein, which the Trustees decided to locate on 60th Street, fronting on the Midway, between Woodlawn and Kimbark Avenues.⁹⁶

The Trustees approved preliminary drawings for the women's hall on June 24, 1930, and authorized the architects to proceed with working plans, hoping to have the women's hall open by December 1, 1931. But on July 9, 1931, the Trustees voted to defer construction of the women's hall for a period of one year, setting a new completion date of October 1, 1933.⁹⁷ This delay was fatal, given the ravages of the Depression; in July 1933, the University settled its accounts with the architects and engineers for their preliminary work (a sum of \$109,488).⁹⁸ Like Max Epstein's Arts Building

95. "Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds," August 20, 1929; September 24, 1929; November 25, 1929; and April 9, 1930; *ibid.*

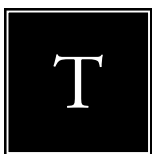
96. "Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds," February 2, 1931, and March 25, 1931. *Ibid.*, Box 7, folder 1. On March 10, 1931, the committee decided that Paul Cret would get the commission for the Arts Building. Its site was officially confirmed on March 25, 1931. The building was to cost \$800,000, with an endowment of \$200,000.

97. "Minutes of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds," October 8, 1931, *ibid.*

98. "Minutes of the Committee on Business Affairs," July 27, 1933, *ibid.*, folder 6. The financial ravages of the Depression quickly impacted Burton-Judson Courts as well. In January 1930, the Trustees reduced many original details, including eliminating many fireplaces and substituting a roof of wood instead of steel in order to reduce the cost from \$1,671,000 to \$1,360,000.

on the Midway, which would never be built, the plan for a women's residence hall on the South Campus was dead, and with its demise went any interest in additional investments in undergraduate housing. Burton's dream of the colleges was abandoned, until a different version was revived two generations later by the Blum Committee in the mid-1960s.

THE DEPRESSION



he student housing situation on the eve of the Depression was grim. Harold Swift candidly admitted to Julius Rosenwald that "we house only 700 students, less than 10 percent of our whole student body. I know of no other University or College with so bad a record. We all feel there is unequalled opportunity for great work at the University of Chicago, but, without dormitories, we do not take anywhere nearly full advantage of the situation."⁹⁹ The housing problem was further complicated by the fact that, unlike Yale, Chicago had a large population of women students, as well as a relatively large population of graduate and professional school students, most of whom did not come from Chicago and preferred housing on or near the campus.

Several problems loomed large as the scope of the economic collapse after 1930 became evident. First, the rental housing stock in Hyde Park and Woodlawn had grown older and often less attractive. A survey of junior faculty views of the local rental housing situation in 1930 elicited a chorus of complaints about small, unattractive rentals, many of them unclean and badly appointed. The situation was particularly bad for women faculty members and unmarried faculty of both sexes. One

99. Swift to Rosenwald, May 31, 1928, *Mason Administration*, Box 6, folder 12.

woman wrote that “housing is a real problem for unmarried faculty woman. In many cases the salary is not adequate for the maintenance of an apartment, and one does not want to live in one furnished room in the home of a family.” Married faculty with families also found serious constraints. One faculty member complained that “the housing conditions are terrible, especially lacking in apartments of good quality, large enough for a family containing two or more children. Newer places are nearly all of four rooms or less” while another observed that “rent on this apartment is almost $\frac{1}{2}$ my salary, and it is too small. In neighborhood west of the University buildings are inferior and playmates for children undesirable. A study for myself is out of the question.” A fourth reported: “could not live in the neighborhood—unsanitary conditions, poor neighbors, dark rooms, and high prices. Moved to Flossmoor.”¹⁰⁰

Second, as the Depression ensued, housing rental rates dropped in the neighborhood, creating adverse market conditions for the older residence halls. L. R. Steere reported in 1934 that the “Women’s Dormitories have suffered . . . from the competition of the ridiculously low rates offered by neighborhood householders, and to some degree, from the more attractive accommodations available at International House.”¹⁰¹ After Burton-Judson opened in 1931, Gates Hall and Blake Hall were opened to women as well, and were somewhat preferred since they did not require a board contract and charged lower rental rates.¹⁰² The older

100. “Final Summary of Replies to Housing Questionnaire Sent to Instructors and Assistant Professors, Winter 1929–30,” *Hutchins Administration*, Box 106, folder 7.

101. Steere to Harold H. Swift, April 27, 1934, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 70, folder 7.

102. “Minutes of the Committee on Business Affairs,” April 12, 1933, *Swift Papers*, Box 7, folder 6.

men's dorms built before 1910 also faced serious maintenance and upkeep issues. A comprehensive report in 1930 on then current University housing stock found that Snell Hall ranked last in cleanliness.¹⁰³

Unlike his predecessors William Rainey Harper and Ernest Burton, Robert Hutchins had little interest in the residential housing issue and in the broader concerns about the quality of life experienced by students beyond the classroom. Hutchins was willing, even eager to challenge and rebut the anti-undergraduate sentiments of senior faculty like Dodd and Merriam on issues of faculty appointments and curricular reform, but he had no interest in re-fighting Burton's and Woodward's battles over building more residence halls.¹⁰⁴ Hutchins too had a courageous dream of the College, but it was more *geistlich* and intellectual, and not

103. "Preliminary Report of a Survey of Housing Conditions for Students of the University of Chicago," May 19, 1930, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 106, folder 7.

104. For example, Hutchins had no hesitation in challenging Dodd's dreams of a solely graduate university. In March 1935, Dodd wrote to Hutchins complaining, "I think it unwise for a large endowed institution to continue to offer undergraduate work, especially in a region where there are four State universities not far away. . . . The one thing which modern civilization needs is absolutely free university work on a research level." Dodd then urged that the University should "slowly but certainly abandon undergraduate work and make every effort to obtain the first scholars in the world as writers and teachers." Hutchins replied, "I agree entirely with you that Chicago has the opportunity to become the leading university in the world. I believe, however, that if it fails to become the leading university the reason will be financial and not the one that you advance. At present undergraduate work, by which I mean the first two years, more than pays for itself. Actually research at the University of Chicago is supported by the undergraduate college. The New Plan has reduced and ought to further reduce the cost of undergraduate instruction. Solely from the point of view of research, therefore, the College is indispensable at the present time." Letters of March 1, 1935, and April 12, 1935, *Presidents' Papers, 1925-1945*, Box 104, folder 5.

particularly concerned with the adverse social circumstances in which many of students found themselves or, ironically, how such circumstances might undercut the actual impact of the radical educational reforms that Hutchins and his allies sought to implement. As a later faculty report on student housing in 1961 would observe, the Hutchins years were marked by a kind of “extreme laissez-faire” in respect to class attendance and the absence of course grades—students had only to pass an end-of-the-year comprehensive exam to get a full year of credit for a Core course, with class attendance neither required nor enforced—and this “extreme laissez-faire” in the classroom found its logical parallel in the University’s benign indifference as to where or how students lived or to how they related to each other.¹⁰⁵

What Robert Hutchins did accomplish was to set the College on the path of a much stronger intellectual culture and much more academically oriented student body, such that the kinds of fears that William Dodd had manifested would soon prove to be without foundation. In fact, this was precisely the aim of the architect of the College’s first Core curriculum, Dean of the College Chauncey Boucher, who was convinced that a more rigorous educational program would attract much stronger and more academically inclined college students. Even though Chicago might lose a significant share of its weaker and less committed students, Boucher was confident that they would soon be replaced by

a better type of student; the young people of the United States are keen enough to recognize the best to be had in education quite as quickly or even more quickly than in any other line,

105. Donald Meiklejohn et al., “The College. Committee on Residential Policy,” June 5, 1961, *Archive of the College*.

and are interested enough in their own welfare and development to seek the best wherever it is to be found; therefore, these Eastern men [scholars with whom Boucher had consulted] predicted, if Chicago were to adopt such a plan as here outlined, it would at once be recognized the country over as a performance superior to the old stereotyped and almost universal plan, and in a short time Chicago would have more applicants of better quality than ever before.¹⁰⁶

But the social environment that these brighter and more ambitious students encountered slowly seemed to grow more and more at odds with their educational growth, with the University's indifference towards student life issues seeming to accelerate in the years immediately during and after the World War II. A later Dean of the College, Donald N. Levine, would highlight the profound disjunction between curricular innovation and disregard for student life that marked these years when he observed:

The Hutchins College finally secured the primacy of the intellectual ideal in the College culture, but in a way that subjected young—often very young—and emotionally dependent students to an intensely demanding and sometimes perversely abstract curricular structure in a setting that seemed to depreciate *any* kind of student achievement other than the strictly academic. Consequently, what many regard as the curricular high point of the Hutchins era—the perfection of the Faust-

106. Chauncey S. Boucher, "Supplementary Statement," May 1, 1928, p. 16, *Archive of the College*, Box 27, folder 7.

Ward curriculum in the late 1940s and early 1950s—was also a period of enormous discomfort and distress for a substantial proportion of students in the College.¹⁰⁷

The Hutchins years thus made no progress on the problems that Burton and Woodward had identified. Moreover, the more demanding standards and time-consuming work loads that marked the educational programs of the College in the 1930s and 1940s led to a slow erosion of student interest in joining fraternities. The University contributed to this process of devolution by dictating that, as of Autumn Quarter 1932, fraternities would be forced to defer the pledging of freshmen until the seventh week of Spring Quarter.¹⁰⁸ Finally, between 1943 and 1951, only graduate students were in the membership pool of fraternities because the University prohibited undergraduates from joining. The upshot of such trends and policies was that many of the fraternities eventually abandoned their houses and disappeared. The educational innovations of the Hutchins College thus had a secondary negative impact in further reducing the on-campus or near-campus housing resources available to undergraduate students.

In fact, the only significant move on the student housing front resulted in a net loss of resources, since Hutchins agreed in 1937 to decommission Goodspeed Hall as a dormitory for Divinity School students and recycle it as a new home for the Department of Art. Max Epstein, who had earlier promised a gift of \$1 million for a new Arts Building on

107. Donald N. Levine, “On Upgrading the ‘Quality of Life’ in the College,” October 1, 1984, p. 4, *Archive of the College*.

108. *The Cap and Gown 1932*, p. 273; “Fraternities and Clubs in the University of Chicago,” [1930], *Hutchins Administration*, Box 71, folder 4.

the Midway, now agreed to cover the cost of the renovation, which came to about \$137,000. The whole transaction revealed the limitations of money and imagination under which the University now worked: instead of a magnificent building for the arts on the Midway, designed by Paul Cret to complement a new residential South Campus for the College, the University was forced to cannibalize a perfectly acceptable dormitory and convert it into an ersatz home for the arts, for one-ninth of the cost of the originally planned structure.¹⁰⁹

The interwar period did see its share of inflated dreams and dashed hopes, however. In 1938, one enterprising administrator obtained an estimate of what it would cost to demolish Foster Hall and replace it with a newer, and better designed hall for classrooms. The estimate—over \$725,000—simply proved that defenders of the existing dormitory had little to fear for, since the idea went nowhere.¹¹⁰ When the University did bother to think about housing, its plans were modest and uninspiring. One example of this minimalism was the idea, touted during the fiftieth anniversary campaign of the University in 1941–42, that donors be invited to give old single-family houses to the University that were then to be converted into twelve to twenty bed mini-dorms.¹¹¹ This scheme was sufficiently implausible to die of its own weight, but it does suggest that lack of a coherent housing plan that marked the Hutchins era. The new Four-Year College curriculum adopted in 1942 that encouraged

109. The Divinity students were transferred to Snell Hall, thus putting more pressure on the University's capacity to house male students from other units, including the College. See W. B. Harrell to Emery Filbey, March 17, 1937, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 39, folder 17.

110. W. B. Harrell to Hutchins, June 14, 1938, *ibid.*, folder 16.

111. Memorandum, August 21, 1941, *ibid.*, Box 41, folder 3.

the matriculation of high school aged students in the College brought more pressures. The University gave first choice of rooms in Foster and Kelly Halls to very young girls admitted under the new curriculum, which resulted in some upper-class undergraduate students being forced to move off campus. Hence began a pattern and a precedent that has continued down to the present.¹¹²

THE POST-WAR PERIOD

The distribution of student housing preferences at the University of Chicago had been relatively stable between 1900 and 1940, with one exception. In 1902, 40 percent of our undergraduate students lived at home; another 40 percent lived in rooms in the neighborhoods of Hyde Park and Woodlawn (including students living in fraternity houses); and approximately 20 percent lived in University dorms. In 1940, the parallel statistics were 55 percent of undergraduates living at home; 23 percent living in the neighborhood; and 22 percent in University facilities.¹¹³ The most significant single change in the first four decades of the twentieth century was that more undergraduate students lived at home in 1940 than in 1900, which may have reflected the increasingly dense and efficient resources provided by

112. See Hutchins to Clyde M. Joice, June 22, 1944, responding to Joice's complaints that his daughter had been evicted from Kelly Hall. Joice had argued that "[i]n the language of business, the first obligation of any institution is to take care of the customers it has before it takes care of new customers." *Ibid.*, Box 70, folder 16.

113. "The Students Themselves—Where They Live" and "Analysis of Student Housing, Autumn Quarter 1940," *ibid.*, Box 108, folder 9.

the municipal transportation network as well as the growing reliance of the University on the local Chicago admissions pool. The impact of the Depression on family and student financial resources may also have played a serious role in this shift. In spite of the dreams of Harper, Burton, and Woodward for a strongly residential campus, we had become even more of a commuter school in 1940 than we had been in 1900. These numbers would change radically after 1945 with a rapid and significant decline of students living at home.

After 1945, the University faced serious short-term and longer-term challenges. Given the poor condition of much of the neighborhood housing available for faculty, many junior faculty ended up living in the wartime prefab units built between 1941 and 1944 that were scattered around the central campus.¹¹⁴ The initial post-war building undertaken by the University included the Administration Building, the Nathan Goldblatt Hospital, the Ion Accelerator, and the Research Institutes. As an ensemble this group was hardly distinguished in architectural stylishness. The Administration Building, built at a cost of \$1.6 million, generated considerable criticism for its move away from the traditional English Neo-Gothic style. Joseph Hudnut, dean of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, described the building as a “somewhat run of the mine design and probably a little dull.”¹¹⁵ The Research Institutes were built for \$4.8 million as sturdy but rather nondescript structures. The only housing project authorized after 1945 was a modest faculty-staff housing building on 60th Street and Ingleside Avenue, providing forty-seven apartments and costing \$1 million. The campus

114. “Non-Veteran Members of Faculty Now Occupying Prefab Apartments,” April 24, 1947, *ibid.*, Box 106, folder 11.

115. Hudnut to Cowell, October 14, 1948, *ibid.*, Box 39, folder 4.

planning surrounding these structures had an ad hoc, rushed quality about it. Robert Hutchins admitted as much when confronted with criticism by Samuel K. Allison, director of the Institute for Nuclear Studies, about the stodgy design of the new Research Institutes: Allison is reported to have told Hutchins that that “the facade of the building looked like the State Insane Asylum in Oswego, Wisconsin,” to which Hutchins commented tartly to his staff that “[i]t seems to me that the time has come to inaugurate a new and better system for the approval of plans for buildings.”¹¹⁶

In such an environment, planning for student housing was bound to assume a very low priority. Like all U.S. universities, Chicago was inundated with large numbers of returning veterans between 1946 and 1950, many of whom had severe difficulties finding decent, affordable housing. One report noted that “the return of over 500 veterans to our campus, and the receipt of an average of 75 applications per day from veterans desirous of matriculating in the University, has brought a serious housing shortage at the University.”¹¹⁷ This short-term feast—too many students, who overwhelmed the University’s meager housing resources—was then followed after 1950 by a much more serious famine. The latter turn of events came about because of the collapse of undergraduate enrollments that paralyzed the College and the University beginning in 1952–53. From a pre-1940 undergraduate College of over 3,000 students, the University’s undergraduate population plunged to below 1,400 students by 1954. The freshman class entering the College in the fall of 1953 consisted of only 275 students, a stunning decline

116. Hutchins to James A. Cunningham, September 21, 1949, *ibid.*, folder 1.

117. Howard B. Matthews to Army Service Forces, attn. Captain M. L. Rockwell, December 8, 1945, *ibid.*, Box 70, folder 8.

compared with the typical entering classes of the 1930s, which numbered between 600 and 700 students (642 freshmen matriculated in 1939; 653 freshmen matriculated in 1940). This collapse of enrollments had several causes, among the most important of which was the fact that the University had alienated many high school teachers, principals, and parents with its attempts to recruit their best sophomores and juniors under Robert Hutchins's Early Admissions Program before 1953. George Watkins, the Vice President for Development in the 1950s, later recalled:

No program instituted by Robert Maynard Hutchins was more controversial than the Early Admission Program as it developed—and it finally became a disaster. Many of those attending these alumni meetings around the country were teachers, a lot of them high school teachers. Early admission as such was not new in colleges . . . The University had it, as well as acceleration, based upon what was generally referred to as “testing out” of courses—demonstrating academic proficiency. But Robert Maynard Hutchins inaugurated an Early Admissions Program that went far beyond that in asserting, in effect, that the last two years of high school were a waste and that qualified students should be allowed to enter the College after two years of high school and be awarded an undergraduate degree—the conventional Bachelor's degree—after what was generally regarded as the end of the sophomore year of college. As with so many other of Robert Maynard Hutchins's innovations, this may have made excellent educational sense. But as Lawrence Kimpton often said at staff meetings, it “monkeyed with the coin of the realm”, and violent criticism erupted in all directions, nowhere more vehemently than from other academic institutions and faculties. Also, many

parents of prospective students certainly weren't enthusiastic about sending their children two years earlier to a great city university, where "it is assumed students are adults". High school teachers among our alumni—and those attending these [alumni] meetings—were outraged at the notion that the last two years of high school were a waste. And a sizable proportion of our alumni were in education—the University had long been known as "the teacher of teachers". They had long been encouraging their students to come to the University of Chicago. . . . Well, that source of undergraduate students tended to dry up dramatically. And College enrollment continued to decline.¹¹⁸

This collapse of loyalty and trust among high school officials, alumni, and parents in our traditional admissions markets meant perforce that we had to work much harder to recruit more College students from outside the Chicago and to try to expand the applicant base of the College by recruiting more students from distant areas.¹¹⁹ By 1960, the

118. "Interview of Christopher Kimball with George H. Watkins," August 25, 1987, p. 25, *Oral History Program*, Special Collections Research Center.

119. Dean of Students Robert M. Strozier characterized the opposition of high school officials well when in a memorandum in March 1950 discussing the College's public opinion problems he reported, "It may be true that the unique features of the College Program do cause some misunderstanding among the high school people, whose sympathy and cooperation are vital to the Program. . . . A very competent counselor of East High School in Rockford, Illinois articulated this feeling most clearly. In a thoughtful and friendly mood, she said: 'The College, in a way, is a threat to us. We know that we ought to do a better job. You are doing it. We can't, although some of us break our hearts working at it. And knowing we can't do it, we fear what you are doing. For this reason, we are restless and uneasy when you call on us.'" Memorandum of March 30, 1950, *Archive of the College*, Box 2, folder 7.

number of undergraduate students from the Chicago area had declined to 46 percent, compared with 70 percent in 1940; by 1970, it had declined still further to 26 percent. A more aggressive national admissions strategy in turn meant that more attention would have to be devoted to on-campus housing resources for out-of-town students.

Equally noteworthy, the deterioration of the surrounding neighborhood and the massive increase in crime rates in Hyde Park and Woodlawn between 1945 and 1955 also forced College authorities to argue for a more secure, on-campus residential environment for our students. The neighborhood housing option, virtually taken for granted by the University in the decades before 1940, now proved somewhat problematic. As a subcommittee of the Council of University Senate observed in 1952, "Progressive deterioration of the University neighborhood, with the accompanying increase in lawlessness, has beyond doubt made residence at the University less attractive to prospective students."¹²⁰

Before 1945, we had been able to rely on parental homes, neighborhood housing, and the city's then excellent public transportation system to care for the great majority of our students. The situation that we faced in the early 1950s would be starkly different. As early as 1951, William C. Bradbury, a sociologist in the College who was commissioned to write a major report on the acute problems of student life that had emerged under the Hutchins College curriculum, signaled that the University needed to devote serious attention to expanding and strengthening the College's housing system as part of a total approach to supporting student educational growth. Bradbury argued that "[a]s a result of the war and the post-war boom all the Houses have become

120. R. T. Bruère et al., "Report of the Council Subcommittee on Enrollment," 1952, p. 1, *Archive of the College*, Box 4, folder 10.

badly overcrowded and none is a place for civilized living; room assignments are controlled by a bureau whose primary concern is dollar economy. The administrative decision to try to make Houses social units was a good one, but the imagination and especially the funds that have gone into effort to date have been pathetically inadequate.” Bradbury was unapologetic about the fact that a much improved College housing system would cost “millions”: “As I have said, I make no apologies for this . . . it is fruitless to hope to foster an effective student community without creating its ‘material’ (as well as its ideal) preconditions.”¹²¹ Yet Bradbury’s pleas faced the stark financial realities faced by the University in the early 1950s, when undergraduate matriculations and undergraduate tuition revenues plunged drastically, leaving the University with an arts and sciences faculty much larger than it could plausibly afford and leaving little wiggle room for new dorm construction.¹²² Bradbury’s ideas led to the development of a residential plan for the College that the faculty debated and approved in the spring of 1952. This plan called for the creation of a series of new residential colleges of approximately 150 to 200 students each, with each college having a faculty Master of the College and a Resident Faculty Fellow, both of whom would have apartments in

121. William C. Bradbury, “Education and Other Aspects of Personal Growth in the College Community. A Report to the College Committee on Policy and Personnel,” October 1951, *Archive of the College*, pp. 76, 103.

122. It is noteworthy that even as late as the early 1970s the University had a student-faculty ratio in respect to the number of College students compared with the size of the arts and sciences faculty of almost four to one (for the year 1969–70, 527 Divisional faculty and 56 College faculty compared with 2,378 undergraduate students), revealing how fragile the University’s broader financial situation was. See “Statistical Study of the College,” p. 29 and Appendix A, “Faculty Teaching Undergraduates,” p. 2, *Presidents’ Papers*, Series 97–60, Box 6.

these colleges.¹²³ F. Champion Ward, Dean of the College in the early 1950s, urged the Central Administration to move quickly to develop new on-campus housing, arguing that “the College is not the private hobby of its Dean, and neither Mr. Northrop nor I feel that there is much prospect that without a constructive program, including investment in the financing of the proposed [residential] colleges by the Board, we will be enabled by our own spare-time efforts to remove the serious material obstacles to stabilizing and increasing the enrollment in the College.”¹²⁴ Facing bleak budgetary conditions in the early 1950s, Chancellor Lawrence Kimpton was understandably reluctant to build new on-campus housing. Kimpton tried to assuage Ward by telling him, “All we lack is money and students. As soon as we get our budget into decent shape and as soon as we can convince a few more students to enroll, let’s roll up our sleeves and build more stately mansions.” Ward replied that this decision was “a severe blow to the Faculty’s hopes.”¹²⁵

The College’s residential situation was further complicated by the slow collapse of what had formerly been a vigorous and extensive fraternity culture on our campus. As noted above, in the 1920s the fraternities were numerous enough to provide housing for a significant number of College men. Yet the revision of the College’s curriculum in 1931, which created the much more academically challenging Common Core curriculum,

123. “A Residential Plan for the College,” *Minutes of the Faculty of the College*, 1952, pp. 77–78, 125. Eugene Northrop was a professor of mathematics in the College who was tasked with helping improve the admissions situation.

124. Ward to Kimpton, August 20, 1953, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 78, folder 1.

125. Kimpton to Ward, September 11, 1953; Ward to Kimpton and R. W. Harrison, October 30, 1953, *ibid.*

led the University to prohibit fraternities from recruiting entering first-year students until Spring Quarter of their freshman year. This change in pledging practices, together with the more academically oriented interests manifested by many of the new matriculants, created a more challenging recruitment environment for the fraternities. After 1942—especially after 1946, when the College began to recruit large number of very young students, many of whom were not appropriate recruits—the fraternities faced new challenges, and the subsequent collapse of the College’s enrollments in the 1950s proved to be the final death knell for many of these groups. Whereas in 1929 the University of Chicago had twenty-nine fraternities, that number declined to seventeen fraternities by 1939 and to nine fraternities by 1959. By 1965, the College had only seven fraternities.¹²⁶ Having depended upon the fraternities to provide on- or near-campus residential living resources that it could not or would not build itself and to generate strong social solidarities among their members, the University now lost on both fronts.¹²⁷

126. “Undergraduate Fraternities, Spring Quarter 1929,” *Mason Administration*, Box 1, folder 6; “Students at the University of Chicago,” 1940–1941, *Archive of the College*, Box 15, folder 2; James E. Newman to Robert M. Wulff, August 18, 1965, *ibid.*, Box 76.

127. In 1962, Dean of Students Warner Wick cleverly sought to co-opt the fraternities into helping him build what essentially amounted to University-controlled undergraduate student housing by proposing that the University dedicate part of the block of land just to the west of Pierce Tower for a Fraternity Quadrangle of nine Houses, which would be built as a joint venture between the fraternities and the University. The University would provide a forty-year loan to each fraternity and secure exemption for them from local real estate taxes, since the new Houses would be “treated as a University housing facility” for undergraduates. The scheme never materialized, but it did show how concerned Wick was with the chronic shortage of student housing. See “A New Fraternity Quadrangle,” June 7, 1962, *Archive of the College*, Box 78.

Given Lawrence Kimpton's ardent desire to rebuild the College's enrollments (he suggested to the Board of Trustees a goal of five thousand undergraduates by 1960!), Kimpton eventually persuaded the Board to take action in the later 1950s by authorizing the construction of two new residence halls: Woodward Court (initially for women) opened in 1958, and Pierce Tower opened in 1960. Woodward in particular was a *sine qua non* for any attempt to rebuild the College's population of women students, which had dropped precipitously since World War II. University Dean of Students Robert Strozier warned Kimpton in 1955 that "[t]he enrollment of women students has been consistently low since the war. Other colleges and universities have, during this time, been building attractive residence halls for women and making an appeal which we are unable to make to prospective women students. In fact, the neighborhood and the age of the women's residence halls combine to make our appeal very difficult for women students. We shall not be able to reach our totals either in 1956 or in the future unless we have a sharp increase in the enrolment of women and men students."¹²⁸ Ironically, in the planning for this new hall, the ghosts of the Harkness model at Yale continued to reappear. The architect for Woodward Courts, Eero Saarinen, reprised Harold Swift's admiration for Yale's collegiate housing from the late 1920s, by invoking the Harkness colleges at Yale and Harvard as a model for Chicago: Saarinen argued that "[i]t seems to me that there is much to be learned from the Harkness projects at Yale and Harvard. Their Gothicized architecture demanded picturesque arrangements which in turn brought about un-standardized solutions. It seems to me that our problem is to siphon out the healthy human results and to arrive

128. Strozier to Kimpton, November 18, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 240, folder 6.

at a solution within modern architectural terms with these positive qualities built into the architectural concept.”¹²⁹

Kimpton’s plea to the Board in September 1958 on behalf of the new residence hall on 55th Street, which was eventually named in honor of Stanley R. Pierce (an alumnus of the College [Class of 1914] who had died in late 1959 and left the University a bequest of nearly \$1 million), was ruthlessly candid about the stakes involved. Kimpton

pointed out that this facility, which we need desperately, is closely related to the kind of University that we desire to become. He stated that he is not seriously concerned about our graduate work and that we will be able to maintain our strength there. Our real problem relates to the undergraduate side of the University and, possibly because we began with a strong emphasis on graduate study, we have never quite worked out the kind of undergraduate institution that we want to become.

Mr. Kimpton indicated that in shaping and developing the undergraduate part of the University we can follow any one of the following patterns:

1. The large urban university pattern as typified by New York University and the College of the City of New York. Here there is a large commuting group of students and the University makes no provision for student housing.
2. The State University pattern as typified by the large midwest state universities. Here large numbers of students are

129. Eero Saarinen, “Preliminary Concept Considerations for the University of Chicago,” November 29, 1954, *Beadle Administration*, Box 131, folder 11.

enrolled without any high degree of selectivity and without any particular attention being given to student housing.

3. The third pattern, which he believes we should follow, is that followed by Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and others. Here there is a rather small, highly selective student body with most students living on campus. This type of university operation has enormous educational advantages.

The Chancellor noted that there are bleak facts which we must face. We must again increase our tuition charge. Princeton, for example, is going to \$1,450 in 1959. If we are to attract undergraduate students we must give them something that they cannot obtain at schools like Roosevelt University or at the University of Illinois in Chicago. The fact that our academic standing is high is not enough. We need more social prestige than we now have, for that is an important factor in attracting students at the undergraduate level. At this time roughly 50 per cent of our students come from the greater Chicago area, and 40% of this number come from the City of Chicago. This pattern is similar to that of other large urban universities. Thirty-four per cent of our undergraduate men live in University residences and about 45 per cent of our undergraduate women live on the campus. We do not like to have our undergraduate students living outside the University. The providing of appropriate student housing not only would stimulate undergraduate enrolment, but it also would greatly assist our undergraduate program.¹³⁰

130. "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," September 11, 1958.

It says much about the urgency felt by Kimpton, and his effective communications with the Board of Trustees, that Chairman of the Board Glen Lloyd persuaded twenty-four Trustees to pledge \$675,000 to complete funding of the new hall, which would amount to about \$5 million in today's dollars.

Both Woodward Court and Pierce Tower proved to be serviceable but not well-constructed buildings, and both soon showed signs of wear and tear that grew more acute over the decades. Moreover, their real impact in increasing our housing stock for College students was reduced soon after their opening when the University decommissioned Foster, Kelly-Beecher-Green, and Gates-Blake Halls as residence halls, turning them instead into office buildings. In spite of Kimpton's statement to the Board about the importance of undergraduate housing, it was the clear intention of University planners to transfer a significant part of Burton-Judson Courts to the Law School and other professional schools as soon as the Pierce Tower complex opened. One official wrote that “Burton-Judson is admirably suited for use for graduate men, perhaps better suited for graduates than undergraduates.”¹³¹ Nor were Woodward and Pierce part of a well-thought-out plan that would integrate residential living with the educational ideals of the College, such as William Bradbury had called for in 1951. As Dean Donald N. Levine would later put it, “developments in the 1950s and early 1960s did almost nothing to institutionalize concerns of the sort expressed in the Bradbury Report . . . the heart of Bradbury's reform proposals—making the residential system socially central to a broadly conceived program of growth for College students—was ignored.”¹³²

131. “New Residence Halls for Undergraduate Men,” [1958], *Kimpton Administration*, Box 51, folder 10.

132. Levine, “On Upgrading the ‘Quality of Life’ in the College,” p. 8.

Although the Admissions Office in 1958 sought to advertise the College as “largely a residential College,” such a claim in fact applied largely to entering freshman and sophomores.¹³³ Such slogans were possible only because the size of the entering class had collapsed drastically since the 1930s and because many upper-class students were in fact not part of the residential system, preferring to live off campus, even in the face of disconcerting public safety issues.

Woodward and Pierce were the last new residential buildings constructed by the University until the opening of the Max Palevsky Residential Commons in 2002. The original design of Pierce called for a second tower to be constructed immediately to the west of the first structure (and the project was announced to the press as a two-tower project), but this never happened. As the University entered the 1960s, the housing problem—and strategies to engage it—remained an ongoing source of concern. In June 1961, a faculty committee chaired by Donald Meiklejohn suggested that “[i]n our judgment the residence halls do not now provide living facilities consistent with the aspirations of the College. The crowding, noise, meager student-faculty contacts, relatively drab uniformity, and tone of management which prevail in much of the dormitory space contrasts with the independence, imagination, and communication which the College cultivates in the classroom . . . We doubt that the University can long maintain a College

133. “A Report to Secondary Schools: A Biographical Sketch of the Class of 1962,” *Kimpton Administration*, Box 4, folder 5. In 1960, out of a College population of 2,168 students, only 1,242 students lived in University residences, and the latter figure included both International House and University married student housing. Thirty years earlier, the College had had a population of over 3,300 full-time students.

of the kind and size it now contemplates unless both physical facilities and management policy are changed.”¹³⁴

The Meiklejohn Report was bolstered by a series of internal and confidential communications by James E. Newman, who as Assistant Dean of Students in the College in the 1960s was responsible for the College’s housing system. A historian by training, Newman was given to writing thoughtful commentaries about student life as he encountered it. Commenting on Meiklejohn’s Report, Newman added, “I would hope that future residences would be more spacious, have more single rooms, and include the proper amount of those facilities that are not extras but rather essentials—lounges, practice rooms, study rooms, libraries. Such residences would require both ample funds and ample land.” Newman also questioned the prudence of Lawrence Kimpton’s commitment of two to four of the Burton-Judson Houses to the Law School, and to the impending decision to turn the C Group into faculty offices. But he did so with a general university view in mind, noting that every unit was short of space, and that the Business School and Divinity School would also like to have on-campus residences for their students as well.¹³⁵

One of Newman’s most important interventions was a second long report entitled “The House System and Student Life,” which was prepared and distributed on a confidential basis in August 1963. This report focused less on specific technical desiderata than on larger, macro-campus social climate issues. Although Newman’s purpose was to lobby

134. “The College. Committee on Residential Policy,” pp. 8–9, June 5, 1961, *Archive of the College*.

135. James E. Newman to Alan Simpson, June 26, 1961, *Beadle Administration*, Box 100, folder 6.

for a strengthening of the residential system, he did so via a circuitous survey of the state of the mores of student life on campus. Newman found much to admire in the culture of the College in the early 1960s—the independence of the students, their capacity for critical thinking, and their dedication to academic values. But he also found perplexing and even debilitating problems. Foremost was the lack of communitarian groups and institutions that would ease the loneliness and isolation experienced by many students. Newman argued that “the lack of community social interaction leaves students feeling lonely, bored, thrown back completely on their own resources. The most commonly heard complaint from students is that there is no social life on campus.” Newman believed that the residential system, properly supported and expanded, could help break down this kind of anomie. He concluded with the plea that “by all the means that are available to us, we must develop an atmosphere that cultivates in the student sensitivity and thoughtfulness to others, a sense of creative social responsibility, and that largeness and generosity of spirit which is the mark of the cultivated man. I have said above that the Chicago graduate at his best is the ‘autonomous man.’ His sturdy independence is splendid, but it carries with a certain indifference to social responsibility and a kind of careful measuring out of emotion. If our graduates could maintain their autonomy but add to it a freer, more responsible attitude toward their society, we could be very proud indeed.”¹³⁶

On a more pragmatic level, complaints about the poor quality of housing resources continued to be voiced in the early 1960s. These complaints were accentuated by the decision of the leaders of the College to

136. James E. Newman, “The House System and Student Life,” August 1963, pp. 9, 28, *ibid.*, Box 73, folder 7.

declare formally in 1960 that it had a goal of becoming a largely residential College, requiring that undergraduate women live all four years on campus and that undergraduate men spend at least the first two years on campus. This decision was strongly advocated by Alan Simpson, an Oxford trained historian who had become Dean of the College in 1959 and who valued the ideal of a strongly residential campus as part of a wider effort to make the College more socially supportive of students and to help them profit from the intense intellectual rigors of the formal curriculum.¹³⁷ Simpson's educational ideal was influenced by his studies of European humanism: the humanists, he argued, “understood the possibilities of the whole man and wanted an educational system that would give the many sides of his nature some chance to develop in harmony. They thought it a good idea to mix the wisdom of the world with the learning of the cloister, to develop the body as well as the mind, to pay a great deal of attention to character, and to neglect no art which could add to the enjoyment of living. It was a spacious idea which offered every hospitality to creative energy. Anyone who is seriously interested in a liberal education must begin by rediscovering it.”¹³⁸

Alan Simpson was harshly critical of the laissez-faire attitudes of the past, especially of the “sprawling apartment culture, in which students

137. At the time, Alan Simpson's advocacy of a more “well rounded” approach to liberal education was seen as being opposed to Hutchins's educational philosophy. In response to a request for an evaluation of Simpson, James L. Cate of the Department of History wrote, “Alan is an intellectual without making a fetish of it. He has high standards of scholarship, but he thinks in terms of the rounded man (or woman) as our ultimate goal. This cost him some loss of popularity with the die-hard Hutchins' crew here, but that is not too important.” Cate to J. B. Ross, January 25, 1963, *James L. Cate Papers*, Box 2.

138. Alan Simpson, “The Marks of an Educated Man,” p. 5, *Archive of the College*.

swam in isolated little schools, or sank as the case might be. The result was a highly atomized social life, with characteristic virtues and vices; a forcing house for individualism and for enterprising coteries, but also a source of casualties, wasted opportunities, and squalor. Though small, the College was often thought to be impersonal, and the drop-out [rate] was heavy.”¹³⁹ Simpson urged the University to “commit ourselves to the principle of a residential college both for its own sake and for the security it offers in our urban situation.”¹⁴⁰

Simpson’s hopes for stronger residential life were soon disappointed, since both of the new housing requirements provided easy escape clauses via petitions. He was forced to admit, “I accept my share of the responsibility for heartily endorsing a policy which was not properly defined or announced with proper notice and which has been dogged from the start by a grotesque failure to remove the legitimate objections to the present residences. To cite a solitary example, the architect, who suspended a bunch of balloons from the ceiling of a penthouse in Pierce, approved a stick or two of furniture, ignored the acoustical horrors of the melancholy chamber, and then washed his hands of the whole business except for announcing that any alteration would need his approval, ought to be invited to sit and suffer in it.”¹⁴¹ Frustrated administrators and faculty leaders tried for four years to close the gap between the College’s stated aspirations and its messy realities, finding themselves forced to tolerate and even encourage petitions from students who wished to opt out of the

139. Simpson to Vice President L. T. Coggeshall, January 8, 1962, *ibid.*

140. Alan Simpson, “Speech to the Visiting Committee of the College, September 22, 1960,” p. 3, *ibid.*

141. Alan Simpson to J. P. Netherton, March 3, 1961, *ibid.*

housing system. In the spring of 1964, the University was forced to acknowledge that it had overreached itself, and it rescinded the requirement that second-year men and third- and fourth-year women had to live on campus.

The problems were several. First, both of the new buildings—Pierce and Woodward—had been designed with many small, undersized rooms which, when deployed as doubles, quickly became seriously overcrowded. This fact was brought home to Provost Edward Levi when Eugene Rostow, dean of Yale Law School, wrote to him about his son's experiences in Pierce Tower: "My son was housed in a well-designed modern dormitory at Chicago, Pierce Tower, which I regard as an educational abomination. He and a roommate shared a room about the size of my Yale bedroom, or a steerage statement on an old Cunard liner. They were expected to sleep, study and entertain in that room. Of course, they couldn't."¹⁴² Second, housing staff struggled to manage a system in which graduate and professional schools also laid claim to key on-campus resources, thus shrinking other residential options for the College at the same time that Pierce and Woodward were brought on line and undergraduate enrollments continued to grow. In April 1963, the *Chicago Maroon* published a negative evaluation of the decision to close down the women's dorms in the C Group. Behind the scenes, the article prompted a stunningly candid assessment from Mary Alice Newman, another College administrator (and the spouse of James Newman). In May 1963, she wrote to Warner Wick, University Dean of Students, "The *Maroon* (for once) has accurately delineated the seeming irrationality of current decisions with regard to housing: the abandonment of the C Group as a residence without adequate replacement, the decision to use Harper

142. Rostow to Levi, December 20, 1965, *Walter Blum Papers*, Box 16, folder 5.

Surf for women, the dining room changes of the last year. All of these decisions bespeak a pragmatic, expedient, ill-thought-out business rather than decisions made in a rational way for purposes of educational policy. As one of the original proponents of a 'residential college' I presumed that it would be supported by a minimum standard of living of the kind to make residential living preferable to independent living. However, three years later not only have positive gains not materialized, but we have actually lost ground."

Wick in turn forwarded Newman's letter to the Central Administration, adding his own caustic commentary: "[w]e are in trouble, chiefly because of the decisions made long ago, but whose consequences were hard to anticipate in their full strength. Mary Alice exaggerates only slightly, and you should be aware of the sour atmosphere. . . . In any case, we are not competitive with the colleges we like to think of ourselves as competing with. Talk of our 'residential college' is a big laugh, and the world is hearing about it."¹⁴³ Frustrated staff members, asked to deal with angry parents of young women who were assigned to the Harper Surf building at 54th Street and Harper Avenue, vented their discontent as well: James W. Sheldon Jr., a young staff member, wrote to George Beadle that "[i]f this is the best housing that we can provide for a female, junior undergraduate, it looks as though our claim to being a 'resident college' is no longer true. If we can't do any better, maybe we should completely eliminate the co-educational feature of the College, as we certainly won't attract many of the kinds of girls we want with this type of housing offering."¹⁴⁴

143. Newman to Wick, May 1, 1963; Wick to Beadle et al., May 2, 1963; *Beadle Administration*, Box 73, folder 7.

144. Sheldon to George Beadle et al., May 1, 1963, *ibid.*

Even junior faculty members became concerned. Robert Haselkorn, a young associate professor in Biophysics and Chemistry who had degrees from Princeton and Harvard, complained to Edward Levi about the conditions in Woodward Court to the effect that “I was surprised to learn that nearly all the residents were freshwomen, and that the few second year students would certainly be off-campus next year. Lack of popularity of the dormitory was attributed to the rooms primarily, with no mention made of the parietal rules. In response to detailed questions about the rooms, I was invited to visit them. Compared to my undergraduate and graduate housing, they were terrible.”¹⁴⁵

Among the most agitated was University Dean of Students Warner Wick himself, who became increasingly frustrated over the gap between the University’s lofty goal of a fully residential college and the disoriented realities that he was forced to administer. Wick was convinced that the high dropout rate that afflicted the College’s student body was directly linked to the “failure of so many students to become identified with the community,” and this in turn was deeply connected to the College’s poor residential facilities.¹⁴⁶ In an unusually harsh memo, he complained in February 1964 that

145. Haselkorn to Levi, October 5, 1966, *ibid.*, Box 132, folder 1.

146. Wick to Beadle, Levi, and James J. Ritterskamp Jr., July 26, 1965, *Blum Papers*, Box 15, folder 4. Later in the same year, Wick argued, “It is shocking that a college known to be ‘most selective’, and that draws more than half of its students from the top five per cent of their high school classes, should be able to graduate barely 57 percent of an entering class after five years; and it is especially shocking to discover that the drop-outs are as able, according to all objective tests for ability, as those who stick it out. The conclusion is inescapable that something must be wrong with our [university] society.” Warner A. Wick, “Reasons for Higher Quality in the University Houses,” December 20, 1965, p. 3, *ibid.*, Box 16, folder 5.

. . . the “residential college” we spoke of so proudly five years ago has become a rather bitter joke. During the intervening years we have taken six humanely designed houses for women out of circulation (Gates, Blake, Foster, Kelly, Green, and Beecher). In their places we have substituted Blackstone Hall and the Harper Surf. Unless we evict graduate students from the buildings they now inhabit, despite our promises to the Law School and to Jerry Brauer [of the Divinity School], we cannot now house even two of the four undergraduate classes in dormitories. We have been forced to pretend that the privilege of “living out” is an exception to the rule, permitted only by petition. But if the vast majority of upper-class students did not petition to live out, we would be in trouble. In short, we can get by only because a sufficient number of students would rather be tenants of Bernie Wayne or of 6106 Ellis than live in the house system, and this situation subverts everything I think we stand for. Can we move this problem off dead-center?¹⁴⁷

In response to these concerns and in an effort to gain control over the inchoate process of student residential development that had marked the later 1950s and early 1960s, Provost Edward Levi commissioned a major faculty report in 1964 to chart the future of the housing system. As an alumnus of the College, Levi had a clear understanding of its educational mission. During the later 1960s, he often used dorms as venues to meet students and engage in personal conversations with them. Students seem to appreciate his candor and courage in doing so, and one

147. Wick to Beadle et al., February 24, 1964, *Beadle Administration*, Box 131, folder 11.

student leader wrote in 1968, “As you may, or may not, be aware, it is rather difficult to reach past the red-tape and frowns of secretaries to talk with you or Mr. O’Connell or Mr. Booth. And many students stand in a certain amount of awe of your positions, and are too shy to make an attempt at all [to meet with Levi]. For this reason, your excursion ‘into the field’ was quite valuable, and helped to restore the image of Administration accessibility to the student at-large.”¹⁴⁸ Levi was also proud of the long-standing social and economic diversity of the College which, as we have seen, marked our enrollment demographics from the earliest days of the University, and he noted proudly in the submission that he prepared for the Ford Foundation in 1965 that “Chicago has many more children from families with incomes of \$7,500 or less than are indicated on the samples from the “High Quality Private [Colleges]” and “Ultra Ivy [Colleges] and many less from families of \$15,000 or more.”¹⁴⁹

The committee of faculty appointed by Edward Levi was chaired by Law Professor Walter J. Blum, an avuncular campus loyalist given to telling the truth to the American people in no-nonsense language. Blum’s committee deliberated from September 1964 to May 1965, soliciting a wide variety of opinions from faculty, students, and administrative staff. The final report forcefully argued in favor of the construction of new student housing on campus—focusing especially on the land between 55th and 56th Streets between Ingleside and Cottage Grove Avenues to create a student village for unmarried and married students, and including athletic facilities and space for shops and commercial services. Blum also supported the construction of a second, better-designed tower on the Pierce

148. Leo Moldaver to Levi, October 22, 1968, *ibid.*

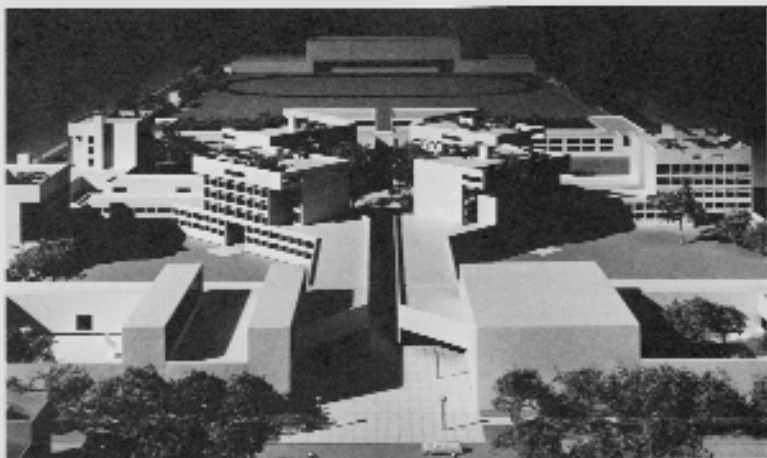
149. Ford Foundation submission, 1965, *Beadle Administration*, Box 271, folder 1.

site. Instead of a bevy of small double rooms, Blum argued that each two-story House in the new tower should have about forty-five single rooms, together with ten suites designed for two students each. Blum also noted the possibility of expanding Burton-Judson Courts on the South Campus, and he emphasized the importance of high-quality construction: “[i]t is of the utmost importance that the University at least keep pace with the quality of housing for unmarried students which has been (and is being) built at other schools of the highest quality. . . . Unfortunately, the last two residences built by the University—Pierce Tower and Woodward Court—suffer badly in comparison with housing built by other schools with which the University competes for students.”¹⁵⁰

In transmitting the final version of the report, Blum insisted that

[i]t is, of course possible to meet an increase in demand for housing by a number of “temporary” or “emergency” steps. Apartment hotels in the neighborhood could be converted into residence halls; or students could be housed in small groups in flat buildings; or conceivably special permission could be obtained to throw up “pre-fabs” around the campus once again. These expedients would be most unsatisfactory. One of the great needs of the College is to attract and hold undergraduate students who have the qualifications demanded by the academic program which is being developed. Almost all of the schools with which the College competes for students are now in a position to offer attractive housing. It stands to reason that the pulling power of the College is bound to suffer if, during the

150. “Report of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Student Residences and Facilities,” pp. 3–4, May 1965, *Blum Papers*, Box 16, folder 1.



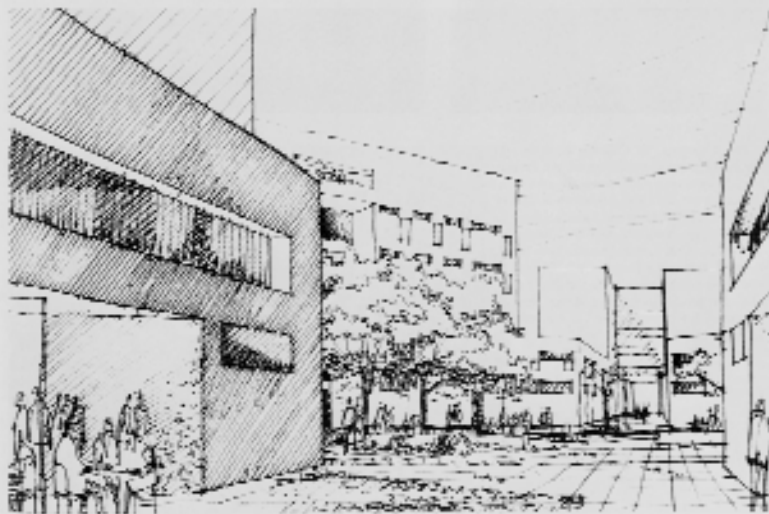
Student Village

John Siefert

Will the Student Village be a myth or reality? With the location selected between 59th and 56th, Cottage Grove and University Ave., architectural design nearly completed, the job left for the University is to find donors for the \$24,000,000 enterprise.

The Student Village will consist of an athletic complex — gymnasium, fields, swimming pool, track and track courts, a Center for the Arts — theater, music, art; and housing units including dining, recreation and study facilities. Also surrounding the old style courtyard will be a book store, snack bar, and post office.

The residence halls will accommodate approximately 900 students. There will be six undergraduate towers: four overlooking the central courtyard, two on 56th and across 55th. The graduate students will be housed in townhouses: two facing the new Stagg Field and eight bordering the courtyard.



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next few critical years, entrants can look forward to nothing better than make-shift sleeping quarters on the fringes of campus or beyond. . . . it must be recognized that in recent years the University has failed to develop a way of life which is congenial to a large segment of the undergraduate population. . . . The University, if it is to achieve its aspirations, must create the supportive facilities and the atmosphere in which a wide variety of students can feel comfortable, develop sustaining associations, and “settle down” while undertaking their studies. Housing conditions, needless to say, can play a vital role in this respect. Properly planned residence units can contribute much to the orderly and sound maturation of students; poor residence units are most likely to be a serious detriment.¹⁵¹

Much like Ernest D. Burton’s bold Dream of the Colleges scheme in the 1920s, Walter Blum believed that his conception of a new student village filled with graduate and undergraduate housing would engender greater sociability and community among the students and help to break down the bleakness of the campus, insisting that “housing for unmarried students [should] be located so as to produce flows of student traffic through the campus, including the evening hours. The campus should be rescued from being a ghost town after sunset. Appearances often generate reality and a campus with students walking back and forth throughout the day and evening will assist in developing a livelier student community.”¹⁵²

151. Blum to Levi, Memorandum of Transmission, June 1, 1965, *Blum Papers*, Box 16, folder 6.

152. “Report of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Student Residences and Facilities,” p. 4.

In thanking Walter Blum for his report, President George Beadle acknowledged the force of Blum's arguments, observing that "[d]espite the rather frightening costs involved, I fully agree we must move ahead as rapidly as possible in building high quality dorms and doing the other things that must be done. The only consolation I know for being so far behind is that we *ought* to be able to do much better today than we could have several years ago."¹⁵³ Blum's proposals were also warmly endorsed by College administrators, who hoped that action would be taken to implement them. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. In 1966, the University engaged Edward Larrabee Barnes to develop the student village plan. In 1967, the University proudly announced a plan for a student complex, now called "the North Quadrangle," for a total cost of \$23.8 million. It included housing for nine hundred students in a student village; art, music, and drama buildings; and an athletics center with a swimming pool.¹⁵⁴

Like the fate of the Burton-Woodward initiatives of the late 1920s for a new South Campus residential plan, the Blum Committee's bold vision of the mid-1960s for a new North Campus residential plan was soon swallowed up by a combination of other urgent needs, budget crises, and planning inertia. The years that followed Blum's plan saw the University move to implement major initiatives to construct new research buildings and to build a magnificent new research library, but new student

153. Beadle to Blum, June 14, 1965, *Blum Papers*, Box 15, folder 4.

154. See "The North Quadrangle," *University of Chicago Magazine*, November 1967, pp. 2–9. Barnes's final proposals met with some opposition from the student body, since they increased the number of double rooms substantially and reduced the number of suites. Students also objected to the fact that the complex was to be isolated by a wall.

housing never materialized.¹⁵⁵ The divisive political and cultural turmoil of the 1969 sit-in that rocked our campus resulted in the College being asked to reduce undergraduate admissions by one-third in the fall of 1969, thus further delaying efforts to rebuild the size of the College’s student population. Instead of expanding, the College again began to shrink, and this fact, together with the miserable state of the University budget throughout the 1970s (a sad, semi-parallel to the 1930s), led the University to ignore the major thrust of the Blum Report. Instead of re-launching a coordinated plan to build new campus housing, the University continued to acquire and convert older properties in the neighborhood for student housing—in part because financial circumstances made unfeasible a systematic investment in new residence halls of the scale that Blum outlined, in part because of the perceived need to stabilize our environs—which essentially meant that we were using undergraduates to help protect the neighborhood (i.e., the acquisition of Broadview Hall in 1967; George Williams College in 1966; Max Mason Hall in 1961; the Eleanor Club in 1967; and, most importantly, Shoreland Hall in 1975).¹⁵⁶

In fact, this “neighborhood strategy” was less a consistent strategy than a series of ad hoc attempts to stay ahead of student demand by incrementally purchasing old buildings that had fallen upon hard times

155. Blum informed the members of his committee that the plans for a student village had met with the fact that “the Administration had just about decided to change the assumptions on which planning for the New Area was to rest. Specifically, the Administration was moving in the direction of including within the New Area a music building[,] a fine arts building, and a repertory theater and drama building. To accommodate such structures the amount of student housing in the Area would be reduced.” Blum to members of the committee, March 4, 1966, *Blum Papers*, Box 16, folder 5.

156. The University also acquired the Piccadilly Hotel for married student housing.

and converting them to student use.¹⁵⁷ Often the pressure to buy and convert these old buildings came from the same colleagues who were also advocating new housing, as an expression of their supreme frustrations at their lack of plausible short-term alternatives.¹⁵⁸ In recommending to the Board of Trustees that the University undertake a major renovation of the Shoreland Hotel in 1977, Vice President for Business and Finance William B. Cannon acknowledged University Dean of Students

157. The idea of using rooms in the Shoreland seems to have first emerged in 1966, having been recommended by the University's manager of commercial real estate, Winston Kennedy. See "Minutes of the Administrative Campus Facilities Planning Committee," May 24, 1966, *Blum Papers*, Box 16, folder 5. The purchase of the Broadview Hotel was also discussed at this meeting. A subsequent survey of planning at the University explicitly connected the neighborhood stabilization strategy with the logic of College residential needs: "The University had stepped into the Hyde Park real estate market to purchase several properties that were not receiving adequate care and management and were therefore beginning to create concern among neighbors in the community as they began to deteriorate. One of the properties purchased, the Shoreland Hotel, soon filled an urgent need for additional student housing." Calvert W. Audrain, William B. Cannon, and Harold T. Wolff, "A Review of Planning at the University of Chicago, 1891–1978," *University of Chicago Record*, April 28, 1978, p. 75.

158. This was clearly the case presented by Warner Wick. In February 1966, he wrote to James Ritterskamp, the Vice President for Administration, to urge that the University buy the Eleanor Club "in time for Autumn 1966." Wick confessed that "we will need to rely on makeshift housing for a good many years to come, with little chance of any new construction being ready before 1968. The Eleanor Club is an ideal 'permanent makeshift', especially for women, where our need for decent space is most acute." In the same memo, Wick also told Ritterskamp that he would not allow first-year students "to be assigned to the George Williams building as Winston Kennedy has proposed," since Wick insisted that the latter building, located as it was near 53rd Street, could not be regarded as an "on-campus" University dorm. Wick to Ritterskamp, February 8, 1966, *Blum Papers*, Box 16, folder 5.

Charles O’Connell’s reservations to the effect that “the Vice President and Dean of Students believes that a new residence hall in a main campus location would have distinct advantages—out-of-the-classroom education, easy interchange with faculty and other students, etc.—over other alternatives.”¹⁵⁹ But Cannon also noted that the cost of building a new residence hall would be at least twice, and perhaps three times, as much as the cost of renovating Shoreland, and, citing the variable of “neighborhood benefit,” Cannon insisted that “with respect to the beneficial impact, the judgment is that the Shoreland clearly outranks all other alternatives in the context of the University’s economic situation and of the present neighborhood housing situation.”¹⁶⁰

Over the decades, these “beneficial impact” property acquisitions left us with the challenge of coping with the major foibles of older buildings that were, not surprisingly, in need of substantial capital investments. We were also forced to bus students between several of these halls and the central campus, a practice conducive neither to creating a strong sense of on-campus community nor to providing a critical mass of students on the central campus on weekends and evenings that would help dispel the perception of its being a ghost town after 5 p.m. As Henry Field, in a report published in 1969, observed about the University housing policy in the late 1960s, “while the University has several dormitories, it has not developed anything like the system of residential

159. “Background—Shoreland Hall Renovation,” July 18, 1977, p. 8, *Wilson Administration*, Box 77, folder 1. Shoreland became a particularly attractive option after the University sold the old building formerly occupied by George Williams College, which had been renamed Boucher Hall and used as temporary dormitory space in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

160. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7.

facilities that has characterized many similar institutions and which many consider to be an important component of the intellectual and cultural traditions fostered by those other institutions. The most striking single change in student housing is the increase in the University's portfolio of apartment buildings purchased in the neighborhood."¹⁶¹

The years after 1970 did see strong and lasting improvements in the organization and management of the existing residential system. The sit-in of January 1969 focused attention on the growing gap between faculty and student cultures on our campus, and sensible leaders at the University looked for ways to strengthen the role of faculty in the operations of the residential system as one plausible way of confronting this problem. Under the leadership of Edward Turkington, the Director of Student Housing since 1966, the University created the institution of faculty Resident Masters, who have provided strong and effective leadership for our larger residence halls.¹⁶² Turkington also argued for expanding the resources accorded to the Resident Heads of each House by providing them with well-furnished apartments with kitchens and private baths, as well as other material support that would encourage multi-year service and thus lead to greater staff stability.¹⁶³ The extraor-

161. Henry Field, "Student Housing History," *University of Chicago Record*, January 29, 1969, p. 5.

162. Turkington's proposal specifically invoked the masters of the Harvard house system as a model. See Edward Turkington to Charles D. O'Connell, March 3, 1969, *Archive of the College*. Woodward and Pierce both received a substantial infusion of money to create capacious apartments for the new Masters, with \$137,000 spent on Woodward and \$158,000 on Pierce. See Naphtali H. Knox to Walter V. Leen, October 9, 1969, *Levi Administration*, Box 72, folder 4.

163. Edward Turkington to Charles D. O'Connell, March 5, 1969, *Archive of the College*.

dinary dedication of Resident Masters (e.g., Isaac and Mary Ann Abella at Shoreland Hall; Izaak and Pera Wirszup at Woodward Court) revealed the enormously positive impact that senior faculty and senior staff families could have on anchoring the residential system. We are extremely grateful for their dedication. Owing to the addition of various neighborhood buildings—which did give us additional capacity—and the still relatively small size of the College’s population in the 1970s and 1980s, the College did become strongly residential, with almost 70 percent of our students living in our own residential system by the mid-1980s (a figure which then slowly declined as the College continued to grow in size after 1987).¹⁶⁴ The University House System—now encompassing thirty-eight Houses of approximately eighty College students each—has also become an extremely effective sponsor of vibrant micro-communities on our campus and is one of the most successful anchor points of loyalty and affection of current students and recent alumni.

Still, the centralizing and coordinating impulses privileging the importance of on-campus housing that were embedded in the Blum Report were never totally abandoned, at least in the minds of subsequent administrative leaders and committees who administered and reviewed the University’s housing policies. This became clear in 1976 when Charles D. O’Connell, University Dean of Students, ferociously defended the College’s housing system against a proposal to convert part of Burton-Judson Courts into office space for the Law School. O’Connell wrote to Norval R. Morris, Dean of the Law School, that:

164. The University also responded to complaints about Woodward and Pierce by un-doubling 123 rooms in the fall of 1969 and an additional number in 1970. See “Minutes of the Committee on Campus Planning,” May 13, 1969, *Levi Administration*, Box 72, folder 9.



Izaak and Pera Wirszup, Woodward Court, 1980

I would be wrong, I think, to oppose these projects one by one on the grounds of what each particular step would involve in the way of losses to the House system, although obviously the physical losses themselves would be significant. Instead, I have to make it clear that I oppose not only the individual steps but the entire idea. And I shall be glad to elaborate on my reasons. Let me say for now only that the University (and the Law School) continue to face a major problem in attracting students. A major part of this problem is the perception that prospective students have about the neighborhood and about the amenities that the University offers to its students outside the classroom. If we are to overcome this problem a strong, attractive House System is essential. The University indeed must improve its current housing facilities, especially those for single graduate students, and eventually replace some of the more dilapidated structures. Yet the Law School's proposal goes directly counter to this need. It proposes to take away facilities from what may well be the best and most successful set of Houses in our system. I think this is very short-sighted. The success of the House System in recent years has resulted largely from the faculty and staff we have in the Houses—the Masters and Resident Heads. We have succeeded in spite of and not because of our facilities. I hope that we learned a lesson after the conversion of Kelly, Green, and Foster Halls; Gates-Blake; and the almost but not quite successful effort to turn Snell-Hitchcock into classrooms and offices when the state of that unit became so deplorable that it had to be renovated. A healthy vitality goes out of campus life when we move student residences off the central Quadrangles to the edges of the community, even though that has some-

times worked better than we dreamed it would. The trend would have been accelerated, if we had lost Snell-Hitchcock. Campus life and our ability to attract students will be dealt a severe blow if we permit what is a central and perhaps our most attractive residence hall, Burton-Judson, to be eroded and eventually reduced substantially in size. I sympathize with the problems of the Law School. I think that it must solve them in some other way.¹⁶⁵

In November 1983, a faculty committee chaired by Lloyd Rudolph reviewed the range of University housing policies and recommended greater campus consolidation and a greater proportion of students living in quadrangle residence halls: “[i]n our view, the long-term interests of the University and the neighborhood are best served if we adopt the principle of campus consolidation” and “we believe that it is advisable to accommodate undergraduates who choose to live in University housing in residence halls located in the campus area and to increase the proportion living in the Quadrangles.” The committee also argued that “[o]ur deliberations have led us to favor the principle of consolidating student campus residence on or near the main campus. When *ceteris paribus* choices are made between investments on- or off-campus, we recommend on-campus decisions” and further urged that the impending capital campaign to celebrate the University’s centenary in

165. O’Connell to Morris, March 22, 1976, *Wilson Administration*, Box 23, folder 10. President John Wilson added his two cents, writing to Morris, “[A]t a time when the University is attempting to build up its undergraduate and graduate student population, I find the notion of converting one of the primary student facilities into office space counter-productive in the extreme.” Wilson to Morris, March 31, 1976, *ibid*.

1992 “include a proposal to fund the creation of a Quadrangles residence hall.”¹⁶⁶

In 1997, the University commissioned yet another report, this one prepared by a committee of faculty and senior staff chaired by then-Vice President Arthur M. Sussman. This committee recommended that the University repudiate the neighborhood strategy and, explicitly acknowledging its debt to the Blum Report, urged that the University add one thousand new beds by constructing residence halls on campus. Since the committee assumed that Woodward Court would still remain in service, it also explicitly argued that the University should make an effort to take the residential level of the College to 72 percent of all matriculating students.¹⁶⁷

The Sussman inquiry was followed four years later by a further investigation of student housing by another faculty committee, this one chaired by Richard Taub. The Taub Committee also endorsed Sussman’s recommendation that new residence halls be built on or near campus: “The current wide dispersal is perceived to undermine efforts to strengthen the university community as a community and to militate against participation in the growing and rich array of centralized non-academic student programming symbolized by developments in the Reynolds Club and the proposed conversion of Bartlett into a student center.”¹⁶⁸

166. Lloyd Rudolph et al., “Report of the Faculty Committee on Student Housing,” November 1983, pp. 20–21, 24, *Archive of the College*.

167. “[T]his committee has reached conclusions concerning undergraduate housing and life that are remarkably similar to those of Professor Blum and his colleagues,” Arthur M. Sussman et al., “Report on Undergraduate Student Housing,” April 1997, pp. 2–3, 37, *ibid*.

168. Richard Taub et al., “Report of the Committee on the Future of the University House System,” June 27, 1997, pp. 5–6, *Archive of the College*. Herman

Now, eleven years later, having constructed the Palevsky Residential Commons around Regenstein Library and the new residence hall on 61st Street adjoining Burton-Judson, but also having demolished Woodward Court, having sold Shoreland Hall, and having converted Max Mason Hall to graduate housing, we again find ourselves facing a critical juncture in relation to the housing system. We now have two magnificent new residential complexes at either end of the central north-south axis of our campus, and both Palevsky and the 61st Street complex offer dramatically improved quality and appearance. The College is extremely grateful that the Trustees decided to invest in these beautiful, high quality facilities. Because of the dramatic expansion of the College since the late 1990s, however, we will have the capacity to house only 56 percent of our students even after the opening next year of the new residence hall on 61st Street. This puts us in a serious competitive disadvantage with our top peer competitors, most of whom house between 85 and 95 percent of their undergraduate students in fully residential campuses.

Nor has the University yet resolved the fundamental dilemma that Barry D. Karl in 2001 shrewdly (and soberly) characterized in an essay on John D. Rockefeller. Karl commented on the “basic defects” of the University to develop a vibrant community of alumni supporters of the early University, in large part because of the University’s historic failure to develop strong residential life communities for undergraduates on our campus:

Sinaiko, who was a member of this committee, argued explicitly, “[g]iven our present housing stock—scattered all over the neighborhood and largely acquired piecemeal and for reasons extraneous to our College housing needs—why not develop a long term plan/policy to gradually get rid of those outlying properties and move the bulk of our undergrads back either onto campus or much closer to it.”



Isaac and Mary Ann Abella, 1988

Rockefeller did not want a University dependent on him and his name for fear that it would not attract that local support he felt necessary. From the perspective of his business practices, that meant that Harper and conceivably his successors would continue to come to the Rockefellers for support. When Rockefeller finally cut the University's endowment out of his support and that of all of his family thereafter, it was the failure of the University to create a Chicago community that would follow that of other universities. Students would come to the institution, earn its degrees, serve on future development committees and in time become donors. What both he and Harper failed to foresee, apparently, was that the University would be a streetcar college for many years, its small number of dormitories home to a minority of its student body. Even today, built into the University of Chicago's basic defects is the failure of the University to develop that pattern, something each president has struggled with but with what could at best be considered very limited success. It may be worth noting that the career of the University's most recent administration was brought under attack over the battle such effort of community creation generated in its faculty and its alumni as well.¹⁶⁹

The "streetcar" nature of the College also bolstered the distorted image of the University as an on-campus community having primarily a graduate student clientele. This myth—which has had (and unfortunately continues to have) a remarkable resilience in the face of dubious evidence and conflicting facts—was given constant new life by having

169. Barry D. Karl, "The Rockefeller Method," unpublished essay, 2001.

the undergraduate population of the University disappear each evening and on weekends from the campus community.¹⁷⁰ Another way to put this observation is to imagine how the historical self-conception of the University would have evolved if most graduate students had been as disbursed across the metropolitan area as were the undergraduates.

At the end of this complex and tangled story, now over a hundred years into the University's history, where do we stand, and, more importantly, to invoke a famous line from Lenin in 1902, what is to be done?

The complex debates that have informed the residential issue on our campus have often circled around the challenges first posed by William E. Dodd in the late 1920s. Dodd feared that a "Harkness across the Midway" would create a College filled with affluent slackers who would undermine the research mission of the University.¹⁷¹ Given Dodd's strong Jeffersonian roots and his deep hatred for the social prestige that

170. Before World War II, the University had a relatively large undergraduate College and a smaller graduate student population. In Autumn Quarter 1929, for example, the University enrolled 2,970 undergraduates as opposed to 1,513 graduate students in the arts and sciences. Owing to the collapse of the College's enrollments after World War II, the image of a "substantially larger" graduate population gained currency in the 1960s and 1970s. Nowadays this descriptor is quite flawed if one compares the population of College students (4,894) to that of the arts and sciences doctoral graduate students in their first four years of residence (1,595), both data points coming from Autumn Quarter 2007. Moreover, if one compares the number of College students needing classroom instruction with that of the arts and sciences graduate student population (including terminal MA programs) also involved in for-credit courses, the ratio is even more striking: Approximately 80 percent of all the students in the arts and sciences on the quadrangles at any given time who need to be taught in classroom based courses are College students.

171. See Dodd to Merriam, July 27, 1928, *Dodd Papers*; and Karl, *Charles Merriam and the Study of Politics*, p. 160.

attached to any kind of aristocracy, his anxieties were as much personal as professional.¹⁷² Dodd believed strongly that an investment in College residential halls was antithetical to the best interests of the wider University, even though, ironically, the great majority of our College students did not come from privileged social backgrounds.¹⁷³ After 1945, such formal or ideological opposition to the construction of new residence halls as a part of a broader dissent against investments in the work of the College was less evident. But faced with competing priorities, the University was never able to assemble the resources to implement an aggressive on-campus residential strategy for the College that was called for by so many different faculty colleagues and committees.

The subsequent history of the University's undergraduate student body proved that William Dodd's concerns were both misplaced and wrongheaded. The history of the College after 1930 was in fact defined by our success in recruiting smart, disciplined, and academically serious undergraduate students who bring great credit to the University, and the profound concerns voiced by men like William Bradbury in the early 1950s reflected their belief that serious academic students needed a strong residential system to be able to flourish. Reacting to fears that a stronger residential system would encourage too much "college spirit"

172. "Dodd worked from a powerful intellectual model that was rooted in the class assumptions of his impoverished southern youth and had flourished during his turbulent career as a historian and a political activist. His intense class consciousness guided his diplomatic behavior, for the democratic pronouncements of this respected intellectual masked a profound bitterness towards those elite groups whose interests conflicted with the rights of the masses." Bailey, *William Edward Dodd*, p. 142.

173. This made the subsequent decision of the University to name one of the Houses in Burton-Judson Courts in honor of William Dodd delightfully ironic.

on the part of our students and that it “would sap our high devotion to the works of the mind,” Dean of the College Alan Simpson responded in 1960, “I can only say that this fear argues a curious lack of confidence in the Chicago traditions and a melancholy ignorance of the better possibilities of community living. The imagination of some of the critics, when they contemplate a residential college, seems to rise no higher than the halls of old Podunk.”¹⁷⁴ The Rudolph Committee reaffirmed this argument in the 1980s, when they insisted that “[o]ur concept of residence goes beyond the utilitarian meaning of housing to address the quality of campus life. The well-being that a satisfactory quality of life engenders is an essential component of effective higher education and of the University’s standing and competitive edge.”¹⁷⁵ In a sense, William Dodd got things backward: rather than dorms attracting lazy students and making them more lazy, the College attracted smart students who would have profited enormously from the social and cultural support of a coherent and comprehensive residential system.

From a pragmatic perspective, William Dodd’s challenge might also be answered with a competitive, market-oriented response, to the effect that nowadays parents and students expect high quality residential resources, and that any university that fails to provide these resources will not be fully competitive in the new century. But a better and wiser response would return us to Frederic Woodward’s notion that to be fully successful in its mission as an educational community the University needs to encourage strong patterns of friendship, sociability, and intellectual collaboration among our College students and to do so in the

174. Alan Simpson, “A Comment on the Residential Policy by the Dean of the College,” September 16, 1960, p. 2, *Archive of the College*.

175. “Report of the Faculty Committee on Student Housing,” 1984, p. 2, *ibid*.

context of residential communities. Such a response recalls the sentiment often mentioned by faculty in the 1950s and 1960s that a College with a highly demanding curriculum needs to create supportive social structures outside the classroom so as to enable students to profit from the rigorous educational programs of the institution and to encounter and come to know fellow students of many different perspectives, backgrounds, and values. It also confirms the arguments of our own colleague Bertram J. Cohler who, in an important study of the psychological and emotional advantages of an effective university residential system, argued in 1993 that “[i]t is time to reconsider the traditional tension between classroom and residence and to more effectively integrate the college residence within the milieu of the college as a whole. This more effective integration promises increased value of the undergraduate education and increased effectiveness of the college in realizing its mission of fostering personal and intellectual development across the college years. If the most significant learning takes place outside the classroom, as the study of higher education has suggested, then it is time to take advantage of the milieu as a whole in order to foster student development.”¹⁷⁶

I believe that Ernest Burton and Frederic Woodward got the issue right eighty years ago, that is, that a more strongly residential campus would be a significant asset for the University because it would encourage stronger and more supportive cultural and intellectual communities among our students; because it would reinforce the excellent educational work of the faculty, but do so in more informal settings outside of the classroom; and because, in the long run, it would encourage still greater

176. Bertram J. Cohler and Susan E. Taber, “Residential College as Milieu: Person and Environment in the Transition to Young Adulthood,” in J. Sanders and J. Goldstein, eds., *Residential Treatment for Children and Adolescents* (New York, 1993).

satisfaction among our alumni based on their positive experiences when they were at the University. This means that it would be a serious mistake to continue the piecemeal decision-making style of the past. Instead, we need a coherent vision for the College’s housing system, one that realizes that high quality collegiate housing, located on our campus, can be an enormous asset in supporting the educational goals of the faculty, in developing strong and vibrant micro-communities among our students, and in engendering long-term positive relationships with and among our students and our alumni.

Such a policy has several consequences. First, we need to construct two or three additional College residence halls on our campus with a total capacity of approximately one thousand new beds. These halls should be of high quality construction, worthy of joining the other classic buildings that enhance the beauty of our campus. We should not return to our former practice of buying decrepit old buildings. The system of disbursed housing that used old buildings was developed helter-skelter, showing no logic other than the fact that it bore some relationship to the routes of through streets that accommodated the large, ugly buses that plagued our neighborhood.

This also means that we should not try to turn International House into another ersatz College residence hall. The latter facility was not designed for the purposes of housing undergraduates, and it would be completely inappropriate for the College’s residential system. Since it opened in 1932, I-House has had a distinguished and honorable history, and it should continue to function for the primary purposes for which it was originally designed, namely, as a hall for single graduate students, international students, and visitors to the campus.

We should set as our immediate goal that which the Sussman Committee recommended eleven years ago and that the recent Kieran Timberlake

survey has enthusiastically reaffirmed, namely that *we construct new, on-campus housing to permit the College to house not less than 70 percent of all our College students*. I posit this number because I believe that we should not increase the absolute number of students forced to live off campus beyond the number of such students living in the neighborhood *before* we began the process of expanding the College in 1996. In that year, approximately 1,400 students lived in the neighborhood. Given our current enrollment objective of a College of 5,000 students, if we could house 70 percent of our students in our residential system, that would still leave 1,500 College students living in the neighborhood.

Second, previous faculty reports on the housing system have agreed that it would be desirable to retain more of our third- and fourth-year students in the University House System. We can only accomplish this increase by building halls that meet the needs of our juniors and seniors for access to private rooms and kitchen facilities.

Third, both of these objectives—a housing system that is physically contiguous with and culturally supportive of a vibrant campus community, and a larger percentage of our upper-class students housed within it—can be met only by substantial capital investments in new College residence halls. Not everything can be built in a day, but we do need a realistic plan and the commitment to make this a very high priority for the University.

I believe that the long-term future of our College—filled as it is with bright, ambitious undergraduates who are manifesting both rising retention rates and increasingly positive attitudes about the University—makes it all the more essential that we dedicate ourselves now to the task of ensuring that our residential system remains truly capacious, culturally effective, and attractive to all of our students. We need to give many more of our students the opportunity to live in and develop strong

residential life communities. The future of the residential system involves some of the most significant decisions that the University will make about the future of the College in the years ahead. It presents our generation of faculty with an historic opportunity to strengthen the College and to contribute to the long-term welfare of the University. It also affords our College alumni an extraordinary opportunity to dedicate their philanthropic support toward a policy domain that will have a crucial long-term impact in enhancing the work of the College. We may have had no Harknesses in our past, but I do hope that our College alumni will embrace with enthusiasm a strategy to augment and to promote our residential life programs in the future.

The distinguished work of our colleagues in the past, together with our own good sense in the present, suggest what should be done. Now is the time to summon the resolve to do it and do it well.

Let me conclude by thanking you for your dedication to the education of our College students. I wish you a happy, safe, and productive academic year.

P H O T O C R E D I T S

Frontispiece, pages 53, 61, 94–95:
Special Collections Research Center at the University of Chicago Library

Page 103: Chicago Maroon File Photo

Page 108: Personal Collection of Isaac Abella

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