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“A HELL OF A JOB  
GETTING IT  
SQUARED AROUND”

THREE PRESIDENTS IN TIMES  
OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE:  
ERNEST D. BURTON,  
LAWRENCE A. KIMPTON, AND  
EDWARD H. LEVI

JOHN W. BOYER

XXII

OCCASIONAL PAPERS  
ON HIGHER  
EDUCATION XXII

THE COLLEGE  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO



*Joseph Regenstein Library, 1970*

“ A H E L L O F A J O B G E T T I N G  
I T S Q U A R E D A R O U N D ”

*Three Presidents in Times of Fundamental Change:  
Ernest D. Burton, Lawrence A. Kimpton,  
and Edward H. Levi*

I N T R O D U C T I O N



Our academic year is well launched and by all accounts our students are doing very well. There are several ways to express the quality of the student body—including their achievements in high school and the work they did to win admission in a very competitive environment, and of course their accomplishments after they graduate. We have heard about our excellent admissions numbers from Jim Nondorf today, and we will have to wait to see the post-graduation results for our current students, yet I do not doubt that they will make us proud. But the most important and the most gratifying expression of the quality of our students is the work that they do with us every day in our classrooms and our laboratories. Of that there can be no doubt. I have become used to being stopped by colleagues—at the beginning of the academic year especially—to be told about the intellectual energy, ambition, and creativity of our students, and it never ceases to be gratifying.

Among the most important reasons why these extraordinary students come to the College is the faculty. They come to learn from you and they

*This essay was originally presented as the Annual Report to the Faculty of the College on October 30, 2012. John W. Boyer is the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in History and the College, and Dean of the College.*

look to you as models of devotion to rigorous inquiry. We are fortunate to be the stewards of an academic community where our students share the aspirations of the faculty and look to us for inspiration and guidance. Our students are why our work matters to the world. It is fitting, therefore, to remind ourselves that as a faculty we will continue to thrive insofar as our students thrive, and it is our joint well-being as a shared academic community that has motivated the essential investments in our students that we have engaged in for the past decade and more.

Last year we lost two colleagues — Bert Cohler and Herman Sinaiko — who embodied this ideal of a shared academic enterprise. Herman and Bert were inspiring teachers who introduced generations of students to the pleasures and the demands of learning in our University. Throughout their careers they also cared deeply about the broader communal structures that sustained our academic work. This year, in their honor, we will rename the two beautiful common rooms in Burton-Judson, one for Herman and one for Bert, and inaugurate in those settings a series of talks for students by Quantrell award winning teachers. Both of our late colleagues were Quantrell winners, and both would have been delighted to engage with our students in his way.

Herman as dean of students in the College, Bert as resident head at Burton-Judson, and both of them in many other ways, were acutely aware of the fact that although our community is primarily academic we must always be mindful of the importance of our physical and social infrastructure to our academic mission. The disasters in Pierce Tower last year brought that fact home to us. I am therefore particularly pleased to report that we are proceeding quickly toward much needed new reinvestments in our residential system in the College. When we build new residence halls, we are not merely constructing bedrooms. 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 context of vibrant residential 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.

These investments will take place in the context of a larger, University-wide fundraising effort to renew and strengthen the University of Chicago. As our contribution to this new campaign, College has embarked on a plan to raise \$500 million over the next six years. The College's campaign will be guided by a four part logic. We will raise money for our academic enterprise, for the financial aid that is essential to our students, for our efforts to help students make intelligent transitions to life after graduation, and for our many engagements with communities beyond campus — in Chicago, the nation and the world. Together the initiatives encompassed in these four categories are designed to secure for the College the future it deserves as one of the most rigorous undergraduate institutions in the nation, and one moreover which welcomes the very best students and makes success possible for them at each stage of their careers.

Our fundraising for academic programs will center on an effort to secure a large gift to endow the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts and thereby support the teaching of our students in the Core curriculum directly through endowment, and indirectly through operating funds freed up by the endowment. Essentially, we wish to secure substantial new resources to provide strong and enduring support for our teaching programs in general-education in the College, programs that are signature elements of a liberal arts education at Chicago. At the same time we will also seek to add additional College Professorships to the faculty.

These are endowed positions for senior colleagues who exemplify the ideal of teacher-scholar first articulated by William Rainey Harper and regularly invoked by all of our presidents, because it embodies the spirit of the University of Chicago as a place where the faculty regards teaching at all levels as vital to the life of learning and the fruitfulness of research. Finally, we will ask our alumni and friends to help us expand the funds for research that are available to our students. Research opportunities bring our College students in direct contact with our distinguished faculty in a host of productive ways, giving our students an immediate and palpable sense of how challenging, exciting, and risky it is to try to generate new knowledge, and to do so in the context of the proud standards of a great research university.

We will also be seeking new funds in support of financial aid for our students—including new gifts to the Odyssey Scholarships that will allow us to reduce or eliminate loan obligations to more families with low and moderate incomes. Moreover, we will seek funds to support merit aid for some of our most talented students—students with many choices about where to attend college. Finally, we also want to add funds that will allow us to support more international students in the College. Adequate financial aid is an ever-moving target in an educational marketplace where the full cost of attendance is \$61,390—*this* year. The sacrifices made by every family to make a Chicago education possible for our students are extraordinary. We must not lose sight of that fact.

As much as we are concerned about access to a Chicago education, we are also concerned that our students have as many opportunities as possible to make thoughtful and effective plans for their futures. We have begun to build a suite of programs through the Office of Career Advancement (formerly CAPS) that helps our students connect with alumni and professional networks in multiple fields, and also to take

advantage of the resources available in our professional schools. These programs — in the arts and business, science and technology, education and law, journalism and health professions, and public and social services — are valuable investments in the success of our students. Expanding the College's Metcalf Internship program is also a crucial feature of this area of activity. All of these initiatives are important tools for recruiting the best students to the College and giving practical reality to our belief that a rigorous liberal education leads to distinguished professional success in many endeavors. Our alumni have always found meaning and success in professional lives of remarkable diversity. Our contemporary career programs acknowledge that fact for the sake of this generation of students. Alumni are eager to give generously to support these initiatives.

Our faculty, our students, and our alumni are fully engaged in the world beyond campus, and the fourth pillar of our campaign takes its inspiration from that fact. We will seek to secure funding to insure the growth and the permanence of our Civilization courses, our Center in Paris, and our many other projects abroad. Our Civilization courses in Jerusalem and Vienna were endowed by generous gifts from College alumni in the past year, and we look forward with pleasure to the spring quarter of 2013 when the 17th Civilization course abroad will be inaugurated in Istanbul. This year will also see new investments in our Chicago Studies initiatives, and we will seek support from alumni throughout the coming campaign for expanded academic, cultural, and social engagement with the many communities of the city of Chicago.

Again, the larger logic of our campaign is that the University's future depends upon investment in the intellectual and cultural success of our students — their academic achievements, the infrastructure that makes those achievements possible, and the use to which they put their educations in the short term and the over the long arc of a lifetime. The

resources we seek in pursuit of these goals we seek primarily from our alumni and our parents, and we do this with the conviction that the alumni and parent communities have a profound stake in our success—a fact that will continue to be true as our current students become alumni and eventually donors as well. Thus our community forms a virtuous circle of shared values and cross-generational support.

The University's strength resides in its remarkable ability to sustain itself across the generations. Our research and teaching today depend upon the intellectual and material inheritance of the past, an inheritance that we must renew for our successors. Hence our development goals involve a careful balance of support for new initiatives that will continue to strengthen the College and for longstanding signature programs, such as the Core curriculum, which over many decades have come to define the special national identity of our College. In each past generation the stewards of the University sought to preserve and protect the honored work of teaching that was ready to hand, but also to nurture the institution for us—their successors. This interplay of past, present, and future makes for complicated decisions in every generation. An underlying devotion to the intellectual and cultural welfare of our students has been a steady guide in our past and can be so in our future. But such a guiding principle does not make the governance of the University as complex institution any easier. I would like to devote the rest of my remarks today to this theme, describing how three men who served as president of this University dealt with dramatic and immediate challenges in the service of a University permanently dedicated to teaching, to research, and to the well-being of its students. ■



PART I  
THE PRESIDENTS

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**T**his essay describes significant facets of the work of three men who served as president of the University of Chicago. All three were intimately connected with the regimes of their predecessors (Ernest Burton had served as director of the University Library under Harry Pratt Judson; Lawrence Kimpton had served as a dean of students and vice president for development under Robert Hutchins; Edward Levi had served as provost under George Beadle), but each had to take decisions that were highly controversial at the time, in light of the policy worlds imagined by their predecessors. For example, Burton sought to protect and even enhance undergraduate education in the face of his predecessor's disdain for the Colleges, while Kimpton urgently tried to save the University by saving the neighborhood in an era of radical demographic change, acting against Robert Hutchins's inactivity toward the wider urban environment. Similarly, Edward Levi was forced to retrench and consolidate University finances after 1969 in the wake of the expansionist, Golden 1960s over which George Beadle had nominally presided.

All three men also ended up facing serious governance challenges vis-à-vis the faculty: Ernest Burton and his controversial "Dream of the College" plan for the future of undergraduate life at the University; Lawrence Kimpton's tumultuous dismantling of the Hutchins College between 1953 and 1958; and Edward Levi's handling of the great sit-in

of January 1969 among a bitterly divided community of faculty and students.

All were gifted rhetoricians, and all deployed spirited public discourse to redefine and reimagine the problems and opportunities that they faced. All began their presidencies with great hopes and dreams, but were forced to settle for considerably less in terms of actual achievements, because of the thorny external constraints that they came up against. Each was trained in a different field of scholarship, but each was broadly educated in the humanities — Burton in Biblical Studies (Rochester, 1882, plus Leipzig and Berlin), Kimpton in Philosophy (PhD, Cornell, 1935), and Levi in the Law (JD, Chicago, 1935). Of the three, only Levi has fared well in the received wisdom about the historical leadership of the University. Indeed, one must be impressed by the reverence in which Edward Levi is still held as a great man, an outstanding president, and an excellent scholar by University of Chicago faculty down to the present day. Lawrence Kimpton, in contrast, is a virtually forgotten leader, although one might well argue that Kimpton did more to save the University than Levi. Ernest Burton too has been totally eclipsed, in his case by the charismatic public relations image generated by Robert M. Hutchins that enveloped the University's culture between 1929 and 1951, in spite of the fact Burton's plans for the future of undergraduate College were even more radical than those of Hutchins. Given that Ernest Burton had the trust of the faculty in a way that Hutchins never did, what would have happened to the University of Chicago had Burton not died unexpectedly in 1925 and had lived to see his great plans for the University implemented?

Presidents have enormous responsibilities that they must bear in the face a remarkable dilemma: they are charged with articulating and protecting the University's unique mission, its special cultural identity, and

its central governing norms. Yet, to do this in an environment of growing national and international competition and in context of budgetary stringency — the condition in which the University of Chicago found itself throughout most of the 20th century — they must always be alert to possibilities of change, competition, and major structural revision. But to the extent that they opt to function as agents of fundamental institutional change, presidents can easily bump up against traditionalist conceptions of the University’s culture, norms, and mission that many senior faculty believe the presidents are charged to protect above all else.

All of our University presidents have faced this conundrum. Some dealt with it by trying to maintain the status quo and not introduce radical reforms. Others were willing to tamper with received norms and institutional practices with relish, boldness, and even zeal. In times of severe budgetary crises (of which the University endured more than its fair share over the course of the 20th century), this dilemma became particularly acute, because financial crises inevitably narrowed the policy options that leaders had available to them and forced hard and decisive choices. Equally important, they inserted a new sense of temporal acceleration in the pace of governance and decision making, forcing the presidents to act now, even if prudence might dictate that caution and *Schlamperei* would be more congenial.

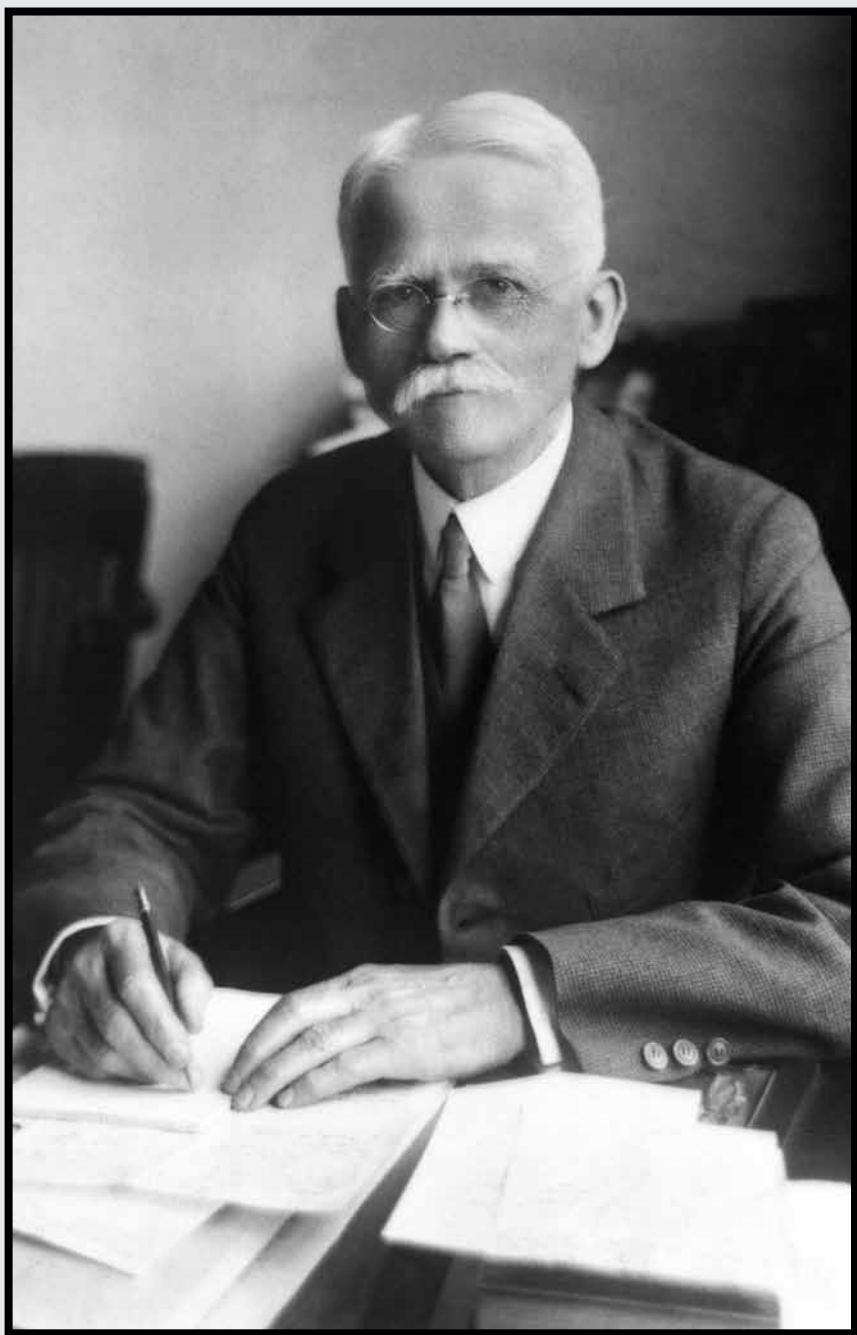
Each of the three presidents whom I discuss in this report lived in times of acute challenges and even crises that they neither anticipated nor welcomed. The decisions that each man took were structurally cumulative in that they set the stage for further crucial changes down the line. One leader’s crisis response inevitably set the conditions of possibility for his successors’ options and shaped the time frame within which those options had to be evaluated, adjudicated, and implemented. ■



Attendees at the University of Chicago president Edward H. Levi's inauguration dinner in Chicago's Hilton Hotel, from left: former National Security Advisor and head of the Ford Foundation McGeorge Bundy; Edward H. Levi; former University president and chancellor Robert M. Hutchins (1929–1951), and former University president George W. Beadle (1961–1968). November 14, 1968.

*Photographer: David Travis. University of Chicago Photographic Archive, [Series VII: Chicago Maroon, apf7-03917], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.*





*Ernest DeWitt Burton, undated*

PART II  
ERNEST DEWITT BURTON

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LEADERSHIP AFTER HARPER

**E**rnest DeWitt Burton was appointed acting president of the University in January 1923. Burton sought to revive the enthusiasm of the faculty for William Rainey Harper's ambitious vision of the University, after the budgetary stringencies of the presidency of Harry Pratt Judson, but Burton's ideal model of the University was adjusted to the realities of a much larger and more complex institutional setting with a stronger faculty sense of self-governance after the First World War. Burton also struck out in new directions in his approach to undergraduate education and in the powerful energy that he brought to fundraising. Well into the 1950s the memory of Burton's dedication was still vivid in the minds of faculty who had known him. The distinguished political scientist Leonard White recalled to Burton's daughter Margaret in 1956, "I was a member of the faculty although still a young man when your father became President of the University. No one who was here at the time can fail to have a vivid recollection of the energy and dynamic power which he imparted to

every section of the University.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, as late as 1968 Edward Levi would observe that “on the presidents, I suspect Burton was a great one.”<sup>2</sup> Since the 1970s, however, Burton’s accomplishments and his reputation have lapsed into complete obscurity. This is particularly unfortunate in that Burton’s term may have been one of the shortest of our presidents, but his two and one-half years in office were among the most decisive of any of them.

#### BURTON’S EARLY CAREER AT THE UNIVERSITY

Ernest DeWitt Burton was a distinguished New Testament scholar and the director of the University Library who was one of William Rainey Harper’s first appointees in 1892. Long a forgotten figure in the history of the University, Burton was a first-rate leader who had a fundamental and lasting impact on Chicago’s welfare. The son of a Baptist preacher, Burton was born in Granville, Ohio, in 1856, the same year as Harper and just over 50 miles from Harper’s birthplace.<sup>3</sup> Burton undertook his

1. White to Margaret Burton, February 17, 1956, *Ernest DeWitt Burton Papers*, Box 4, folder 7, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library. White’s letter came on the occasion of his nomination to the Ernest DeWitt Burton Distinguished Service Professorship. Unless otherwise indicated, all archival collections cited in this essay are in the Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. I am extremely grateful to Daniel J. Koehler for his very helpful research assistance with this essay, and to Martha Merritt, Michael Jones, and Dennis Hutchinson for valuable comments and suggestions.

2. Levi to John Moscow, March 1, 1968, *Beadle Administration*, Box 199, folder 3.

3. On Burton’s early career, see Thomas W. Goodspeed, *Ernest DeWitt Burton. A Biographical Sketch* (Chicago, 1926), pp. 15–29.



undergraduate studies at the local Baptist college in Granville—Denison University—and then taught ancient Greek for several years at Kalamazoo College and the Norwood School in Ohio. In 1879, he moved to the Theological Seminary in Rochester for his graduate work. He taught New Testament Greek first at Rochester and then at the Newton Theological Institution, a Baptist seminary near Boston, between 1883 and 1892. In 1887, Burton was awarded a sabbatical year that he spent in Europe, visiting the University of Leipzig for advanced training in biblical research as part of the then requisite German sojourn for young Americans seeking careers in modern *Wissenschaft*.<sup>4</sup>

Burton was ordained as a Baptist minister in June 1883. So committed was he to a life of evangelical zeal, Burton considered serving as a Baptist missionary abroad, even though he soon realized that he was not fit for such a physically strenuous life. Still, Burton's concern for evangelical missionary work remained a deeply entrenched leitmotif of his professional career and led him to support a scheme proposed by William McKibben, an ex-Baptist missionary then living in Chicago, in 1904 to create a branch campus of the University of Chicago in China, under the supervision of the Divinity School. As a way of exploring such possibilities, Burton agreed to chair a commission in July 1908 sponsored by John D. Rockefeller to explore possible opportunities for establishing new Christian higher educational institutions in East Asia.<sup>5</sup> Burton repeated this

4. Burton returned to Germany in spring and summer of 1894, this time mainly to Berlin, to attend lectures by Adolf von Harnack and other notable German church historians and to pursue research on the history of early Christianity. See Burton to Harper, July 6, 1894, *William Rainey Harper Papers*, Box 2, folder 4.

5. See David L. Lindberg, "The Oriental Commission's Recommendations for Mission Strategy in Higher Education." Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1972, pp. 41–61. Rockefeller's support for this trip was brokered by Frederick T. Gates, who decided that Burton should chair the initiative.

experience 10 years later, leading another commission to China in August 1921. Burton also chaired the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society for many years, and he was actively involved in supporting domestic and foreign missionary activity throughout his tenure at Chicago.

Harper first encountered Burton in 1882 when he invited him to participate in the Morgan Park Seminary summer Hebrew program, but their personal and professional relationship became fuller and deeper after 1886, when Harper was teaching at Yale and Burton at Newton. Harper invited Burton to write a textbook in ancient Greek for his summer school programs, a task that Burton accepted but then was unable to complete because of ill health. Various conversations ensued between the two men on new research trends in New Testament studies, Burton's primary scholarly field, but also one of enormous interest to Harper. So impressed was Harper by Burton's scholarly acumen and personal charisma that he sought to hire him in December 1891 to become the founding head of the new Department of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at his new University. Burton was initially skeptical of Harper's offer, but eventually acceded once Harper had given Burton pledges of generous financial and policy support. When his students at Newton urged him to decline Harper's offer and stay in Boston, Burton responded by articulating a kind of personal providential destiny that required him to help to spread the Gospel in the great inland American empire: "If I read the signs of the times aright, the battle of Christianity in this country for the next quarter century is to be waged, somewhat more fiercely in the Mississippi Valley than on the New England coast. And in the Mississippi Valley, perhaps no place will be so nearly the very heart and center of the conflict as the city of Chicago. A Theological Seminary connected with a University in that city holds a position of peculiar importance, and he who is to teach the New Testament in such a School

occupies a place of most solemn responsibility. A sober minded man could hardly choose for himself such a responsibility. Only when he believes that there is a call of Divine Providence could he venture to accept it.”<sup>6</sup>

Burton proved to be one of Harper’s most successful senior appointments, both in scholarly reputation and in capacity for effective institutional leadership. In 1897, Burton was appointed as the editor of the newly founded *American Journal of Theology*. He also edited the *Biblical World*, the successor journal to Harper’s *The Old and New Testament Student*. Burton proved to be an engaging and sympathetic teacher who commanded strong loyalties among his students. A former student recalled in 1929 of his initial encounters with Burton that “often have I said that his classes, and those of Dr. Henderson with whom I majored, were like religious services — so deep, so vibrant the sense of spirit that pervaded them. I found there what I never thought to find — a religion which *mind* could accept while the *heart* rejoiced. He is one of my precious memories of graduate days.”<sup>7</sup>

Burton’s talent for administrative leadership soon led him beyond the ken of the Divinity School. In June 1902, Harper asked Burton to assume the chairmanship of the Joint Commission on Library Policy to plan the design and siting of a future University library and other new campus buildings that would be part of the library group on the south end of the central quadrangles. The assemblage of buildings constructed along 59th Street, from Social Sciences to Classics, essentially reflected Burton’s scheme of August 1902. Burton also led the effort to plan the new Harper Library complex between 1908 and 1910. So successful was

6. Goodspeed, *Burton*, p. 27.

7. Earl Eubanks to Frances M. Burton, November 29, 1929, *Burton Papers*, Box 8, folder “Memorials.”

Burton's diplomatic leadership of these complex political endeavors that he was asked in 1910 to take on the additional responsibility of director of the University Libraries. Through judicious staff appointments and effective departmental planning Ernest Burton essentially became the founder of the University's modern library system.

Ernest Burton was a liberal Protestant scholar with quite progressive ideas about the authorship and historicity of the New Testament. In a series of books and essays on various components of the New Testament (he was extremely prolific, producing scholarly studies of the Gospel of Mark, the Epistle to the Galatians, and the Synoptic problem in general, as well as many more popular works), Burton combined exacting philological skills with a spirited devotion to new practices in historical criticism that generated considerable controversy among the Baptist faithful.<sup>8</sup> If anything, Burton was much bolder and more decisive in embracing new trends in biblical scholarship than his friend Harper.<sup>9</sup> His massively detailed study from 1920 of the Epistle to the Galatians was a remarkable work, and demonstrated the refined craft of a senior scholar whose erudition afforded Burton considerable professional legitimacy among fellow senior faculty members at Chicago. The book also revealed Burton's profound admiration for St. Paul, not only as remarkable missionary but also as a "commanding personality" who sought to make "religion personal rather than ecclesiastical, and morality a social relation grounded in religion."<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Burton also

8. See William Baird, *History of New Testament Research. Volume Two. From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann* (Minneapolis, 2003), pp. 306–311.

9. Robert W. Funk, "The Watershed of the American Biblical Tradition: The Chicago School, First Phase, 1892–1920," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 95 (1976): 9–14.

10. Ernest D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Galatians* (New York, 1920), pp. lxiv, lxxi.

had the social and interpersonal skills to get on well with conservative leaders in the Baptist establishment who differed with him theologically.

Ernest Burton became one of William Rainey Harper's closest personal friends on the faculty. Harper's wife, Ella Paul Harper, once wrote to Burton, "You were his spiritual brother and he leaned upon you as upon almost no one else."<sup>11</sup> It was Burton, together with Albion Small, who participated in the famous death-bed meditation scene with Harper, as Harper lay dying in the President's House in December 1905. In these conversations Harper rehearsed again and again his understanding of faith and hope for a life of grace beyond the grave. It was characteristic of Burton's optimism and generosity that in the face of Harper's doubts about the meaning of his life and work, Burton tried to reassure him about the growing goodness and progress of the world, about the slow, but progressive approach of human society ever closer to God, and about Harper's own important role in bettering that society. Here surely was a workable model of a liberal, modernist world view, so congenial to Burton's general scholarly and theological inclinations, a world of divine immanence in which "he who has come into fellowship with that spirit of goodness that is at the heart of things can never lose that fellowship, and so can never cease to be, and because that spirit of goodness is good, and because things are moving on toward the better, the fellowship beyond this life must be better even than that of this life." Yet Harper kept searching for more urgent and compelling reasons and facts that would dispel his fears of having lived an inadequate life, and more wretchedly, an overly ambitious life. Ernest Burton eventually appealed to the forgiveness of God, much like Harper as an earthly father would forgive a wayward son, and eventually Harper accepted his fate with greater confidence.

11. Ella P. Harper to Burton, January 20, 1906, *Burton Papers*, Box 4 folder "Personal Correspondence H."

The scenes, as recorded by Burton immediately after Harper's death, read like a slow-motion graduate seminar in biblical criticism.<sup>12</sup> But they also reveal the loyalty and devotion that Burton had for Harper, and they help to explain Burton's eagerness, once he had the power of the University presidency, to reaffirm the scholarly and pedagogical values that Harper had thought critical for the welfare of the University, even if Burton would also seek to expand the mission of the University in bolder social and ethical dimensions that he felt justified in the deeply changed conditions of the world after the First World War.<sup>13</sup>

Ernest Burton's convictions about the progressive sweep of history and about Christianity's responsibility to empower men and women to cultivate intellectual liberty and spiritual power and to devote themselves to the "uplifting of men and nations" made his intellectual portrait of particular relevance when Burton was forced to ponder the longer term role of the research university in American society in the 1920s, and particularly the mission of the undergraduate college at the University

12. For this document, see *Burton Papers*, Box 2, "Memoranda of Conversations with President Harper in December 1905."

13. When Harper first learned of his chronic medical condition, with his physicians giving (at best) odds of three out of 10 to survive, Burton wrote to him that "I have been thinking of the physicians' estimate of the chances in case their further examination confirms the present fear, and I am disposed to interpret it as giving very large ground of hope. For, when did you ever have three chances out of ten for success and fail to realize on all of them? With your magnificent, unparalleled achievements behind you, with your splendid opportunities still before you, with the enthusiastic loyalty, confidence, and love of the men who have had the joy of working with you and under your leadership for the last thirteen years, with the yet warmer affection of them that are still nearer to you — with those things to hearten and encourage you, and with your splendid courage and nerve and constitution, you will conquer: we shall look for nothing less than complete recovery." Burton to Harper, February 12, 1905, *William Rainey Harper Papers*, Box 7, folder 19.

of Chicago in training future civic leaders.<sup>14</sup> Burton was convinced that world Christianity now needed to secure more “practical achievement[s],” notably to “labor with zeal and with discretion for the promotion of the highest welfare of all and the harmonious relation of all nations.”<sup>15</sup> Burton’s culturally altruistic religious beliefs — nurtured both as a biblical scholar and as a theologian — had a powerful impact on Burton’s views of the future educational agendas of the University.

#### THE UNIVERSITY IN 1922

When Harry Pratt Judson officially left the presidency of the University in early 1923, he was already for many faculty an unwelcome guest, and Judson’s historical reputation inevitably suffered. The First World War, a war that Judson had welcomed and enthusiastically endorsed, had created circumstances that made his final exit more like a political demise. As Daniel Meyer has observed about the opinions of many senior faculty in 1922:

[f]or many, it was the University’s president, Harry Pratt Judson, who most acutely symbolized the frustrations of the postwar era. Approaching his fifteenth year in office, the aging president had become the embodiment of a once-promising institution that now appeared to be in danger of succumbing to administrative fatigue and complacency.”<sup>16</sup>

14. See Ernest D. Burton, “Why I Am Content to be a Christian,” *The Biblical World*, 34 (1909): 368–373.

15. Ernest D. Burton, “A New Type of Christianity,” *ibid.*, 33 (1910): 4–5.

16. Daniel L. Meyer, “The Chicago Faculty and the University Ideal, 1891–1929,” Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1994, p. 389.

In early 1922 key leaders of the board of trustees finally persuaded Judson to retire and in April they asked Ernest DeWitt Burton, a close confidant of Harper and a senior scholar widely respected among his local faculty peers, to explore possible successors to Judson. Burton conducted a confidential interview mission to New York City and New England to meet with possible candidates, but came back with less than enthusiastic reactions. The leaders of the board briefly considered Raymond B. Fosdick, a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation, and Ernest M. Hopkins, the president of Dartmouth College, but both men declined to be considered for the position, and by the end of 1922 Swift and Ryerson decided to ask Burton himself to replace Judson, offering him the job in mid-January 1923.<sup>17</sup> Initially the trustees selected Burton to be acting president, but within six months they decided that they had found a worthy permanent successor to Judson and dropped the modifier in Burton's title. As Harold Swift later remembered the scene, “he [Burton] had been in the East and Mr. Martin Ryerson (the previous President of the Board) and I (President of the Board) met him at the [railway] station on his return. We drove in the parks for approximately half an hour and talked to him about the University's situation and asked him to become acting president. In reply he pointed out that an acting

17. For the politics of the presidential search, see *ibid.*, pp. 405–419. Many letters from alumni congratulating Burton on his appointment are filed in his General Correspondence. Typical was the letter of Mary Tableton to Mrs. Burton in January 1923 to the effect that “[T]his is a signal honor, of course, and a fitting distinction in recognition of his wonderful service to Christianity. His long career of teaching, his scholarship, his writings, his unparalleled service to his denomination, his distinguished contributions to the University and his kindness to his students have made him an international figure. I'm glad from the bottom of my heart and as proud of him as can be but my congratulations go to the University.” Tableton to Mrs. Burton, January 16, 1923, *Burton Papers*, Box 8.



presidency was an interregnum and raised the query as to whether we wanted a passive administration or an active one, and I replied that we wanted the acting presidency to be an active one. He said that on that basis he was glad to accept it.”<sup>18</sup>

Ernest Burton was 66 years old when he received the summons from Ryerson and Swift, and quite naturally felt himself to be near the end of his professional career. In his private correspondence Burton was candid about the fact that, given his age, his tenure as president might be a brief one, but in the end he accepted with the same spirit of evangelical service as had defined his career since the 1880s.<sup>19</sup>

When Ernest Burton became president in early 1923, he faced a disgruntled senior faculty, many of whom felt a loss of direction on the part of the University’s leadership, and an unsteady financial situation. The economic situation of the University in early 1923 was solid, in the sense that the budget was balanced, but it was also increasingly uncompetitive and thus programmatically fragile. In 1923 the endowment was able to cover almost 45 percent of the total operating expenses of the University, a figure that nowadays is closer to 19 percent. The inflation of the war led to a reduction of the value of tuition, however, and competition from other universities displaced the University’s dominant prewar position on senior faculty salaries. By 1923, Chicago had fallen seriously behind Harvard and Columbia in the average value of full professorial salaries. Moreover, the impact of World War I had led to

18. Swift to J. W. Bailey, July 10, 1930, *Swift Papers*, Box 47, folder 10.

19. “I know of course that not even under the most favorable circumstances can my term of office be anything else than brief. But however brief I am looking forward with joy to sharing it with you and with hope that within it we may set things definitely forward toward our goal.” Burton to Trevor Arnett, May 14, 1923, *Trevor Arnett Papers*, Box 1, folder 1.

many more students enrolled in classes and rising instructional costs, as well as a national environment in which top Eastern universities were outspending Chicago for senior faculty salaries. Not only had Judson's austerity regime led to key faculty departures, but senior faculty experienced the final years of the Judson presidency as a period of intellectual stagnation. As a report by an outside consulting firm, the John Price Jones Corporation, observed in 1924, "failure to raise faculty salaries, to meet increased living costs and competition with other universities, together with the failure to fill vacancies with new men of comparable attainments, has naturally had a detrimental effect on the morale and prestige of the teaching staff."<sup>20</sup> Burton saw his mandate as one to transform the University by appealing to an expanded donor base beyond the Rockefeller charities, and to use this appeal to energize the faculty to think ambitiously about revitalizing the University. Burton's goal was to reimagine the University, based on the highest standards of scholarly quality, and to create a campus environment that encouraged work that made for "thoroughness, accuracy, increase of knowledge and development of character" as opposed to work that led to "superficiality, stagnation, and low ideals of life."

Burton's appointment as president came less than nine months after another crucial transition of power, when Harold H. Swift succeeded Martin A. Ryerson as chairman of the board of trustees in June 1922. Swift would serve until 1949. An alumnus of the College (Class of 1907), Swift was young, ambitious, well connected socially, and of a solidly pragmatic temper. His admiration for and preoccupation with the University dominated his professional and personal life. Swift had

20. "A Survey and Fundraising Plan for the University of Chicago," March 8, 1924, p. 20, *Presidents' Papers, Addenda, 1924–1981*, (85–14), folder 4.

already worked with Ernest Burton on several University related projects, and he respected him. In contrast to Swift's scarcely concealed doubts about Judson's passive management style, focusing exclusively on a balanced budget, he found Burton to be an engaging and engaged leader. Many years later Swift would reflect that Judson was "tired and old" when he finally retired, and that he had stayed too long for the University's good. Comparing Judson to Burton, Swift insisted:

Burton seems to me to have had an electric knowledge of what should be done when he took over from Judson. Dr. Judson, tired and old, was ambitious to stay on as President as long as Dr. Harper had stayed; and the Board, grateful for the firm foundation Judson had put under Harper's brilliant superstructure, permitted him to stay on for five or six years too long. Burton had been at the University since its beginning, as had Judson. He was a great scholar, had a scholar's point of view, and knew how the scholars of the University had suffered for five years [i.e., since 1918]. Therefore he was on fire to get the faculty back to research and scholarship.<sup>21</sup>

Ernest Burton realized that he had to act quickly to restore forward momentum, and the only way to do this was to raise substantial sums of new money, for new faculty appointments and enhanced salaries as well as for new research and teaching buildings.<sup>22</sup> As he put it to Martin

21. Swift to Glen A. Lloyd and George W. Beadle, April 17, 1961, *Harold H. Swift Papers*, Box 119, folder 29.

22. See, for example, Burton to Swift, December 26, 1923, *ibid.*, Box 73, folder 3.

Ryerson in 1924, Chicago needed "not slow increments of progress, but some mighty strides forward."<sup>23</sup>

**ERNEST BURTON AND  
THE COLLEGES**

Ernest Burton devoted much of his presidency to efforts to rethink the role of undergraduate education at the University of Chicago. Burton was a profoundly 19th-century man in his conviction that knowledge and culture were one, and that a central responsibility of the universities was to empower young men and women to create a higher and more progressive culture for all citizens to enjoy. Given his belief in the unity of knowledge and culture, the idea that the University would somehow disavow or curtail undergraduate education was alien to Burton. Quite in contrast, he believed that college-level students were among the most efficacious human ties between the higher learning of a university and a truly liberal and compassionate civil society. The liberal arts on the collegiate level were thus a pathway from knowledge to culture, and a critical feature of the general cultural and ethical armature of the University. As Burton insisted in June 1924:

We have renewed our conviction that to achieve its purpose the education of our youth must be vastly more than a process of impartation and acquisition of knowledge. It can hardly be said too often or too emphatically that the college must concern itself with the development of personalities of men and women who to knowledge have added something worthy to be called

23. Burton to Ryerson, April 19, 1924, *Office of the President. Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 35, folder 3.

culture, and to culture high ideals and strong character. It is true that the University is not the only factor in this development. Heredity plays a prominent part. Society outside of college walls is a powerful force. The church and synagogue have their responsibility, and most of all, the home. Yet the University must take its share, and that share is not limited to the impartation of knowledge or even to training in methods of acquiring knowledge. . . . Nor dare we take refuge in any narrow definition or conception of education to excuse ourselves from doing our utmost to meet these responsibilities. The task of making for this Republic citizens who will maintain its best traditions and meet its new responsibilities and opportunities is a vast and serious one and none of us who face the opportunity of making a valuable contribution to the achievement of that task dare shirk it.<sup>24</sup>

Burton's views of undergraduate education led him into a battle with those who wished to marginalize, if not eliminate Chicago's undergraduate programs and students. The primary advocate of this view was none other than Harry Pratt Judson, who in January 1923 in one of his final letters to Chairman of the Board of Trustees Harold Swift had asserted that "[a]s I look at it the University is at the parting of the ways. Either it is to be primarily a University in the highest sense, with distinct emphasis on its graduate work and its graduate professional work, or it is to be essentially a College with the higher work incidental." Judson left no doubts about which option he favored: "My own view is that the University idea ought to be made very prominent; that we should frankly

24. Convocation Statement, June 1924, *Swift Papers*, Box 47, folder 4.

recognize the College as of secondary importance." Judson concluded his swan song with the enjoiner that "[t]he time should come also in the not distant future when the number of college students whom the University will receive should be limited."<sup>25</sup>

Judson's ambivalence toward undergraduate education has to be set in the context of the strains produced by World War I. The crush of students who returned to the University after 1918, both undergraduate and graduate, put great pressure on instructional staff and on facilities, and led to discontent among the senior faculty and a movement to limit or even abolish the first two years of the undergraduate program. In December 1922 a report of the Committee on Research of the University Senate, the governing body of the University filled only with full professors, urged that Chicago should prioritize graduate education and research as the highest obligation of the University and impose limits on the numbers of undergraduates it would admit, since "the State Universities are able and obliged to provide for the great mass of college students."<sup>26</sup> Responding to an invitation of the curriculum committee for the arts and sciences in 1923 to comment about the future structure of undergraduate instruction, the faculty of the Department of History listed as their first choice "the elimination of the Junior College, either by a gradual process, beginning with the Freshman year and after a period, if the step seems to have justified itself, discarding the Sophomore year also, or by a direct striking of the whole Junior College."<sup>27</sup> Such rhetoric,

25. See Judson to Swift, January 30, 1923, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 56, folder 2.

26. "Report of the Senate Committee on Research," December 18, 1922, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 70, folder 19.

27. Carl F. Huth to David Robertson, January 29, 1923, *Department of History Records*, Box 1, folder 4.

which was both financially naïve and damaging to sensible planning about the future of the undergraduate Colleges, failed to recognize the simple fact that tuition profits from the undergraduate colleges were already by the 1920s a significant support for faculty salaries and faculty research.

Upon assuming office in early 1923, Ernest Burton took the opposite approach to that suggested by Judson, advocating new investments to support college teaching and residential life. Drawing upon ideas for the built campus environment of the University that he had imagined as early as 1902, in late January 1923 Burton proposed “transferring all undergraduate work to the south side of the Midway, building up here undergraduate colleges which would combine with the advantages of a Williams or a Balliol all the advantages also of connection with a great university carrying forward upon high level research and professional study.”<sup>28</sup> A year later, in February 1924, Burton argued to Harold Swift that the construction of a new College instructional building on the south campus should be given very high priority since it “appeals to me very strongly” and would “serve as a rallying point and unifying center for all Undergraduate life . . . In my judgment such a building is an indispensable means of bringing about that unity of undergraduate life

28. See Ernest DeWitt Burton, “The Relation of the Colleges and the Graduate Schools,” undated [late January 1923], *Swift Papers*, Box 144, folder 7. Burton prepared this document as a way of confronting the anti-undergraduate views of Abraham Flexner, who was an influential adviser to the Rockefeller boards in New York City. Flexner seems to have grudgingly agreed with Burton that Chicago could not abandon its undergraduate college (according to Burton, Flexner said, “you cannot do away with your colleges, but I wish to goodness that you didn’t have them”). Flexner came to admire Burton’s decisiveness, and he later observed of Burton’s leadership style as President: “The fur began to fly. Never in my experience have I encountered anyone who seized a point more rapidly or who proceeded more decisively to put his decisions into effect.” Abraham Flexner, *I Remember. The Autobiography of Abraham Flexner* (New York, 1940), p. 271.

as distinguished from the life of the graduates which is desirable and which is entirely consistent with that measure of undergraduate participation in the life of the whole University which is itself also highly desirable.”<sup>29</sup> Burton juggled his priorities repeatedly over the next two years, as he sought to fund a new medical center and to cover rising faculty salaries, but his commitment to a large-scale investment in the University’s undergraduate program was consistent, and in one proposal submitted to the board of trustees he allocated almost \$2 million, out of a total to be raised of \$10.7 million, to improving undergraduate education and new residence halls.<sup>30</sup>

Burton’s support for the Colleges was thus more focused and more coherent than William Rainey Harper’s, who had failed to give the undergraduate programs at Chicago a distinctive logic and identity within the broader identity of the University at a time when Chicago’s older Eastern rivals were successfully putting in place what Roger Geiger has characterized as a fruitful amalgamation of liberal intellectual culture conjoined with “an exuberant peer culture, incorporating a secular orientation toward worldly success and extracurricular activities” as constituent features of their institution’s fundamental logic.<sup>31</sup> Burton’s views of the role of undergraduate education within the wider University also differed from those of Robert Hutchins, in that Burton placed

29. Burton to Swift, February 9, 1924, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 60, folder 12.

30. “Needs of the University,” Sheet 3, February 9, 1924, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 60, folder 12.

31. Roger L. Geiger, “The Crisis of the Old Order,” in Geiger, ed., *The American College in the Nineteenth Century* (Nashville, 2000), p. 275.



stronger emphasis on sociability and community interaction as a defining feature of a college student's education. Burton used his annual report to the University community in 1923 to launch these themes. In a bold reconceptualization of the early history of the University, Burton asserted, "The University of Chicago was thought of by its founders as a College. Before it opened its doors, however, their ideal had, under the influence of President Harper's dominant personality, been displaced by that of a University in which graduate work should hold the place of eminence, but in which undergraduates should also have place and consideration."<sup>32</sup> Burton then argued that this arrangement was inherently unsteady and structurally conflicted, that the University's attempt to mix in large numbers of undergraduates within an institutional culture that (on paper at least) was so formally privileging of graduate education was strategically unfortunate, and that it had led to the negative outcome that "some have even proposed that we should do away with our Colleges or concentrate attention upon our graduate work to an extent that would inevitably spell deterioration for the Colleges." This last comment was a statement of fact, but also a rebuke to the position advocated by Harry Pratt Judson.

Given that Burton strongly, even more so than Harper, supported high quality undergraduate education, he found himself in a political as well as ideological dilemma. Burton rejected Judson's views of isolating or abandoning undergraduate teaching, insisting that "the very fact that the University is dominated by the idea of research, and that such research must be carried on in all of the social sciences, and surely not

32. *The President's Report Covering the Academic Year July 1, 1922, to June 30, 1923* (Chicago, 1924), pp. xv–xviii.

least in education, is a decisive reason for including college work in the scope of our activity." Yet invoking the need for the Department of Education to have access to undergraduate students itself was a rather weak reed, and Burton knew it, for he continued with a more plausible answer about the identity of the University: "the fact that I wish to emphasize is that we have reached a stage in our development when of the two great fields of the University's work, graduate and undergraduate, each must stand on its own merits, each must receive that discriminating attention which its own character demands, neither must be hindered or compromised by the other." Burton cagily disclaimed that he was not certain how to resolve the tension, but then put forward what would in fact become the essence of his proposed solution: "Whether it will be found necessary and practicable to bring about a gradual geographical separation, as a result of which, though all of the work of the University will be done in quadrangles along the Midway, certain of these quadrangles will be assigned wholly or chiefly to graduate work and others wholly to undergraduate work, need not now be said."

In the next paragraph of his report Burton then answered his own question, and in an uncompromising way: "I hope the time may not be too far distant when the University will be able to provide a Central College Building, which shall be the center of undergraduate life for both men and women." This large building (which would include classrooms, labs, rooms for undergraduate organizations, a library, a theater, and an assembly room) would "both relieve the pressure on some of our existing buildings and tend to create a College consciousness which so far from destroying would even tend to increase the consciousness of relationship to the University." Burton further imagined that a cluster of residential halls for both women and men would be built surround-

ing this new College Building, which would “greatly help in realizing our hope for a better type of undergraduate life.”

Ernest Burton thus tried to break out of the discursive conundrum privileging graduate education above all else in which his friend William Rainey Harper had trapped the University (and which Harper himself by the later 1890s had privately come to realize was too rigid to comprehend the University’s complex demographic realities) by deploying innovative campus planning to give the College a prominent institutional and pedagogical identity.<sup>33</sup> Burton’s proposed solution was brilliant in mobilizing space on behalf of institutional purpose. Given that instruction on the graduate and undergraduate levels had different agendas and purposes, Burton insisted that the two communities should inhabit physically separate spaces, but share the same faculty, with the undergraduate college divided into eight or 10 distinct residential communities, each with its own cultural identity. He urged in May 1923, “I am thinking of a time when on our quadrangles there will be a group of [residential] colleges, perhaps eight or ten or twelve, each with its own buildings, each with its 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. . . . Under such conditions I am confident that we shall develop a higher type of college life than America now possesses. I look forward with ardent hope to the

33. For the reality, as opposed to the theory, over which Harper in fact presided see Willard J. Pugh, “A ‘Curious Working of Cross Purposes’ in the Founding of the University of Chicago,” *History of Higher Education Annual*, 15 (1995): 93–126.

realization of this dream."<sup>34</sup> And Burton was not averse to publicly touting the kinds of students who would populate these colleges. In an interview in the *Chicago Tribune* just after he was appointed president, Burton announced, "[i]t is not the intention of the university to abolish the undergraduate work or to place a curb upon university social activities. Our aim is not to turn out mollicoddles filled with book learning, but to turn out good red-blooded students who will be able to profit most from the best teaching we can give them."<sup>35</sup>

The formation of extensive residential learning communities was thus a key concept for Burton. Unlike Harper who esteemed such ideas in a vague and indeterminate way, and Judson, for whom they were irrelevant, for Burton life in a college residential community was crucial to the full maturation of the cultivated and motivated personalities he sought to foster among his undergraduate students. At a time when less than 14 percent of students at Chicago lived in University residence

34. "An Address Delivered by Acting President Ernest DeWitt Burton before the Chicago Alumni Club, May 31, 1923," p. 13, *University Development Campaigns*, Box 5. Harold Swift approved of Burton's dream of the college rhetoric, and reported, "You will be interested in a paragraph or two in reference to your dream of the colleges, that I received a few weeks ago from a friend and alumna of the University. It is as follows: 'I just tried to get you on the phone but knowing that you're hard to reach decided to write how thrilled I was over reading Dr. Burton's speech. My vision doesn't compare in breadth, length or depth to his — but his idea of forming smaller groups was what I feebly tried to tell you of in a note I wrote you last year. Its reach seems so endless for I feel perhaps I could have been a bigger woman or one of more worth if I had had the intimate influence of people who were earnestly living something. Then there are so many who come to the University who never get any contact with people or things outside of their tiny vision except in the classroom.'" Swift to Burton, July 24, 1923, *Swift Papers*, Box 47, folder 3.

35. *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1923, p. 17.

halls, Burton believed that residential living was crucial to the future identity of his ideal college. Such halls would not be “mere dormitories, but places of humane educational residence. They should provide opportunity on the one hand for personal contacts, under the most favorable conditions, with older persons and fellow students, and for 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.”<sup>36</sup>

Burton’s tendency to use the phrase “the formation of habits” in discussing his goals for the undergraduate college revealed his broader emphasis on the holistic person, anchored in a community of like minded individuals: “college life is the period of the formation of habits, even more than of the acquisition of knowledge, and . . . 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.”<sup>37</sup> Burton also emphasized repeatedly the role of the University in the development of open-minded and morally responsible personalities. For Burton the “breadth of knowledge, power to think, are indispensable prerequisites to large participation in life or large contributions to life. But apart from high moral character they are not only inadequate but positively dangerous. And because this is so, no institution that undertakes to give these former

36. Ernest DeWitt Burton, *The University of Chicago in 1940* (Chicago, 1925), pp. 29–30.

37. “An Address Delivered by Acting President Ernest DeWitt Burton before the Chicago Alumni Club, May 31, 1923,” p. 13.

things can escape the obligation to concern itself with the latter also.”<sup>38</sup>

And it was also logical that Burton’s sensitivities about the University’s cultural impact on student personalities would influence his tastes in faculty recruitment. Early in his professorial tenure at Chicago he had insisted that the University’s moral goals as a Christian community for its students could only be met “by unflinching courage and courtesy on the part of the Christian men on the faculty and among the students, and by care in the election of men to positions on the faculty—a goodly proportion of men in this faculty who by their ability as scholars and teachers will command the respect of the student community, and who by their upright lives and by their frank avowal of pronouncedly Christian sentiments will throw a strong influence on the side of vital Christianity [and] will make the University in the best sense Christian.”<sup>39</sup> Over time, and especially after his election to the Presidency, Burton tempered the explicitly Christian tone of such rhetoric, but a strong residue remained in his articulations about the responsibility of the faculty to train young college students to serve as leaders in the world beyond the academy with ethical dedication.

Burton’s dedication to campus residentiality and to the cultivation of personality and character among his students reflected broader cultural trends in the history of private American universities after 1900 of which he was most certainly aware. For this was a time in American higher education when key leaders of the elite eastern universities like Abbott Lawrence Lowell and Woodrow Wilson began to fashion ambitious schemes of communitarian living for their (substantially upper and

38. Ernest DeWitt Burton, *Education in a Democratic World* (Chicago, 1927), p. 64.

39. Memorandum on the Role of Religion in the University, December 18, 1892, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 70, folder 11.

upper middle class) students that eventually, in the case of Yale and Harvard, resulted in the great Harkness gifts of the later 1920s.<sup>40</sup> These years were also filled with voices demanding that more attention be paid both to academic standards and to the “character” formation of the undergraduate students who, as future members of the American social elite, needed to be suitably socialized both by wealthier liberal arts colleges and by the new research universities.<sup>41</sup> Nor can perhaps the

40. See Mark B. Ryan, *A Collegiate Way of Living. Residential Colleges and a Yale Education* (New Haven, 2011); James Axtell, *The Making of Princeton University. From Woodrow Wilson to the Present* (Princeton, 2006), pp. 1–3, 16–17, 22; August Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York, 1991), pp. 153, 157, 164–173, 203; Benjamin J. Sacks, “Harvard’s ‘Constructed Utopia’ and the Culture of Deception: The Expansion toward the Charles River, 1902–1932,” *The New England Quarterly*, 84 (2011): 287–293.

41. A. Lawrence Lowell’s comments to Harvard students in 1909 were typical: “I believe that the future of the country is in the hands of its young men, and that the character of its young men depends largely upon their coming to college. And in the college, I believe that their character depends not merely on being instructed, but mostly on their living together in an atmosphere of good fellowship.” Henry A. Yeomans, *Abbott Lawrence Lowell 1856–1943* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), pp. 101–102, as well as David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915–1940* (Ithaca, 1986), pp. 106–108; W. Bruce Leslie, *Gentlemen and Scholars. College and Community in the “Age of the University,” 1865–1917* (University Park, 1992), pp. 240, 247–249; and Roger L. Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities 1900–1940* (New York, 1986), pp. 129–139. For a useful general survey of American and German models of collegiate education, on the eve of World War II, see W. H. Cowley, “European Influences upon American Higher Education,” *The Educational Record*, 20 (1939): 165–190. Cowley argues (p. 185) that American students resorted to enhanced extracurricular activities as the German model of “impersonalism” came to be imitated in the United States after 1890, but this is empirically questionable, given the deep involvement of American college students in athletics and other non-academic activities in their 19th-century liberal arts colleges.

influence of John Dewey be discounted in Burton's rhetoric about the need to give relevance to liberal education by focusing on the real social needs of the time. But in these rhetorical forms one also sees the creative distillation of Burton's passions as a sometime evangelical missionary and as a student of late-19th-century progressive Christianity. In contrast to understandings of student "character" as an underpinning for the social and political elitism that often obtained in the Eastern schools, Burton deployed a much more socially altruistic sense of the word, viewing the students of his University as potential missionaries for the cause of cultural edification and moral uplift throughout the broader reaches of American civil society in the aftermath of World War I. Graduates of the University carried an obligation "to make their contribution to the process of social evolution, the process, in other words, of making a better world for children to be born in and for men and women to live in by creating a better type of human society."<sup>42</sup> For Burton, the University's mission in the aftermath of the First World War had to be balanced across all sectors of instructional activity, and it had to acknowledge that the ethical and civic imperatives of undergraduate education were of equal importance with the research imperatives of graduate education. To the extent that a fundamental commitment to egalitarian merit as a public good came to define the student culture of the University over the course of the 20th century, Ernest Burton was one of its most spirited sponsors.

Burton's stance was in decided opposition to popular trends in the 1920s that postulated social prestige and financial success as the only worthwhile goods that might be obtained via a college education. Even if sweeping arguments like those of David O. Levine, to the effect that

42. Burton, *Education in a Democratic World*, p. 44.



“to the American college student of the 1920s, success was an end-all and be-all of existence, and success was dependent on conformity to narrowly defined patterns of status-seeking behavior,” fail to capture the complexity of local campus cultures like that of Chicago, where academic standards and pedagogical rigor remained fully in force after World War I, Burton’s justification for college as a site of moral renewal and cultural enrichment was a forceful response to those who viewed higher education only as a means to financial advancement.<sup>43</sup>

James H. Tufts, who served as a vice president and dean of faculties under Burton, later praised Burton’s “magnificent vision and practical resourcefulness” in inspiring faculty and students alike, insisting that Burton’s personality was a particularly strong asset: “Sincerity, modesty, clearness of thought and simplicity of statement characterized his addresses. And there was a certain fineness of spirit that shone in his face. He did not need to say much about the spiritual meanings and purposes of the education. He embodied them.”<sup>44</sup> Tufts insisted that the controversy to which Burton’s proposals about the Colleges gave rise was rather

43. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915–1940*, p. 123, as well as p. 14. For a similar argument see Daniel A. Clark, *Creating the College Man. American Mass Magazines and Middle-Class Manhood 1890–1915* (Madison, 2010), pp. 181–190. Clark tries to juxtapose older notions of genteel character, anchored in elite conceptions of gentility and social worth, with more modern functionalist, success-oriented personality ideals as the middle class “stormed” the bastions of higher education after 1910. The problem with this formulation is that it is far too mechanical and fails to acknowledge that an institution like Chicago began as a middle and lower middle class enterprise in the early 1890s, with both men and women in attendance, and never aspired to be a social finishing school, either before or after 1910. When Burton talked about character and personality, he was using them synonymously to urge a pragmatic ideal that balanced intellectual rigor with professional commitment.

44. Memoir of James H. Tufts, *James H. Tufts Papers*, Box 3, folder 18.

benign, and that Burton had used his prestige and good sense to resolve the issue once and for all:

[U]nder President Burton's administration an opinion was held and expressed by some, although the matter never came to a formal vote, that as a feature in the forward movement it would be wise to drop the college in order to concentrate upon the more peculiar task of a university. The college exists to inform and train the immature; the university exists to discover new facts, laws, and truth of every sort. Its business is with a different class; it is bad for both college and university to combine two dissimilar functions. President Burton met the proposal with a single reference to the purpose of a university. 'A university', he remarked, 'is supposed to be established to search for truth. Among the various fields that present themselves for study and exploration education itself is certainly one, and one that is fully as important as any other'.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, Tufts' gentle disclaimers notwithstanding, Burton's scheme of a new campus for undergraduate learning and life was quite controversial, and it generated considerable opposition on the part of senior faculty

45. *Ibid.*, Box 3, folder 20. Tufts also argued that the University had to retain its College for no other reason than it would destroy its reputation in the metropolitan area of Chicago if it disavowed undergraduate education, all the while expecting citizens in Chicago to support the university financially, and that the University had to come to terms with John D. Rockefeller's expectation, as expressed in his letter to the trustees announcing his final gift to the University of \$10 million in 1910, that the University had to help itself by appealing to a wide range of supporters who were professionally successful in the "world of affairs," most of whom would logically be its undergraduate alumni.

who despised undergraduates. Harold Swift later remembered about Burton's support for undergraduate education in 1923 that Burton "practically had a mutiny on his hands" and that some senior faculty "reproached and reviled him for his emphasis on the College. Mr. Burton won the battle but only after great difficulty."<sup>46</sup> And, in fact, the issue was not at all settled, and had Ernest Burton lived and pursued what Harold Swift later called his "Dream of the Colleges," he would most certainly have encountered the harsh opposition that Frederic Woodward and Harold Swift met in 1928–29 when they tried to move forward with Burton's ideas for a large residential complex on the South Campus. Robert Hutchins too would lock horns with the same senior faculty interests, and seek to solve the problem not spatially but through the curriculum by evicting the departments in 1942 from any role of teaching in the College and by creating a College-only faculty that would provide for the intellectual care and feeding of the undergraduate students. As different as their approaches were, both Burton and Hutchins found themselves up against older mantras and prejudices about the primacy of research over teaching, which Burton had sought valiantly to undermine by insisting that the fundamental mission of the University was to unite these two broad streams of activity and not pit them against each other. But this undertaking was not an easy one. Chauncey Boucher, who became dean of the Colleges in 1926, recalled in 1928 that in spite of forceful public statements by Burton and his successor Max Mason to the contrary, "the idea which has had currency for ten years to my knowledge, still persists among many faculty members, students, and alumni, and among the public at large, that the University

46. "Eighth Session," p. 54, *Office of the President. Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1. See also Meyer, "The Chicago Faculty," pp. 449–450.

of Chicago is deliberately endeavoring to kill its Colleges slowly but surely by maltreatment and become a graduate institution with only such senior college work as is necessary to supplement the graduate work."<sup>47</sup>

Ernest Burton had taken the first public step in reimagining the role of undergraduate education to be of central importance to the University's basic institutional identity, but it would require many decades before either the collective self-understandings of the senior faculty or the budgetary power structures on our campus were prepared in any permanent way to acknowledge the legitimacy of Burton's ideals.

47. Chauncey S. Boucher, "Thoughts and Suggestions regarding an Educational Policy, and its Successful Administration, in the Colleges of Arts, Literature and Science, of the University of Chicago," pp. 3–4, December, 1928, *Office of the President. Mason Administration*, Box 3, folder 7. Evidently, there were rumors among some alumni groups that the same anti-undergraduate senior faculty had also forced Max Mason's resignation as president in the spring of 1928, because of his sympathy for the College. In fact, Mason resigned for completely different reasons, but such rumors were themselves telling about currents of anxiety in alumni circles about what they perceived to be the bleak future of undergraduate education at Chicago. See Harry L. Mefford to Harold H. Swift, November 2, 1928, *Swift Papers*, Box 47, folder 16, who claimed to have witnessed graduate Dean Henry Gale insulting the undergraduate programs: "Two years ago at the C Banquet, Dr. Mason told the C men to let no one fool them; that the development of the undergraduate school would go forward immediately. At this C Banquet, [Dean] Henry Gale who is nothing more than a mouth-piece for Dr. [Gordon] Laing made the statement that the undergraduate body was fast diminishing. . . . The above facts are sent to you not in the spirit of criticism but to open up a channel whereby we may attain a smooth working combination between the graduate and the undergraduate schools, and where you and I may see the University of Chicago grow to be the center of education in the United States instead of being, as it is now, a subsidized group of professors, a large number of whom are working to advance themselves and are taking the undergraduate body as a great bore to themselves and bemoaning that they must meet these dumb youngsters three and four times a week."

**ERNEST BURTON'S PLAN FOR  
THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY:  
THE CAMPAIGN OF 1923-1925**

Ernest Burton's second major contribution to the history of the University was his leadership in organizing the first real fundraising campaign in Chicago's history. Given Burton's sense that large new sums of money were needed to respond to the financial weaknesses of the University after World War I, his decision to launch a major campaign was both logical and courageous. It was also tactically urgent, in that Burton realized that continued support from the Rockefeller boards in New York City would be contingent upon the University finally doing what John D. Rockefeller had urged the institution's leaders to do in 1910, namely, to cultivate widespread public support for the future financial welfare of the University. As Burton reported to Martin Ryerson, "I am also getting from Mr. Arnett frequent indications that the feeling in the East is that at the moment we are lacking, but that there is real appreciation of our spirit, outlook and plans for the future, and that, of course, to come up to our ideals and theirs we must realize our plans, not simply make them."<sup>48</sup>

48. Burton to Ryerson, April 19, 1924, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 35, folder 3. Trevor Arnett was Burton's vice president for budgetary affairs but had been secretary of the General Education Board in New York City from 1920 to 1924 and had close ties to the leaders of the various Rockefeller charities. We have some evidence that John D. Rockefeller was grateful for Burton's initiatives. Cornelius Woelfkin, the pastor of the Park Avenue Baptist Church in New York City, wrote to Burton in July 1924 that in a personal meeting with Rockefeller the latter "spoke most discriminatingly and appreciatively of Harper and Judson — and equally so of yourself. I think I know when he is genuinely pleased and I am sure he was happy in the report concerning yourself. Also I am sure I was only confirming what he has learned from other sources." Woelfkin to Burton, July 2, 1924, *Burton Papers*, Box 82. "General Correspondence, 1924."

Burton's energy and optimism were contagious, and other key opinion leaders soon acknowledged the need to raise new money. Albert Sherer, a recently appointed trustee, an alumnus of the College (Class of 1905), and a close friend of Harold Swift, generated a memo in May 1923 urging that the University needed to increase the number of donors and thus to increase the size of the endowment. Sherer was especially interested in enhancing the University's supporters among the citizens of Chicago and the Midwest. He urged Swift to appoint a committee of the board to be known as Committee on Public Relations to study the problem of how to raise money. Sherer also felt that the board needed to appoint an "experienced man to devote his entire time to the work of interpreting the University to possible donors. Such a man working with the Committee on Public Relations could be of great service in formulating a practical program and his experience should be of value in co-operating with the alumni in organizing whatever fundraising activities they plan to undertake."

Swift agreed to Sherer's scheme, and appointed Sherer, Rosenwald, Burton, and himself to be an ad hoc "committee of four," which would have the authority to hire such a person.<sup>49</sup> But before hiring a fundraising czar, Swift insisted that the University also come up with a systematic plan of what a fundraising campaign might look like and how it might be executed. After consulting with Sherer and Rosenwald, Swift and Burton therefore asked the board of trustees to approve a campaign planning study in January 1924. Swift was convinced that the amateurish, in-house methods of the past would not suffice. Hence, when Edgar Goodspeed argued against hiring external consultants to plan the campaign, insisting that he and like-minded local faculty could very well

49. Dickerson to Swift, May 9, 1923, *Swift Papers*, Box 82, folder 12.

develop the campaign structure and message (just as his father, Thomas Goodspeed, had done in the 1890s), Swift rejected such advice out of hand. Rather, Swift wanted a “comprehensive plan before going ahead to secure funds,” and to start the planning process off, he hired the John Price Jones Corporation of New York City to undertake a preliminary report on the feasibility of raising funds.<sup>50</sup> While Swift took it upon himself to coordinate the structure of the campaign, he also tried to bolster Ernest Burton’s resolve in the face of an impatient and ambitious senior faculty.<sup>51</sup>

The report of the John Price Jones Corporation was ready by March 1924.<sup>52</sup> It suggested that the University might successfully run a campaign

50. Swift to Burton, December 31, 1923, *Swift Papers*, Box 73, folder 3. Goodspeed’s proposal for an internally organized campaign is also in this folder. He insisted that “an outside agency, even for survey purposes, could tell us little, if anything, that we do not already know.” Swift was encouraged to select the John Price Jones Corporation in January 1919 by Trevor Arnett, who was still employed at the General Education Board but who was about to return to Chicago as Burton’s chief financial officer. See Arnett to Swift, January 17, 1924, *ibid.*, folder 4.

51. See Swift’s encouragement of Burton when Burton wanted to call an emergency meeting of the University Senate to announce a shortfall of revenue that might endanger Burton’s expansion program. Swift strongly urged him not to call the meeting, on the grounds that a “consistent and well rounded plan” was emerging that might resolve the situation. See Swift to Burton, January 7, 1924, *ibid.*, Box 73, folder 4. Burton again inquired in April whether he might call such a meeting, and Swift responded that the time was “nearly ripe.” Swift to Burton, April 17, 1924, *ibid.*, Box 74, folder 7.

52. See “A Survey and Fund-Raising Plan for the University of Chicago,” *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 40, folder 1. Jones believed that “such a survey bears to a financial campaign the same relation that a map bears to a military campaign or a diagnosis to medical treatment.” See Jones to Albert Sherer, November 14, 1923, *Swift Papers*, Box 73, folder 4.

that would invoke its past achievements and future promise, that would resonate with civic elites of Chicago by stressing the University as Chicago's university, that would highlight the tremendous prestige brought to the city by the University, and that would also rely on alumni and trustee support: "The University has a strong appeal and a genuine need; it requires only the loyal effort of its Trustees, faculty, and alumni to bring the desired response."

To coordinate and assist with the actual campaign the University hired the Jones Corporation, which had already staffed a number of other postwar college campaigns, beginning with the 1919–20 campaign at Harvard that had generated \$14.2 million.<sup>53</sup> Jones assigned a younger colleague, Robert Duncan, to work on the Chicago campaign. A graduate of Harvard (Class of 1912), Duncan was already an experienced veteran of college fundraising who had played an important role in the Harvard campaign. John A. Cousens, the president of Tufts College, assured University authorities that "we employed . . . Mr. Robert Duncan to do some special publicity work for us. Mr. Duncan is a young man of unusual ability and energy. The University of Chicago would, I think, be fortunate if he entered its service."<sup>54</sup> Mark Cresap of Northwestern reported that Duncan was "highly satisfactory . . . a thorough, efficient executive."<sup>55</sup> Duncan would stay with the University as

53. See Scott M. Cutlip, *Fund Raising in the United States. Its Role in America's Philanthropy* (New Brunswick, 1965), esp. pp. 171–177, 480–482. Jones was also a graduate of Harvard. The Jones firm was chartered in New York State on November 23, 1919.

54. John A. Cousens to G. O. Fairweather, January 21, 1924, *Swift Papers*, Box 73, folder 4. Swift reported that Duncan was "much interested [and] anxious [to] have work." Telegram from Swift to Arnett, January 15, 1924, folder 4.

55. "Extract of letter from Wilbur E. Post in response to H.H.S.'s request to find



an episodic adviser over the next three decades, and by the 1950s he had a unique historical perspective on the internal problems and potential of the institution. After leaving Chicago in 1956, he returned to his alma mater and helped launch the spectacularly successful Harvard campaign from 1956 to 1960, which netted nearly \$83 million.<sup>56</sup> Inevitably, the advice (and subsequently, the criticisms) that Duncan provided to Chicago reflected the fundraising experiences (and the successes) that he had at Harvard.

Over the winter and spring of 1924, Duncan helped to engineer a highly sophisticated organization: clerical and professional staff developed systems to research the giving capabilities of potential major gift donors; organized donor assignment lists (who was to make the initial contact with the prospective donor, who was assigned to make the actual solicitation, etc.); donor tracking and acknowledgement; a faculty speakers' bureau; and many other features that are still the core activities of a major fundraising campaign. Duncan had a flair for advertising and, in addition to producing dozens of different campaign publications, he displayed on large billboards located throughout the city the slogan "The University of Chicago, It's Yours." Trevor Arnett prepared a lucid explanation of the finances of the University, which demonstrated the need for new support.<sup>57</sup> The campaign was also noteworthy for giving birth to the word "development" as a key rhetorical symbol of the University's self-advancement. Duncan later recalled, "At one of the first luncheons

out from Mr. Cresap all he would say in reference to Mr. Duncan and the John Price Jones People," *Swift Papers*, Box 73, folder 5.

56. Cutlip, *Fund Raising*, p. 481.

57. Trevor Arnett, "A Letter to Alumni," *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 35, folder 3.

the question of a name for the committee and for the campaign was raised. After some discussion and at President Burton's suggestion, it was decided to call the committee the Committee on Development and the campaign the Development Campaign. So far as I can remember now, that was the first time I ever heard that term used."<sup>58</sup>

Swift and Burton were insistent on getting the campaign started in the fall of 1924.<sup>59</sup> To anchor and help launch the campaign, the University was able to parlay its contacts with the New York-based charities established by the Rockefeller family into a \$2 million matching gift from the General Education Board at 61 Broadway (at 2 to 1, with the University having to raise \$4 million).<sup>60</sup> Happily for the University, the officers and trustees of the Rockefeller charities included several men with strong Chicago connections (George Vincent, Trevor Arnett, James Angell, and later David Stevens and Max Mason). Although John D. Rockefeller Sr.'s final gift came in 1910, bringing his total gifts to \$34.7 million, the University maintained close contacts with Rockefeller's boards which, over the next 20 years, gave an even greater amount of money to Chicago than had Rockefeller himself (between 1911 and 1932 alone the Rockefeller charities gave the University \$35.8 million, a sum slightly larger than the total personal benefactions of John D. Rockefeller). The extent of our continued dependence on Rockefeller generosity was demonstrated by the fact that of the \$137 million that

58. Duncan to Thomas Gonser, October 24, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 100, folder 6.

59. Swift to Burton, February 20, 1924, *Swift Papers*, Box 73, folder 5.

60. Burton first visited the GEB in early February 1924. As late as April, he hoped that he could get \$6 million from them. See Burton to Swift, April 17, 1924, Box 74, folder 7. The final decision was taken at the May meeting of the GEB.

the University received in gifts between 1890 and 1939, Rockefeller contributions (personal or board-driven) amounted to over \$80 million, or almost 60 percent.<sup>61</sup>

The heart and soul of the campaign was Ernest D. Burton. The campaign gave Burton a chance to reinvigorate the University by creating new momentum among the faculty and setting new goals for the trustees, as well as rekindling enthusiasm within a wider civic public. Burton was shrewd enough to understand that a successful fundraising campaign required that he articulate his personal vision for the University, and not simply ask donors for money. In a number of key speeches delivered in Chicago and in other cities around the country Burton sketched his plans for the future of the University. The basic theme of the speeches was the need to build on Harper's heritage by making the University not bigger but better. Burton stressed the fundamental mission of research ("this mighty and fruitful thing, the quest for new truth"), but he was also able to translate "research" into a set of practices that involved undergraduate and professional education, as well as doctoral training in the arts and sciences. He insisted that a new ideal of college life was evolving in the United States, stressing the development of intellectual habits more than the "impartation of known facts," and the University of Chicago would help to shape it: "The dominant element of that life will be the recognition of the fact 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

61. See the list of Rockefeller-associated gifts to the University of Chicago from 1890 to 1932 in the *Swift Papers*, Box 85, folders 13a, 15, 17. See also "Conditional Gifts-University of Chicago," July 21, 1927, *ibid.*, Box 75, folder 28, and the data from 1938-39 in *Office of the Vice President Papers*, Box 9, folder 26.

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.” What better place to train young minds in the “capacity to think for themselves” than to place them under the influence of scholars “who are striking out new paths, fearlessly attacking the mysteries of truth . . . it seems logical and right that the work of the colleges should be conducted in an atmosphere imparted by or akin to that of the great graduate schools, in places where freedom of the mind is encouraged.”

Burton’s approach was thus consistent with Harper’s values, but with a more capacious and articulate sense of the value of undergraduate work in a research university than Harper had ever articulated.<sup>62</sup> As mentioned above, one of Burton’s key ideas was to create a set of new buildings for the college on the south side of the Midway, which would allow it to flourish adjacent to the graduate programs, but not be overwhelmed by (or overwhelm) those programs.<sup>63</sup> Burton was also emphatically pro-alumni, insisting that the alumni were critical to the future development of the University. Burton’s *The University of Chicago in 1940*, the idea of which was suggested by Duncan, was a splendid and incurably optimistic statement of the future of the University.<sup>64</sup>

Burton conducted a detailed survey of the University’s future needs in February and March 1924, and by the summer he came up with the figure of between \$50 and \$60 million for current and long-range needs,

62. Copies of his various speeches are in *University Development Campaigns, Part 1: 1896–1941*, Box 5.

63. Burton’s later views of the college also reflected the influence of Swift. See Swift to Burton, October 31, 1924, *Swift Papers*, Box 75, folder 1.

64. Duncan to Swift, September 13, 1924, *Swift Papers*, Box 74, folder 19; *ibid.*, September 25, 1924, Box 76, folder 9.

\$21 million of which should be raised in the next two years.<sup>65</sup> Burton essentially wanted to double the University's current endowment within the coming 15 years by adding an additional \$33.5 million by 1940. Not all of this could be raised immediately, however, and the final goal for the campaign was reduced to \$17.5 million (\$7.5 million for endowment, \$10 million for new buildings) in September 1924 after much negotiation among Burton, Duncan, Swift, and others.<sup>66</sup>

The campaign centered primarily on endowment support for the faculty and on the construction of new buildings. To balance his intended investments in undergraduate education, Burton raised the stakes on the faculty and research fronts by foregrounding the need to raise a multi-million dollar endowment to enhance faculty salaries. He wrote to the trustees that "Chicago must not only hold her great men but also draw others. At present her salary scale is below that of other leading universities. . . . This endowment is needed if Chicago is to meet the competition of other universities, not only of the great privately endowed Eastern Universities, but also of the state universities of the West."<sup>67</sup> At the core of this strategy to rebuild the luster of the faculty's ranks Burton inserted a bold strategy to create the first endowed professorships in the University's history. In April 1924, Burton solicited

65. "The University of Chicago. Its Needs, Immediate and of the Future. Its Plans to Meet These Needs. A Memorandum for the Information of the Trustees of the University," July 1924, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 60, folder 12.

66. The negotiations may be charted by the correspondence in *Swift Papers*, Box 74, folder 7.

67. "The University of Chicago. Its Needs, Immediate and of the Future. Its Plans to Meet These Needs. A Memorandum for the Information of Trustees of the University," p. 4.

Martin A. Ryerson, the former chairman of the board of trustees, to endow the first Distinguished Service Professorship for \$200,000.<sup>68</sup> Burton had known Ryerson for many years, and their warm and cordial relationship was probably the reason why Burton felt comfortable approaching Ryerson for the first, foundational gift to launch his new professorships program. His letter to Ryerson combined both gentle deference toward a venerable donor and university leader and iron logic about the need to bolster the University's prestige, insisting that "perhaps our greatest need is the establishment of outstanding professorships which on the one hand would pay the professor a conspicuously good stipend, and which on the other would be in themselves a recognition of ability, learning, and eminence." Burton hoped that "the creation of these professorships would on the one hand enable us to bring to the University men of a type and quality that are now beyond our reach, and on the other hand to hold and honor our most eminent men. It would tend to lift the whole level of our graduate work and convince our own people and outsiders that we do not mean to fall to the rear, but intend to hold our place among the Universities of the first class." Burton concluded that "to hold a Martin A. Ryerson Professorship would be the highest honor we could bestow upon a man eminent in research and teaching." Not surprisingly, Ryerson agreed to the gift. Within five years the University had eight such chairs, most of which were contributed by local Chicago donors.

Burton used the public enthusiasm and positive ambience generated by the campaign to make significant progress on several key building projects that had either languished or at not yet come to full planning

68. See Burton to Ryerson, April 19, 1924, *Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 35, folder 3.

readiness. Two massive building projects that came to fruition immediately after Burton's presidency still define the physical and cultural landscape of our campus, and may properly be considered his gift to the long-term future of the University. In 1924–25 architectural planning was finalized for the construction of Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, which is a lasting symbol of the wealth and optimism engendered by Ernest Burton's efforts in the mid 1920s, in much the same way as Regenstein Library served a similar symbolically catalytic role in the mid-1960s. Burton's tour of 22 British cathedrals during the late summer of 1924 to reacquaint himself with the cultural-historical designs that had inspired early planning for our chapel was the final step before he agreed to accept the plans for the new chapel put forward by architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. He wrote to Edgar Goodspeed in September 1924 that "my experience in England has cleared my mind entirely on the University Chapel. It remains to be seen whether the Board will agree with me, but I am fully persuaded that the Goodhue plan is fundamentally sound, and that we only need to restudy certain details."<sup>69</sup> The board of trustees concurred with Burton's recommendation to proceed, and ground was broken for the chapel in the summer of 1925. Ernest Burton also played a critical leadership role in final planning and financing of the University's Medical School which broke ground on the north side of the Midway west of Ellis Avenue in May 1925 and officially opened its doors in November 1927, a second critical institutional achievement of the 1920s. Other notable buildings that were planned and launched during or immediately after Burton's tenure included the Divinity School, Joseph Bond Chapel, and Wieboldt Hall.

69. Burton to Goodspeed, September 21, 1924, *Edgar Goodspeed Papers*, Box 2, folder 2. See also Burton to Swift, August 31, 1924, *Swift Papers*, Box 47, folder 7.

The campaign consisted of appeals to the trustees, to the alumni, to foundations, and to the general public in Chicago. The trustee side of the campaign was moderately successful. Harold Swift contacted all of the other trustees via personal visit, phone, or letter, urging that they set a generous standard of participation in the campaign.<sup>70</sup> In the end, the trustees committed themselves to \$1.68 million, or about 20 percent of the total that was finally raised. But Swift had a hard time generating active participation and real enthusiasm from many of the trustees. Moreover, their gift patterns were uneven, with some trustees giving paltry amounts. Three trustees — Julius Rosenwald, Martin Ryerson, and Harold Swift himself — accounted for \$1.5 million, with the remaining \$168,000 in smaller gifts, some as small as \$1,000.<sup>71</sup>

The campaign of 1924–25 was also the first time that the University systematically tried to mobilize its alumni. A General Alumni Committee

70. Swift's standard solicitation letter left the recipient with little choice but to give a gift: "I dislike soliciting funds, especially from my good friends, but [I] believe you will realize that this is the feasible way to handle [the matter]. To that end, I enclose herewith two pledge cards, one of which I should appreciate you filling in with the amount of your subscription." Swift to Robert Lamont, November 21, 1924, *Swift Papers*, Box 76, folder 4.

71. The lists are in *ibid.*, folder 4 and folder 8. Robert Scott gave \$25,000, Thomas Donnelley \$25,000, Robert Lamont \$75,000, and Harold McCormick \$10,000. Edward Ryerson gave \$5,000, Albert Sherer \$1,500, William Scott Bond \$3,000, Harry Gear \$1,500, Frank Lindsay \$1,000, Wilbur Post \$1,500, C. H. Axelson \$3,000, Samuel Jennings \$1,500, Howard Grey \$6,000, Deloss Shull \$1,000, and Burton himself \$5,000. Charles Evans Hughes gave \$100. During the negotiations over which trustee might serve as a leader of the development committee, with Thomas Donnelley begging off for reasons of overwork, Swift was forced to admit that "[n]o one else on the Board impresses me as ideal or even satisfactory." Swift to Arnett, April 21, 1924, *ibid.*, Box 73, folder 15.



was organized in the autumn of 1924. By October it had 175 members and an executive committee of 18, and it developed an “Alumni Campaign Handbook” to guide volunteers in their solicitations. They in turn coordinated the work of a host of district and local alumni leaders around the country, who were poised to begin solicitations in March 1925 and whose task it was to obtain a pledge “from every Chicago man and woman in the locality over which he has jurisdiction, and as much more as is necessary to make up his quota.”<sup>72</sup> The organization also included a detailed procedure for local leaders to rate the gift capacities of individual alumni in their area as to what they might be expected to give over a five-year period. Each district was also assigned a quota, and it was expected to fulfill that quota, come what may. The results were encouraging in Chicago and in other localities as well — by late 1925, out of approximately 27,000 alumni, over 11,000 gave contributions, and a majority of these were College alumni. Total alumni giving was slightly over \$2 million. Alumni leaders would recall in 1926 that the “[s]udden and startling attention bestowed upon Alumni was unprecedented, and in marked contrast to any evident interest theretofore displayed by the University in its Alumni.”<sup>73</sup> Even more impressive was the fact that this was a relatively young or at least younger group of people — in 1923 about 89 percent of our alumni were under 43 years of age. Although men outnumbered women in the total alumni population, women graduates outnumbered men among the undergraduate alumni. Over 43 percent of the alumni in 1923 were employed in education — on the primary, secondary,

72. “Alumni Campaign Handbook,” p. 8, *ibid.*, Box 75, folder 23.

73. “University-Alumni Relations. A Survey and A Suggested Plan,” [1926] p. 21, *Swift Papers*, Box 156, folder 27.

and university levels—a characteristic that was crucial to the shape of the early alumni culture at the University.<sup>74</sup>

In the middle of the spring 1925 campaign activities, Ernest Burton died suddenly on May 26, of a recently diagnosed colon cancer. Burton’s death was a terrible shock to the leaders of the campaign and to the faculty, and it created an immense leadership vacuum. Trustee Robert Lamont observed:

Nothing is gained by attempting to minimize the seriousness of the disaster that has come to the committee. I am more impressed with it after listening to the tributes to the character, personality, and ability of Dr. Burton. One of the things that greatly impressed me . . . was the courage and fighting quality of the man. At 67 he undertook a work that would have daunted most men, and his last thought was that it should go forward. We must not fail him now.<sup>75</sup>

Yet, in retrospect, that is exactly what happened, since Burton’s successor, a distinguished mathematical physicist from the University of Wisconsin, Max Mason, had little stomach for the kind of public campaigning necessary to complete the final part of the drive, which was to be a major public campaign in the city of Chicago. The campaign for

74. If one includes the additional 4.8 percent of the alumni who were in the ministry, and another 2.2 percent who were categorized as being “scientists,” it is clear that well over half of our alumni in 1924 were in occupations in some way related to learning and education. See *University Development Campaigns, Part 1: 1896–1941*, Box 2, folder 5, and Floyd W. Reeves and John Dale Russell, *The Alumni of the Colleges* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 64–91.

75. Robert L. Lamont to Swift, May 29, 1925, *Swift Papers*, Box 76, folder 21.

public civic support urged by Duncan and Jones and planned for 1925–26 was potentially the most important, but least successful, component of the campaign.

The campaign of 1924–25 was long remembered as a model effort, and a successful one to boot. The final results of the campaign were touted publically in optimistic words. The University spent about \$300,000 on the campaign, and raised as of June 1, 1926, \$7,785,300, \$2 million of which was generated by the alumni.<sup>76</sup> In 1954 Harold Swift looked back on the Burton years as the “two most thrilling years in the University’s history.”<sup>77</sup> The board of trustees was evidently pleased by Burton’s handling of the campaign, given that they took the unusual step of increasing his salary by 33 percent in September 1924 as a gesture of their gratitude to him.<sup>78</sup> Yet in reality the campaign had mixed results. Almost one-third of the total came from the matching grant from the General Education Board and a single gift from Julius Rosenwald. Aggregate alumni contributions were impressive, but the campaign also encountered a lack of interest on the part of many alumni, some of whom complained about the faculty’s indifference to the lives of the undergraduates.

The most troubling part of the campaign, however, was the dearth

76. See John F. Moulds to Max Mason, June 1, 1926, *ibid.*, Box 75, folder 19. \$2 million came as a matching grant from the General Education Board and \$1 million from Julius Rosenwald that was counted as part of the \$1.7 million trustee gift. Rosenwald intended that his gift be expended, and not lodged in a permanent endowment. Swift to Trevor Arnett, March 25, 1925, *ibid.*, Box 82, folder 1; Wm. C. Graves to L. R. Steere, January 14, 1927, *ibid.*, Box 76, folder 4; and Moulds to L. R. Steere, October 14, 1926, *ibid.*, folder 1.

77. “Eighth Session,” p. 54, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1.

78. See the correspondence in the *Swift Papers*, Box 47, folder 7.

of the special gifts solicited from members of Chicago's civic elite. The special gifts initiative in the city was in fact a failure, and a lack of focused leadership after Ernest Burton's death was the real cause. In his final report on the campaign, submitted in February 1926, Robert Duncan did not mince words as to whom he thought was to blame:

Several members of the [Special Gifts] Committee were "bear-ish" in their attitude on obtaining large gifts, with the result that the meetings of the Committee, instead of being of an inspirational nature, had the opposite effect. . . . It is a source of regret that, with the mass of favorable publicity which the University was receiving last Spring and Autumn, members of the Board [of Trustees] were unable to prosecute more actively the Special Gifts campaign. . . . Success in Special Gifts work is obtained only as a result of persistence and constant hard work, and few of the University of Chicago Trustees or leading alumni were in a position to give the necessary time to the effort.<sup>79</sup>

Had Ernest Burton lived, Robert Duncan was certain that the civic campaign would have been pushed forward with vigor, since "[h]e was the real leader of the Campaign. Shortly after his death, there was a noticeable slowing up in Campaign activity, and the momentum of early spring, 1925, was never regained. The result is that the possibilities of gifts from citizens of Chicago have hardly been scratched."<sup>80</sup> In the

79. Robert F. Duncan, "The Campaign for Development of the University of Chicago. August 11, 1924–February 6, 1926," pp. 22, 23, 27, *University Development Campaigns, Part 1: 1896–1941*, Box 1, folder 9.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

confusion that followed Burton's death, signals became crossed. As late as August 1925, Harold Swift admitted that he was well satisfied with Robert Duncan's work and reported: "[W]e believe they gave us a good set-up and we think them willing and capable of cooperation. At any rate, we have engaged [the John Price Jones Corporation] for next year when we expect to have a wider appeal to the public."<sup>81</sup> This statement suggests that Swift was committed to a full continuance of the campaign. Yet when the new president, Max Mason, arrived on campus, things began to change. Swift later recalled that, although he (Swift) thought well of the John Price Jones operation, Mason disliked their campaign tactics, resenting their (as Swift put it) "go-get-em salesmanship" which, Mason felt, might accomplish its goals, but which might also "do so much harm as to make people sore and hurt us in the long run." Mason was thus opposed to a "continuing plea for funds" at the University. Hence, according to Swift, "[a]fter Mr. Mason was elected, it was decided to call off the campaign."<sup>82</sup>

Ernest Burton's sudden death in May 1925 cut short what might have been a genuinely transformational presidency, had Burton been able to complete the fundraising campaign that he had started and to launch the revolution in undergraduate education to which he aspired. Harold Swift would later characterize Burton's two years as president as "exhilarating days . . . when the University became an intellectual beehive in planning the University of that day and in building for twenty-five years." Burton's term was one of amazing energy and bold thinking, and

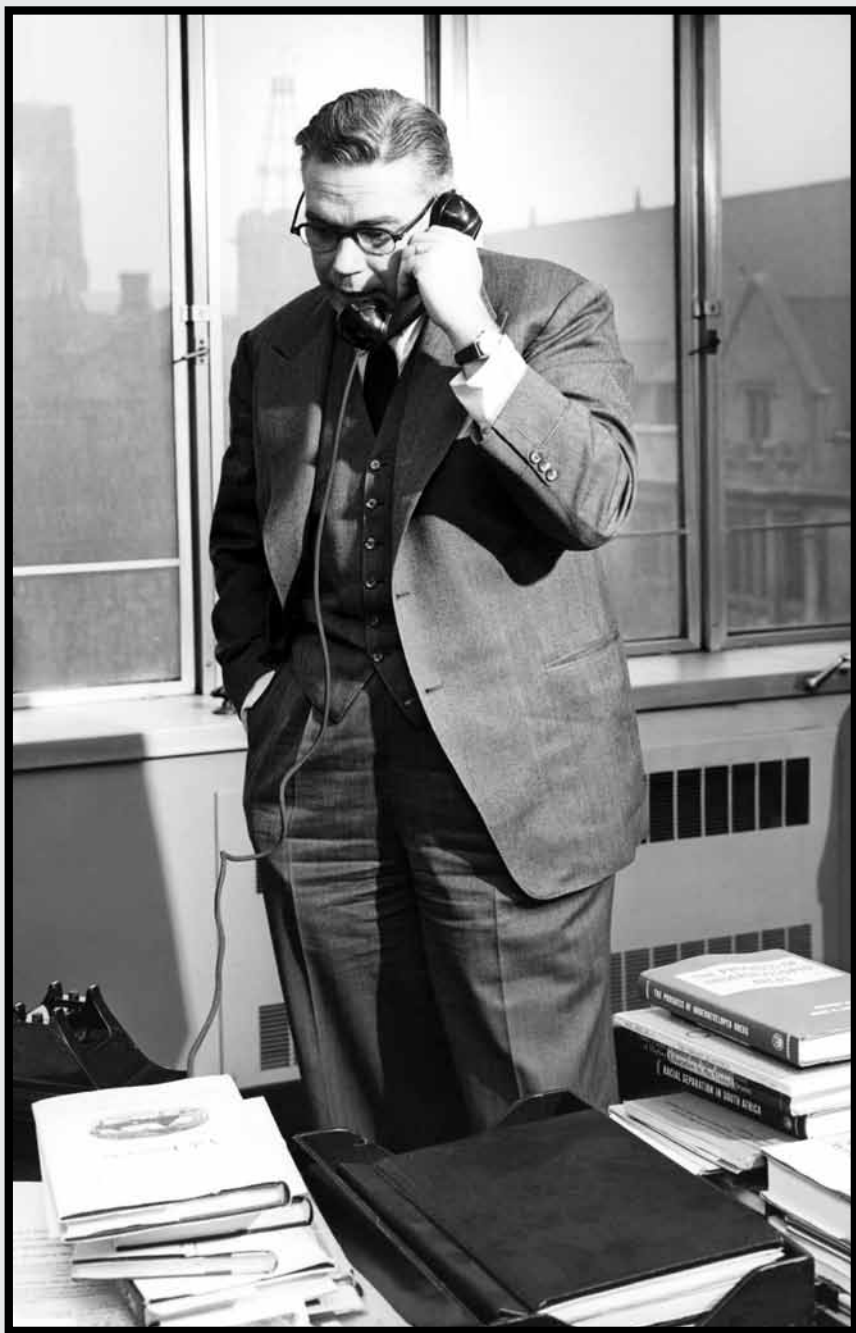
81. Swift to Jacob Pfeiffer, August 11, 1925, *Swift Papers*, Box 73, folder 13.

82. Swift's memo to C. H. S., February 19, 1930, *ibid.* Shortly after Mason's resignation, Robert Duncan sent Swift a letter asking about the status of fundraising at the University and offering to become reengaged with Chicago, on an ongoing consultancy basis. See Duncan to Swift, October 19, 1928, *ibid.*

the outpouring of sympathy on the occasion of his death was remarkable. He was cast as a veritable saint who had brought grace as well as wisdom and learning to the University, a fully altruistic man who devoted his life to the service of University, as opposed to seeking to profit from the University. Yet this rhetoric of ethical value soon receded into the quotidian of institutional practice. Especially after the financial disaster of 1929, the easy and confident moral imperatives with which Burton bathed his policies would come to seem curiously provincial. Huge structural challenges lay ahead for the University, and the onset of the Great Depression would force hard choices among increasingly scarce resources that Burton and his generation had never been forced to contemplate.

Following the short and undistinguished presidency of Max Mason from 1925 to 1928, the history of the University between 1929 and 1951 is dominated by the charismatic figure of Robert Maynard Hutchins. I will be discussing Hutchins's presidency in my annual report for next year (2013). Hutchins was a bold planner and aggressive risk taker. He believed university presidents should stand for something and that it was his obligation to raise difficult issues and force the faculty to debate these issues. At the same time, Hutchins's relations with the University's senior faculty were often strained, and there was considerable distrust of his motives and intentions. Many notable changes in the structure and ethos of the University were owing to Hutchins's bold leadership — the creation of the divisions and the College as independent ruling bodies, the implementation of the first Core curriculum, the instantiation of an image of the University as a particularly rational and intellectual milieu, etc. — but Hutchins also sowed deep political divisions within the University community, and he left the University in a severe financial and demographic crisis. Ernest Burton had sought to

give the undergraduate College a positive, self-conscious role within the broader mission of the University. His death ended that cause temporarily until it was taken up by Robert Hutchins with a very different set of modalities over the course of the 1930s and 1940s. Although Hutchins succeeded in giving the College a unique structure and special curricular identity, he did so in ways that ultimately were unsustainable within the political-constitutional milieu of the wider University. His successors — particularly Lawrence Kimpton and Edward Levi — were inevitably forced to deal with the radical consequences of his rule. ■



*Lawrence A. Kimpton, May 1951. Photographer: Stephen Lewellyn*



PART III  
LAWRENCE A. KIMPTON

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KIMPTON'S EARLY CAREER

**L**awrence Kimpton was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1910, and he attended Stanford University in the late 1920s and early 1930s. At Stanford he was an athlete and a genial man about campus, but also someone with sufficient academic prowess to be admitted to a doctoral program at Cornell University to study philosophy. In 1935 he received his PhD in philosophy, writing on the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Kimpton early on decided on a career that blended teaching with academic administration, and he quickly proved that he was good at both. From 1935 to 1941, he taught philosophy, history, and German, and he served as the academic dean at Deep Springs College in California, where he earned a reputation for having “a sound practical viewpoint, natural qualities of leadership, and ability to inspire in young men a desire to develop scholarship that can go hand in hand with the ability to accomplish in a practical way those objectives that true scholarship indicates

are best for society and the world at large.”<sup>83</sup> After leaving Deep Springs, he became the part owner of a 7,000 acre cattle ranch in Nevada for a year. In 1942, he moved to the University of Kansas City where he also served as dean.

Kimpton was hired at Chicago in 1943 as the chief administrative officer of the Metallurgical Laboratory, the cryptic name given to Arthur Holly Compton’s wartime plutonium project within the broader Manhattan Project. This job gave Kimpton a broad perspective over many administrative and research domains within the University (and later, so friends insisted, high doses of radiation that compromised his health throughout his presidency). From September 1944, Lawrence Kimpton also served as University dean of students and as secretary of the faculties, while also holding courtesy professorships in the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Education. He demonstrated wise and fair judgment, an ability to apprise thorny political situations quickly, and a calm and friendly temperament. Kimpton was also an excellent writer, so much so that Norman Maclean would later insist that “he wrote one of the finest American prose styles ever written by a university president.”<sup>84</sup> In sum, Kimpton came across as a deeply literate, pragmatic problem solver, not as an ideologue of any sort.

Kimpton’s talents began to be recognized nationally, and in February 1946 Arthur Holly Compton offered him the number two administrative position of vice chancellor at Washington University,

83. Testimonial of John U. Anderson, September 17, 1942, *Lawrence A. Kimpton Papers*, Box 4.

84. See the remarks of Norman Maclean at the memorial service in honor of Lawrence Kimpton, January 12, 1978, *The University of Chicago Record*, February 28, 1978, p. 20.

which he rejected because “they have been very good to me here, and there now seems to be a good possibility that my situation will be considerably bettered here.”<sup>85</sup> In 1947, Kimpton decided to accept an offer to return to his alma mater, Stanford University, where he worked as university dean of students from 1947 to 1950. He went to Stanford because he greatly admired Stanford’s president, Donald B. Tressidder, but a few months after Kimpton arrived Tressidder died unexpectedly of a heart attack in January 1948. Kimpton’s name was logically in play to succeed Tressidder, but the choice went to Wallace Sterling. Kimpton found Sterling to be a “very nice” person, but also one who appeared indecisive and who lacked bold leadership skills, leading Kimpton to become unhappy with his situation in Palo Alto. Although he initially thought that he would like the more relaxed atmosphere and slower tempo of official life at Stanford, over time Kimpton grew bored with the more languid pace of affairs, longing for the more chaotic, but dynamic atmosphere at Chicago. Kimpton observed to Richard McKeon of his new colleagues at Stanford that “there was a freshness and novelty about Chicago that is wholly lacking here. Committee meetings are insufferable, and everywhere there is a vast inertia . . . There is a complete lack of boldness and vigor about the people here; they are dull, frightened, uncertain little fellows.”<sup>86</sup> Kimpton sent various signals to Hutchins that, if the right job opened up, he would be eager to return to Chicago. From their early correspondence it seemed evident that Kimpton admired Hutchins’s rhetorical boldness and his charismatic personality, and that he both liked Hutchins and thought that he could learn from him. This feature of their relationship was all the more fascinating and

85. Kimpton to Compton, February 6, 1946, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 4, folder 12.

86. Kimpton to McKeon January 2, 1948, *Richard McKeon Papers*, Box 45.

paradoxical given that, once in power, Kimpton set about destroying many of the fundamental structural innovations that Robert Hutchins had put in place involving undergraduate education and the structure of faculty appointments.<sup>87</sup>

Hutchins remained in touch with Kimpton on and off after Kimpton left for California, occasionally expressing a hope that Kimpton would return to Chicago. Finally, reacting to pressure from the trustees that his administration must become more active on the fundraising front, Robert Hutchins offered Kimpton the newly created position of vice president for development in March 1950. Kimpton accepted with alacrity and returned to Chicago in August 1950. Hutchins's mandate to Kimpton was to "to direct the money-raising . . . the financing of the University."<sup>88</sup>

These were years of deteriorating financial solvency for the University, with pressures being put on Robert Hutchins to do something to

87. Kimpton wrote of Hutchins in early 1951 that "no one else I have known could arouse so much admiration and loyalty, and willingness to support him to the last ditch. This loyalty is partly the result of his remarkable abilities but even more it is engendered by his character. In his writing and speeches he has been largely concerned with spiritual and moral values, and those of us who have seen him in the day-to-day administration of the University of Chicago know that these are not slogans. They are working beliefs by which he tests every problem on which he rests his solution. That kind of integrity commands something like a crusading zeal from associates." Draft of a statement on Hutchins, May 14, 1951, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 168, folder 8.

88. Hutchins to Kimpton, April 12, 1950, *Robert M. Hutchins Papers*, Addenda, Box 79. Kimpton later recalled, "I hated the place, but I discovered that I loved it, and I told him [Hutchins] that I was so utterly bored with even my own Alma Mater in California that I had no choice but to come back and go to work for this great institution." "Address before the Alumni Foundation at the Palmer House," April 27, 1955, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 13, folder 40.

put the University's fiscal house in order. In 1950, the board of trustees commissioned Kersting, Brown & Company to survey the financial and development situation of the University. The results were mixed.<sup>89</sup> The consultants found that many alumni were unhappy with the University's alleged left wing activities, and resented the fact that (in their mind) the College was "not getting a fair cross section of youth" and that the College was appealing to "prodigies to become 'long-haired' geniuses." They also felt that little social prestige was attached to the school, resented the fact that many alumni sent their children elsewhere, and believed that the abolition of football and "the fraternity situation" precluded sentimental attachment and took away "any reason for return to campus to keep up ties." Finally, some felt Hutchins had become a supremely controversial figure.<sup>90</sup> However fair or accurate the information provided by the interviewees, such concerns translated into giving rates by Chicago alumni substantially below those of private peer institutions. The average participation rate in the annual fund for Chicago alumni was 14 percent, compared with an average of 37.5 percent for five other top private U.S. universities, resulting in \$135,304 in cash contributions compared with the average of \$484,320 attained by our peers. Perhaps as a result, Kersting found that "[t]here seems to be on the part of some members of the Administration a sort of defeatist attitude

89. "An Inventory of Fund Raising Resources and Suggested Procedure," December 1, 1950, by Kersting, Brown & Company, *Swift Papers*, Box 83, folder 13. The research included interviews with 51 alumni representatives selected in Chicago, New York, Des Moines and Waterloo, Iowa, and Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and 56 interviews with non-alumni businessmen and professionals as well as members of the board, senior staff, and some foundation leaders.

90. "An Inventory," pp. 13–14.

toward the University's alumni, a feeling that they are not to be counted on, especially those in the earlier classes who should be more able to give.”<sup>91</sup> Most striking, Kersting found that the growth of the University's endowment was almost flat from 1939–49, whereas the endowments of eight other top private universities had averaged a growth rate of 34 percent. Moreover, Hutchins had taken \$10 million out of the endowment in this period to cover building costs and underwrite deficits. The University was especially deficient in gifts from individuals for current use. Chicago received \$466,884 in gifts from individuals for 1949–50, representing 14 percent of the total gifts for current operations. In 1948–49, Harvard had received \$1,043,379 in gifts from individuals (28 percent of the total gifts it received), Yale \$545,764 (27 percent), Columbia \$616,560 (31 percent), and Princeton \$598,766 (54 percent).<sup>92</sup>

When Kimpton's appointment was approved on May 1, 1950, the records of the Budget Committee of the Trustees noted that “in the discussion that followed concern was expressed about the financial situation of the University. . . . The necessity for more aggressive approaches to donors was emphasized, and for continuous pressure on the Development Office and, in the last analysis, on the Chancellor.” Hutchins himself claimed that he was “feeling much better about everything” once Kimpton had accepted the job.<sup>93</sup> But Kimpton was warned by Lynn Williams, who was in charge of public relations at the time, of the grave challenges that he would face: “I think you may know that there is some general dissatisfaction with the public attitude about the

91. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

92. “An Inventory,” pp. 20, 39.

93. Hutchins to Kimpton, April 29, 1950, *Robert M. Hutchins Papers*, Addenda, Box 79.

University, particularly in the Midwest, and I think you will very soon come to realize — if you don't already — that this presents a very serious problem in any attempt to raise funds. . . . As you know, not all of our alumni have been enthused about the University. Our annual fund drive has always been disappointing.”<sup>94</sup>

Returning to Chicago in late summer of 1950, Kimpton quickly proved that he was an adroit and cunning fundraiser. He reported to his father that “I have been running from one end of this town to the other making friends and seeing people . . . I'm enjoying the work very much indeed. I enjoy people and they seem rather flattered about being asked for money.”<sup>95</sup> Ironically, Kimpton seems to have thought that, with his own excellent interpersonal skills and his remarkable capacity for storytelling, he could parlay Hutchins's formidable fame into greater financial good for the University (with some hyperbole he called Hutchins “one of the great salesmen of all time”).<sup>96</sup>

94. Lynn A. Williams Jr. to Kimpton, May 18, 1950, *Office of the President. Hutchins Administration*, Box 68, folder 1. Williams himself wrote to Hutchins in June 1949 urging an overhaul of the central administration and complaining that “the members of the Central Administration are so overwhelmed with minutiae as not to find the time for reflection and study which is required if we have to have an intelligent and orderly approach to meet our major difficulties. . . . We need to develop clear and regular channels for doing things so that most decisions can be handled in groups or classes, and so that we do not treat every instance as new and special. . . . As matters stand now we have no organization chart and no schedule of responsibilities.” Williams to Hutchins, June 24, 1949, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 67, folder 11.

95. Letter to Carl E. Kimpton, September 15, 1950, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 3.

96. Letter of September 22, 1950, *ibid.*

S U C C E S S I O N   T O   T H E  
P R E S I D E N C Y

Only months after Lawrence Kimpton returned to Hyde Park, Robert Hutchins decided to accept an offer from Paul G. Hoffman in December 1950 to assume a senior administrative position at the Ford Foundation, and he resigned from the chancellorship.<sup>97</sup> Hutchins's sudden, but not unexpected, decision instantly created a sizable power vacuum at the University of Chicago, which had last seen a presidential search in 1929. Kimpton's administrative service at Chicago, at Stanford, and again at Chicago made him a plausible candidate to succeed Hutchins. He was not a published scholar, but neither had Hutchins been a scholar. In contrast to Hutchins, Kimpton had no enemies on the faculty, he was widely admired by the trustees, and he had a close knowledge of the workings of the University that seemed pleasing and plausible. Kimpton was also a nationally competitive figure in that several other universities had made inquiries about his availability to become their president, so he enjoyed the aura of a rising young administrative star in whom the trustees might vest such prodigious responsibility. Finally, Kimpton was a thoughtful, well-spoken person with suitable academic credentials. He had civic courage, much common sense, and a genial wit. In contrast to the later alienation between the two men, Kimpton could also be seen by Robert Hutchins's allies as one of their own, for Kimpton openly admitted that he had returned to Chicago because he wanted to work with Hutchins. Hence he could plausibly be viewed as a "Hutchins man"

97. A word about titles is in order here. From 1945 until 1961, the president's official title was changed to that of chancellor. Hence, throughout his regime, Kimpton was addressed as chancellor. The board of trustees changed the designation back to the conventional title of president in 1961.



in his general approach to the governance of the University.<sup>98</sup> For those who cared about institutional continuity, this was a crucial assumption; but it would quickly prove to be a miscalculation.

Lawrence Kimpton's selection came at the end of a long process that saw the vetting of hundreds of names. The final short list included Detlev W. Bronk, president of Johns Hopkins; Charles W. Cole, president of Amherst; Gilbert F. White, president of Haverford; and Lawrence A. Kimpton and Lowell T. Coggeshall of the University of Chicago. In the end two finalists emerged, Kimpton himself and Coggeshall, the dean of the Division of the Biological Sciences. Harold Swift later recalled how the trustees came to tip the nod in favor of Kimpton:

One of the final considerations was that Kimpton said frankly that he wanted the job, and he turned down one or more other presidencies while waiting for the decision. Coggeshall said he was perfectly happy where he was and doubted whether he would do well in the proposed job but would take it if requested. He added that if he accepted and after two years considered he had failed, he would withdraw from the University altogether, not returning to his previous position.<sup>99</sup>

Coggeshall's equivocations tipped the choice in favor of Kimpton, and on April 12, 1951, the board officially approved his appointment.

Although Kimpton was certainly aware of the serious financial problems facing the University, once in office he was nearly overwhelmed

98. "I returned to Chicago chiefly because of Hutchins." Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, December 8, 1950, *ibid.*

99. Swift to Lloyd, April 5, 1960, *Glen Lloyd Papers*, Box 21.

by their sheer magnitude. By the fall of 1951 the yawning gulf between resources and income was all too apparent, and Kimpton would write to his father in early November 1951 that “we do have some tremendous problems around here, and I am not at all sure I can ever get them solved. Hutchins left this University in a fantastic mess financially and it is going to be a hell of a job getting it squared around. I am in the process of trying to make out a budget for next year and it is inconceivable the problems one runs into.”<sup>100</sup> Two weeks later he continued this theme by observing that “Mr. Hutchins very much over-extended the University, and it is my job to contract it. I’ve got to reduce this operating budget about a million dollars a year in reasonably short order. This is going to be a very tough thing to do and will not gain me great popularity. I suggested to the Board of Trustees that I do it all at once and that they retire me on a liberal allowance for life. This is about the only way you could do it suddenly.”<sup>101</sup>

I will focus in this part of my report on three major flash points of University policy in which Lawrence Kimpton took both decisive and drastic action: the structure of undergraduate education, the budget and fundraising, and the stability of the neighborhood.

100. Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, November 9, 1951, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 3.

101. Letter of November 26, 1951, *ibid.*

**T H E C R I S I S O F C O L L E G E**  
**E N R O L L M E N T S**

When Lawrence Kimpton resigned from the presidency of the University in March 1960, he wrote to the chairman of the board of trustees, Glen Lloyd, briefly outlining the accomplishments of his administration. After noting that he came into office with two huge problems—the neighborhood and the University’s terrible budget situation—Kimpton also observed that he had found himself greatly preoccupied with the College:

If nothing else, its dwindling enrollment, indicative of its isolation from both the educational organization everywhere else and even from the University itself, demanded action. The recognition of the problem was easier than its solution, but by last year the University had reorganized the College into a unit effective in its articulation with the secondary schools on the one side and our graduate divisions on the other, with a curriculum that recognizes the importance of both general education and specialized knowledge. The reorganization of the College under its present plan and strong leadership was perhaps the hardest struggle of all, but the College is so central to the rest of the University that the result was worth any effort.<sup>102</sup>

Early in his presidency, as part of the general crisis of the budget, Lawrence Kimpton was forced to confront the dramatic drop in undergraduate enrollments that took place at Chicago after 1951, which led

102. Minutes of the Council of the University Senate, March 29, 1960.

him to investigate other features of the College's problems. By the autumn of 1953, enrollment in the College had sunk to less than 1,350 students. The entering class in that year — 275 first-year and 39 transfer students — was less than half of what it had been 20 years earlier. Kimpton and many other critics of the College program that Robert Hutchins had created in 1942 viewed the declining number of undergraduate matriculants not merely an admissions or a marketing problem, but as reflection of more fundamental problems involving the structure of the College's curriculum and its governance structure. Kimpton soon came to agree with the faculty of the departments and graduate divisions who objected to having been excluded from undergraduate teaching under the 1942 revolution wrought by Hutchins. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the growing independence of the College's faculty and its success in creating a veritable master plan for four years of general education as the essence of the baccalaureate degree, many faculty members with primary appointments in the divisions manifested considerable skepticism and even outright hostility about a curriculum that seemed to claim that a first-rate liberal arts education should consist only of general-education sequences and their attendant comprehensive exams. Arguing that the College and its faculty had allowed themselves to become too divorced from the rest of the University, they asked — indeed, they even demanded — that opportunities for more specialized study be given greater weight and prominence in our students' bachelor's programs.

In siding with the graduate divisions, Lawrence Kimpton was forced to confront a newly autonomous, relatively large, and deeply resentful group of College-appointed professors who, since the late 1940s, had come to feel themselves to be a genuine faculty and who acted as such. Kimpton soon discovered that he had waded into a nearly intractable curricular conflict. In December 1952, he wrote to his father that "I am

moving in on some pretty big problems here at the University. I am trying to change the whole quality and nature of the student body, and this is not an easy job. I have also been trying to get something done on this College of ours. The thing is organized so that it differs from all other institutions in the country. What I am trying to do is get it into a more conventional pattern, so that it will be more attractive to students, and have a better standing in the country as a whole.”<sup>103</sup> This private letter is significant because it underscores the fact that Kimpton entered the fray of curricular struggle because of his pragmatic fears about the future survival of the College as a successful teaching institution with healthy student enrollments within the wider University, not because he was an authentic partisan of one or another philosophical school of thought about liberal education.

Holding grave apprehensions that the applicant base for a general-education College serving grades 11 through 14 was profoundly unsteady, Kimpton, who as secretary of the faculties had sat through and objectively recorded the bitter fights over the undergraduate curriculum that had transpired in the mid-1940s, decided to launch a counterrevolution. Kimpton’s first step was to appoint a committee in February 1953 chaired by a veteran administrator, Emery Filbey, to review the location of the BA degree. Kimpton urged upon Filbey that his committee “approach its deliberations from the viewpoint of statesmen rather than politicians. I recognize that the history of this controversy has caused many wounds which have been reopened by some of the recent negotiations. This problem can be solved, however, only through an unbiased, impartial and judicial attitude toward one of the most important problems which

103. Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, December 1, 1952, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 3.

face the University.”<sup>104</sup> Yet Kimpton was not bashful in privately articulating to the committee two crucial criticisms of what was wrong: “There must not be a permanent gulf between general and specialized education such as our present schema would suggest” and “The present College is a four-year pattern beginning with the eleventh grade and extending through the fourteenth. It is my considered belief that such a structure is ill advised.”<sup>105</sup> Not surprisingly, in April 1953 the Filbey Committee released a report that recommended that the control of the curriculum leading to the BA degree be removed from the exclusive authority of the College faculty.<sup>106</sup> In the future, the BA degree would be “relocated” by converting it into a joint degree that would be shared with the faculties of the various graduate divisions, with each side obtaining control over approximately half of the undergraduate’s four-year program. This decision was tantamount to killing off the original “Hutchins College” and was seen to be so by all concerned. The report was adopted by the Council of the University Senate on May 7, 1953, after a hotly contentious debate, by a vote of 29 in favor and 16 opposed.

Lawrence Kimpton claimed to be surprised at the level of furor that these changes produced, but he also secretly enjoyed the process, writing to his father that “we are in a gigantic dogfight at the moment on the whole problem of the location and content of the Bachelor’s degree. I must say I am really enjoying it. Deans are resigning all over the place

104. Kimpton to Filbey, February 13, 1953, *Presidents’ Papers, 1952–1960*, Box 56, folder 6.

105. Statement of Lawrence Kimpton to the Filbey Committee, March 30, 1953, *Presidents’ Papers, 1952–1960*, Box 56, folder 7.

106. “Report of the Committee on the Bachelor’s Degree,” Minutes of the Council of the University Senate, April 21, 1953, pp. 268–274; May 7, 1953, pp. 308–337.

and all that sort of thing, but I really like a good fight, and this is a good one. I only hope that I am right in what I am doing. It involves a very radical change from the general philosophy of Hutchins and the organization that he left behind him for the University. Right or wrong, however, it has generated a lot of faculty discussion and heat and that is a good thing around the University. I wish it did not take such an enormous amount of time."<sup>107</sup> At the same time, Kimpton regretted that his decisions might damage his formerly cordial relations with Hutchins: "Mr. Hutchins delivers a series of Walgreen lectures beginning tonight, and I have to introduce him. The whole thing may be somewhat unpleasant because he is quite annoyed with me at the present time. I am in the process of tipping over his whole University, and he doesn't like it very well. On the other hand, it seems to me to be clear that some very needed academic changes have to be made around here, and I'm going ahead on it. I shall be sorry if there is bad feeling between us."<sup>108</sup>

The second installment of Kimpton's strategy for restructuring undergraduate education came in 1957–58 and was a necessary, if unplanned, modification of the first. The system of individually negotiated treaties between the graduate departments and the College that had been prescribed by Emery Filbey in 1953 had quickly proven to be a failure. When Kimpton made the decision in 1953 to recenter the demographic basis of the College from grades 11 through 14 to grades 13 through 16, this meant that in the future the high school graduate would become the normal, if not exclusive, client of the University's undergraduate programs. Now the crucial question became, to how many years of college study would the normal high school graduate be held

107. Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, May 1, 1953, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 4.

108. Letter of April 6, 1953, *ibid.*

accountable? Even after the adoption of the Filbey Report in May 1953, the College faculty insisted on the necessity of almost three years of general-education course work for undergraduates, but most of the graduate divisions wanted close to two years (or at least more than one year) of specialized and elective course work. Clearly, something had to give.

Rather than willing and happy cooperation between the College faculty and the faculty of the departments, observers saw endless wrangling and turf wars, the final outcome of which was that some College students found themselves being forced to take almost five years of courses in order to fulfill the demands both of the College and of their respective departments. The historian William McNeill, who was one of the founders of the History of Western Civilization course in the College in the late 1940s, complained to Kimpton that "the major fault, as I see it, lies with the College faculty, or more precisely with the Curricular Review Committee of that faculty. Its members are so committed to their respective staffs and courses as to be unable to look disinterestedly at the problem of what can best be done in a two-year period. They have therefore spent nearly two years jockeying to assure a place in the proposed core curriculum for one or another of 'their' courses. This will never produce a balanced and satisfactory core curriculum."<sup>109</sup> A faculty committee chaired by Charles Mowat reported in 1957 that "too many students are being held for requirements extending their programs beyond four years."<sup>110</sup> Another report by University Dean of Students

109. McNeill to Kimpton, February 20, 1958, *Presidents' Papers, 1952–1960*, Box 174, folder 7.

110. "Report of the Subcommittee on Bachelor's Degree Programs," Minutes of the Council of the University Senate, February 19, 1957, p. 181.



Robert Strozier observed that “not only are their [the new joint degree programs] disparate elements not adequately fused, but their differences, where the components might be expected to be common, are a source of irritation and confusion.”<sup>111</sup>

Going back to the drawing boards in early 1957, Lawrence Kimpton appointed another committee, chaired this time by himself, to sort out these clashes. He found the process somewhat easier than in 1953, perhaps because the College loyalists were so exhausted.<sup>112</sup> The Executive Committee on Undergraduate Education (ECUE) proposed in April 1958 that sole control over the content and structure of the BA be returned to the College, but that the faculty of the College be almost doubled in size by adding 91 members selected from the graduate divisions, with the expectation that in the future the normal appointment paradigm would involve joint appointments between the College and a division. Rather than divide the undergraduate program in two parts — Filbey’s scheme of 1953 — the plan of 1958 proposed what amounted to a slow but deliberate merger of the graduate divisional faculties and the College faculty. The old College of the 1940s and early 1950s would now be replaced with a “new College,” where two years of general education plus two years of specialization and electives would become the curricular norm and where power would be lodged in a “new” faculty which would increasingly consist of those who held

111. “Report to the Chancellor on Some Difficulties with the Undergraduate Programs,” *ibid.*, p. 175.

112. “When I took this big College problem on four years ago, you will recall that the roof blew off. But everything seems to be very quiet and sedate at this point, and I am not anticipating any difficulties.” Letter to his father of February 18, 1957, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 4.

co-divisional appointments.<sup>113</sup> The status of the College and the divisions as independent ruling bodies would be protected, and faculty members would hold two independent, but coordinated, appointments, teaching graduate students by virtue of their membership in a division, and teaching College students by virtue of their membership in the College.

The two-plus-two paradigm (i.e., that at least half of a student's education at Chicago should be devoted to general-education-level courses, with the remainder divided between a student's concentration and free electives) that emerged from the late 1950s continued to shape the College's curriculum until the late 1990s. But with the perspective of 40 years behind us, two important facts about this diplomatic settlement should be stressed. First, and most obvious, it was driven not only by pedagogical considerations but also by political timing and powerful constitutional pressure to cobble together a deal to end the bickering and intra-faculty fighting of the 1950s. That is, it was the result of contingent circumstances as much as grand pedagogical design. Second, while the settlement's institutionalization of joint departmental-College appointments as the normal paradigm for the future faculty appointments in the arts and sciences repudiated Robert Hutchins's conviction about the necessity of an autonomous College faculty, it also assumed that this new joint faculty would be able to sustain Chicago's traditions of non-departmentally-based general-education courses and that the College would continue to function as a curricular whole greater than any departmental parts. Yet it was precisely this issue that worried many colleagues in the College in 1958. Would the unique structure of inter-

113. See the final debate on the Report of the Executive Committee in the Minutes of the Council of the University Senate, May 20, 1958, pp. 127–139; June 3, 1958, pp. 140–159. The vote to adopt was 38 in favor, 4 opposed.

disciplinary general-education courses developed at Chicago in the 1930s and 1940s—courses that were not beholden to individual departmental patronage—survive? Some colleagues feared that the 1958 reforms would lead to the divisions and their departments grabbing fragments of the undergraduate program that related to their own parochial interests, making the College, as Dean of the College Robert Streeter put it, little more than “a collection of undergraduate extensions of the four Divisions.”<sup>114</sup> Unfortunately, Lawrence Kimpton had few plausible answers to such legitimate concerns. His overriding worry was that Hutchins’s separation of the faculty at Chicago into those who taught undergraduates and those who did research and taught graduate students—which was the fundamental logic of the College’s plan between 1942 and 1953—had been a disaster both for the University and for the College faculty, who quickly became known as second-class citizens. In 1960 he commented to Alfred Romer that “to my mind, at least, the most serious mistake that he [Hutchins] made was separating teaching and research. This simply cannot be done, and it created a group of second-class citizens who became more and more remote from the rest of the University and indeed from the discipline of the subject matter. I hope that we have cured that at the present time by re-establishing the College as something that everyone in the University participates in.”<sup>115</sup>

As mentioned above, Lawrence Kimpton’s interventions on the curricular side of undergraduate education reflected his grave concerns about the admissions success (or lack thereof) of the College and negative impressions of the local culture of the institution, as it was perceived

114. Streeter to Kimpton, May 7, 1958, *College Archive*, Box 1, folder 11. For similar anxieties, see the memos of Milton Singer, April 9, 1958, and Howard Stein, April 21, 1958, in *ibid.*, Box 27, folder 8.

115. Kimpton to Romer, June 14, 1960, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 17, folder 10.

by prospective students and their families. Over the course of 1953, Kimpton traveled thousands of miles around the United States, meeting with hundreds of college counselors and high school principals around the nation, seeking to learn why they were not recommending the College to their students. Then in early January 1954, Kimpton gave an unusually forceful address to trustees and faculty that boldly articulated the cultural and social problems facing the image of the College in the aftermath of Hutchins, as Kimpton believed he now understood them. Arguing that "I learned something about the attitude of superintendents, principals, and counselors toward the University of Chicago. . . . We have not taken them seriously in the past and we are paying a high price for the arrogance of our neglect." He then continued:

It isn't that they just don't like us — they dislike us. Slowly as we traveled the country the reasons for the dislike, the accumulated resentment, have come out. The first reason for their antipathy to the University of Chicago seems to be based on personal considerations. We have insisted for years that their high school program was without substance or quality; in fact, we have demanded that they cut their programs and themselves in two so that young people might be exposed to us and the really serious business of education at an earlier age. For some reason, a high school principal resents being told that he doesn't know what he is doing and that half his program must be lifted from his inept hands if the youth of America is not to suffer . . . . But in addition to this personal resentment toward the University of Chicago, we discovered another interesting phenomenon. It is said by the social scientists that the basis of most unreasoned prejudice is a stereotype. Every high school

principal and college counselor knows precisely the kind of student they think we want, and they endeavor conscientiously to urge these students to come to the University of Chicago. The stereotype varies a bit in different parts of the country, but it adds up pretty well into a certain kind of youngster. First of all, he must be odd and not accepted in games and social affairs by the other students. He must be bright, not necessarily in the conventional sense of high I.Q., but in some extravagant and unusual way. He must have read and pondered esoteric things far beyond his years. He draws a sharp breath when reference is made to Aristotle, St. Thomas, John Donne, and James Joyce. He wears glasses, does not dance, deplors sports, and has advanced ideas on labor and the theory of relativity. But he is confident that he would have been happier had he lived in the age of Pericles or during some obscure period of the Middle Ages. The converse of this stereotype is also the case. As one college counselor phrased it to me, "it simply does not occur to any of our normal students to go to the University of Chicago." As one tries to get to the causes for the creation of this stereotype, many things are mentioned. It is widely understood that we read only the Great Books at the University of Chicago and ponder the 102 — no more, no less — Great Ideas. We have insisted that the purpose of a university is to train the mind, and the inference has been drawn that the rest of the person may go hang so far as we are concerned. We have deplored fun, snorted at anyone who wanted to develop himself physically, and sneered at anyone who conceived of a college education as having any vocational or practical significance. It is bruited about that no one is required to attend classes or take examina-

tions or come in at night. The stereotype which emerges is thought to be the only person who would be interested in or profit by our system of education.

Moreover, Kimpton delivered another message, one involving the connection between undergraduate enrollments and the future financial security and solvency of the University. He maintained that

the bleak economic fact is that we cannot exist solely as a graduate institution. The cost of research, the costs of the training of the student for the PhD, must be borne in part at least by a substantial number of undergraduate students. There are only two sources of income that will make us secure in our precious academic freedom: one is endowment income and the other is tuition income. All other sources are precarious or corrupting or both. We cannot rely upon the whims of some fancy and illiterate fellow in a foundation who wants to titillate his board by financing some completely novel project that nobody ever thought of before. Such projects seldom have any real value. Nor can we place much more reliance on industry and government in their present state of education. They tend to buy gadgets to solve their problems, and a university is not a hardware store. I can think of one university in this country that became a second class institution by becoming almost exclusively a graduate school, and unless we are careful, we shall become a second. It is not without significance that the canny New Englanders of Harvard with three centuries and three hundred millions behind them insist that the heart of Harvard University is Harvard College. There is an easy confusion be-

tween the heart and the purse along the banks of the Charles.

Kimpton wanted the University to attract “a very broad cross-section of young Americans at our University.” Arguing that “we have become selective, exclusive, and discriminatory in some most unfortunate way,” he insisted that “we need once again to be attractive to all young people from this country and abroad who value an education and who possess the minds to profit by our superior program, facilities, and personnel. There is no solution to this problem except through hard work, both within and without the institution. Our staff must take a renewed interest in students inside and outside the classroom. There must be more warmth among our administrators who deal with students, and there must be a greater concern about a student’s total welfare. We must stop this schizophrenic nonsense about the extracurricular. At one moment we insist that we have a rich and varied extracurricular program for all our students and then immediately afterward we deplore the very existence of the extracurricular and deny that it is our responsibility. If we are good as we think we are, why can’t we give the life of our students outside the classroom character, depth, and distinction?”<sup>116</sup>

Kimpton was especially concerned about the perception that the Chicago bachelor’s degree was devalued or at least undervalued by the outside world, even for those who entered after finishing high school. According to Kimpton, this meant that many Chicago students were forced to obtain additional specialized training before the outside world credited them with having actually achieved a four year college education. Lest one think that Kimpton was alone in these assessments, a faculty committee on enrollment in 1952, chaired by Richard Bruère,

116. “Trustee Dinner Speech,” January 13, 1954, marked “not for publication,” *Kimpton Papers*, Box 13, folder 36.

argued that “there are some penalties that must be suffered by the pioneering institution along with the rewards that it enjoys. Prospective students are often concerned about the marketability of their degree, should they transfer to another institution.” At the same time, the reputation of the College as an extremely demanding and intense place also limited the admissions pool, since, as the same faculty committee observed: “High school principals on occasion have told our representatives that there was no one in their student body of the quality required to succeed in the College.”<sup>117</sup> Kimpton’s critical views were also confirmed in a study by outside consultants hired to address public relations problems facing the University. Their report observed that “it would appear that at the bottom of the University’s serious decline in undergraduate enrollment lies the disaffection of important segments of the public, including particularly secondary school educators, alumni, and parents of college-oriented young men and women.”<sup>118</sup>

Lawrence Kimpton was particularly frustrated with what he called “our clumsy methods of publicizing our undergraduate work.”<sup>119</sup> Kimpton tried to revamp the College’s admissions efforts, organizing volunteers to engage in interviews and attending small parties for prospective students. The University also organized alumni committees throughout the country to try to recruit more applicants for the College.<sup>120</sup> At the same

117. “Report of the Council Subcommittee on Enrolment,” *College Archive*, Box 4, folder 10.

118. “Public Relations Plan for the University of Chicago,” [1954] in *University Development Campaigns, 1955–58*, Box 1.

119. Kimpton to Ward, October 21, 1953, *Kimpton Administration, PP 1952–1960*, Box 55, folder 4.

120. The University was represented at 100 College Days in various high schools. Kimpton also traveled to events for secondary school principals in



time, Kimpton found himself at odds with the admissions office staff, several of whom were unwilling to embrace his ideas. Robert Duncan, who was Kimpton's external adviser on public relations and fundraising in the mid 1950s, complained in June 1955 that "the [admissions] counselors do not talk the same language as the Chancellor when operating in the field." Duncan had reviewed the advertising material used by the staff and concluded that it was "long and difficult to read," that it had a "tendency to boastfulness" and "an almost exclusive emphasis on intellectual competence to the exclusion of conscience," and that it provided no "real reasons why a boy or girl should wish to attend the University."<sup>121</sup>

Kimpton's ambitions for a larger and more diverse applicant pool were well received by key trustees like Harold H. Swift, however, who felt that the additional students would be more likely to go into a wider array of professional occupations. Swift complained that the current publicity on the College seemed to suggest the University only wanted to recruit students who intended to become university academics:

My comment on the material is that it seems to me to be effective for a group who are interested in graduate work, but I see little in it to attract the right kind of young men and women

Boston, Providence, and Philadelphia in late 1954. Staff Letter No. 1, January 31, 1955, *Swift Papers*, Box 79, folder 15.

121. Duncan to George Watkins, June 2, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 100, folder 6. Calls for more diversity among students date back to the Hutchins era. John Howe, certainly a Hutchins loyalist, remarked to William Benton in 1937, "The University needs students who are able and effective in the social world, not just the bulging-brow kind." Benton himself wanted the University to style itself as a place where leaders would come to be educated, a proposition with which Kimpton would have strongly agreed. See *The University of Chicago's Public Relations*, pp. 118–19, 124, 126.

who mean to get out in the world after receiving their college degrees. In fact, I would say that if a parent, looking about as to where he should send his child to college, were to have access only to material as sent to me, it would be pretty conclusive evidence to him as to why he should send his child somewhere else, because you have emphasized only scholarly work whereas many parents want to train their children to become good members of society, not expecting that they will turn out to be scholars. As I understand the Chancellor's program, he puts very high on his list of desiderata more students and, particularly, more of the right kind of men and women for the College. Because of this, I feel that it is very important to correlate both the College and the Divisions and Schools at almost any time that either of these is mentioned.

In my opinion we have a remarkable group of College alumni who are proving to be constructive and effective in our social milieu, and it seems to me in the buildup of the College they are worth boasting about. It seems to me among our College alumni we have a tremendous number of bankers, heads of business, professional people, economists, scientists, lawyers, and top industrialists, and that they should be featured in most of our public relations material.<sup>122</sup>

Lawrence Kimpton's interventions on the undergraduate level also had implications for University planning far beyond the immediate confines of the College, for Kimpton hoped to expand his newly redesigned College to make it the largest demographic component of the University

122. Swift to Watkins, November 26, 1954, *Swift Papers*, Box 79, folder 13.

of Chicago. In March 1954, Kimpton went before key members of the board of trustees with a plan to increase the size of the College from its then 1,350 students to 5,000 students by the mid-1960s, thus making the College 50 percent of the total University population. Even this number was something of a compromise, since Kimpton privately stated to his closest colleagues that he really wanted 6,000 undergraduates on the quadrangles. Kimpton argued that

[t]he enrollment is really the key to the whole problem. The faculty, including all assistants and research men, number 1,200 at the present time with an enrollment of 4,800, which means roughly four to one in faculty ratio — better than the finest private schools in the country. This points the way to increase enrollment without increasing sharply any operation expenses or increasing the faculty. One thousand more students would produce \$700,000 in student fee income and would help eliminate the deficit we are discussing.<sup>123</sup>

It was evident that the University's leadership hoped that a larger College would benefit the University financially in the short term, but in even more significant ways over the longer run. Nor were fiscal issues absent in the many deliberations on the curriculum, for Kimpton's ECUE Report of 1958 explicitly invoked the specter of a larger College as one of the justifications for its proposed changes, arguing that "[t]he undergraduate student body is expected to grow substantially during the next few years."

123. "Planning Conference, March 4–7, 1954," Fifth Session, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1. Kimpton expressed his preference "for a student body in which there would be 6,000 undergraduates and 4,000 graduates."

In spite of all of the efforts undertaken by Kimpton during the 1950s to improve admissions, to balance the curriculum, and occasionally even to improve faculty morale, the College struggled to break beyond a total four-year enrollment of barely more than 2,000 students. By the autumn quarter of 1961, the College had reached a total enrollment of 2,183 students, a far cry from Kimpton's optimistic hopes. Indeed, the most potent problem facing the College in the later 1950s was its huge dropout rate. For example, of the 476 first-year students who matriculated in the autumn of 1958, no less than 113 (or 24 percent) of these students failed to return to the College in the fall of 1959. Losses of admitted transfer students were even more disastrous. Granted that Kimpton and many faculty members had worked hard to improve our admissions procedures, it seemed impossible to avoid losing students once they arrived here.

Nor can it be said that morale among the faculty was much better by the end of the decade. Writing in May 1959, Robert Streeter, who had recently stepped down as dean of the College, complained that

the poverty of the College's public relations efforts is particularly apparent today, in contrast with the aggressive fund-raising programs being conducted by virtually every other part of the University. The College is conspicuous among all areas of the University in having undertaken no sustained or systematic program to enlist the interest of potential donors in its own activities. The College is also conspicuous for the scandalous inadequacy of the buildings and facilities with which its work is carried on. It is unlikely, for example, that the humanistic arts are taught at any other college in the country in an environment as dingy, malodorous, cramped, crumbling, and hideous

as Lexington Hall. It is hard to believe that most other universities fail, as we do, to provide a useful and attractive library for undergraduates. It seems improbable that other respectable institutions can match the overcrowding and squalor of the offices occupied by most College faculty members, or that, in other important universities, teachers of science lack access to suitable laboratory facilities.<sup>124</sup>

Upon becoming dean of the College in the late spring of 1959, Alan Simpson would remark that “I toured the College domain yesterday—I can only say that I never saw a sterner triumph of mind over matter. There are offices with as little space for reflection and as little light as a public toilet. There are classrooms as grim as a morgue. Diogenes in his tub was a sybarite compared with the asceticism we practice here.”<sup>125</sup>

By the time of Kimpton’s departure from the University in 1960, the shot-gun marriage of College and divisional faculty had been awkwardly consummated, but often with impatience and ill grace on both sides. Even Alan Simpson, who served as dean from 1959 to 1964 and who was a flexible and creative leader, complained of the danger of giving departments too much authority “because it would be surrendering the control of undergraduate education to agencies which have given no evidence of their readiness to accept it as the first claim on their attention.”<sup>126</sup> The settlement of the curriculum was also unsteady and fractured, with many of the existing College general-education staffs bitterly resenting having

124. Robert E. Streeter, Report to the Committee on Policy and Personnel, May 6, 1959, p. 9, *College Archive*.

125. Minutes of the Faculty of the College, June 4, 1959, p. 4.

126. Alan Simpson to Edward H. Levi, June 18, 1962, *College Archive*.

to accommodate themselves to the new realities of a baccalaureate degree program in which divisional partners would gain increasingly powerful voices. It would fall to Provost Edward Levi in 1965 to try to give the 1958 settlement a more plausible and enduring constitutional basis, the story of which I will return to in my next section on Levi. Moreover, little real progress had been made on the admissions front, which probably did not surprise Kimpton, for as an inveterate realist he had admitted privately in 1954 that "this is going to be a long time process, and it is going to be very tough going for a number of years still."

**T H E B U D G E T C R I S I S  
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The acute decline in undergraduate enrollments was a part of a much larger and more ominous crisis experienced by the wider University. At its core lay the truly parlous state of University finances. By 1950–51 (the final academic year of Robert Hutchins's tenure), the University was running a budget deficit of \$1.2 million on a regular budget base of \$11.3 million. That amounted to a structural budget deficit of over 10 percent, a situation that Kimpton described to the board of trustees as having been chronic since 1938. In 1953 Kimpton told the Budget Committee of the Board of Trustees that "our problem is simple of explanation if not solution. In the last eight years we have spent more money than we should have, with the results: 1) We have seriously weakened our reserve position; 2) We have built buildings we can barely afford to maintain; [and] 3) We generated a staff whose cost exceeded our operating income." A year later, he added, "We are working as hard

as we possibly can and yet we are continually running up against this blank wall of the need for money.”<sup>127</sup>

As time went on, contemporaries were willing to talk, at least confidentially, about the financial problems that Robert Hutchins had left behind. In a confidential memorandum in November 1955, the University’s chief financial officer, John I. Kirkpatrick, explained the University’s financial problems by noting that expenditures had exceeded income by approximately \$1 million a year since the end of World War II. Whereas the University’s budget increased from \$8.75 million in 1939–40 to \$18.4 million in 1949–50, sufficient new income to finance these increases was not apparent, with the result that Hutchins was forced to carry large deficits. Moreover, Kirkpatrick insisted that Hutchins thought deficits were a good thing: “Mr. Hutchins proclaimed publicly that a great university operates in the red. He went on the theory that there are always more things to do than a university can afford and hence a balanced budget is an indication that a university is not progressing enough.”<sup>128</sup> In a subsequent oral history interview in 1987, George Watkins, who greatly admired Hutchins’s bravado and intellectual style, admitted that the trustees “were scared to death of what this guy might do fiscally.” Hutchins “scared the Board to death, in terms of its financial and fiduciary responsibility.”<sup>129</sup>

127. “Chancellor’s Docket,” March 16, 1953, *Kimpton Administration, PP 1952–1960*, Box 164, folder 1; *ibid.*, Box 170, folder 3.

128. John I. Kirkpatrick, “The University’s Financial Problem,” November 18, 1955, pp. 4–5, *Swift Papers*, Box 77, folder 2.

129. “Interview of Christopher Kimball with George H. Watkins,” August 25, 1987, p. 16, University of Chicago Oral History Program, Special Collections Research Center.

Once in office, Lawrence Kimpton acted immediately to restore financial order and to plan a major capital campaign. Kimpton began with three years of desperate budget cutting, bringing the budget into balance by 1954. But he was forced to admit to the board of trustees that "the budget had been balanced at too high a cost to morale as well as to the standards of the University."<sup>130</sup> He also warned the board that "the University had achieved a balanced budget and that we actually [may] end up in danger of becoming a second rate institution." As Edward Levi was later to put it: "just as the creation of the University of Chicago was one of the most remarkable things in American higher educational history, so its decline was one of the most extraordinary things. If the University of Chicago had gone out of existence, and it almost did, this would have been the most spectacular event equal to its creation."<sup>131</sup> Kimpton's budget slashing was the first sign of a spiral of desperation: efforts to do one important and necessary thing—live within our means—exacerbated the outflow of top faculty from Chicago to other top institutions.

As his budget cuts began to take a serious toll in faculty morale, and as enrollments in the College continued to worsen, Kimpton assembled a key group of trustees and senior staff at his vacation home in Lakeside, Michigan, in early March 1954 to present a tough, but pragmatic, plan to deal with the University's financial troubles and

130. "Planning Conference, March 4–7, 1954," Fifth Session, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1.

131. Edward H. Levi, Speech to the National Leadership Conference, October 15, 1966, pp. 6, 8, *Beadle Administration*, Box 200, folder 2.



to “talk through the present and future of the University.”<sup>132</sup> Kimpton proposed a vast social reengineering of the campus, focusing on the necessity of recruiting many more students to the College and on the need for a general fundraising campaign that would require a “vast drive for new money”:

The Chancellor thus said that he hoped to state quite frankly to the Trustees that the administration of the University had taken every possible step toward balancing the budget but that to take more would be ruinous to the institution and, therefore, he stated the belief that the Trustees must be acutely aware of the consequences of any further reduction. He stated that he felt one of the great problems of the University is that of attracting more students and doing so at once. . . . He reiterated the sentiment, which he has expressed on various occasions, that the tendency of the University in recent years has been to attract too many students of a certain type and that selection must be greatly broadened in order to make the University a healthier institution, particularly at the undergraduate level.<sup>133</sup>

132. Kimpton to Carl Kimpton, March 3, 1954, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 3. The material from this meeting is in *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1. Watkins transmitted the final results to Kimpton with the note that “[o]ne basic assumption behind the planning is the acceptance of a figure of a total Quad-rangles enrollment of 10,250, approximately half of which would be undergraduate. Both faculty salaries and dormitory needs are planned with such a total enrollment in mind.”

133. “Third Session,” pp. 25–26, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1. Two months later, in May 1954, Kimpton was even blunter. Commenting on the College’s enrollment crisis, he argued “[w]hat that means is that Chicago

gained less in terms of post-war enrollment than any of these other comparable institutions [Northwestern, Harvard, Columbia] and it has lost far more as the post-war years receded. These are very serious figures indeed because they show how we look in relation to the institutions with which we compare ourselves." Kimpton then noted that whereas Chicago had originally had 3,144 undergraduates and 2,719 graduate students in 1939, it now (in spring quarter, 1953) found itself in the situation of having 1,612 undergraduate students and 2,830 graduate students. He continued: "I think that the moral of this is clear. On the basis of economics we cannot continue to have the kind of ratio that we now have. . . . we cannot exist economically on that basis [having more graduate students than College students] and I can only remind you that Clark University practically disappeared as the first great university because of this and Johns Hopkins is trying to dig itself out of the same hole. This is our first problem. The second problem in this matter of distribution of students is that as the undergrad numbers decrease, the place becomes less attractive to undergraduate students and less alluring to them by way of coming in the first place. The result is that you can become involved in an almost vicious circle, in terms of which, as you have fewer undergraduates, fewer and fewer are attracted. The entire atmosphere on the campus changes and the result is that your undergraduate body, for all practical purposes, is shot to pieces. Now, the causes of this are immensely complex. . . . Certainly one of our difficulties is that at the undergraduate level at any rate, we have obtained a very undesirable reputation all through the country. We have been brought out as a quiz kid institution, interested only in the very bright student, the unusual youngster, who, too often it seemed to me, was merely odd. This has given us a very unfortunate reputation with the [high] school[s]. Another difficulty, of course, at least I think so, was the organization of the undergraduate program in terms of which our AB's did not stand up. It had no currency in the market place, and, as you know, we changed that in part at any rate for that reason. Our alumni, and perhaps this is one of the most distressing things—our alumni no longer send their youngsters to this institution as undergraduates. They don't like it. They don't enjoy the program and they don't know anything about it, and this, I think, has deeply hurt us too." Transcript of Kimpton's presentation at the May 13, 1954, meeting of the trustees, pp. 18–21, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 257, folder 2; and an edited version in Minutes of the Board of Trustees, May 13, 1954, p. 79.

Kimpton's bold strategy for returning the University to budgetary solvency was premised on the University achieving a total enrollment of 10,000 students by the mid-1960s, 5,000 of whom would be College students.<sup>134</sup> This would lead to an increase in new net tuition income for the University from \$224,000 in 1955 to \$2.9 million by 1965.<sup>135</sup> Kimpton's plan further involved raising \$12 million in new money to sustain current academic operations, adding \$3.7 million more to bolster instructional areas that would have to deal with the student enrollment increases, \$2 million in additional financial aid, and \$11.4 million for residence halls for College and graduate students and other capital projects. The total equaled \$29.1 million, which was later adjusted upward for an official campaign goal of \$32.8 million.<sup>136</sup>

The trustees admired Lawrence Kimpton's dogged, pragmatic management style, and they acknowledged the importance of improving the public relations of the University, especially in Chicago, and regaining alumni support.<sup>137</sup> To execute his fundraising strategy, Kimpton hired George Watkins as his chief development officer. An affable and creative College alumnus who had fond memories of his years on campus in the 1930s (he remembered with particular gratitude courses taught by

134. Kimpton's plan assumed that there would be 3,000 first- and second-year students in the College's general-education program, and 2,000 third- and fourth-years under responsibility of the departments. The number of faculty teaching in the College was to increase from 75 to 160.

135. "Effect on Regular Budget of Optimum Enrollment and Projected Expenditures," June 10, 1954, *Swift Papers*, Box 77, folder 4.

136. Confidential Memo to the Board of Trustees, June 9, 1954, *ibid.*

137. See Watkins's account of these early years in his comments to the Lakeside IV Conference, March 15, 1957, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 253, folder 2.

Mortimer Adler and Robert Redfield), Watkins had gained considerable marketing experience in the insurance industry. Watkins was a perfect adjutant for Kimpton and became, over time, Kimpton’s veritable alter-ego.

The presentation by Kimpton and Watkins of the new financial plan persuaded the trustees, and soon the debate changed from whether to have a capital campaign to how to organize it and where to set its goal. George Watkins recommended that the University engage Robert Duncan, whom he admired for having helped organize Ernest Burton’s “classic” 1924 drive, to help run the campaign.<sup>138</sup> One by one, key trustees joined Kimpton’s bandwagon. Harold Swift asserted that a drive for only \$15 million would hardly be a major drive, and that it should in fact be more than \$20 million. Gardiner Stern said that \$25 million was initially high to him but that, as the conversation had unfolded, it seemed “less fantastic than it had in the past.” Henry Tenney, who had felt “quite negative about a drive when it was first mentioned,” now decided that “we would be slipping unless we did something positive to change the course of events and therefore he would favor the drive.” Fairfax Cone observed that “we had no choice in the matter — that we must do this or start going backward” and Herman Dunlop Smith concurred about the positive “moral effect” of a drive. Edward Ryerson, as chair of the board, concluded that “we must go ahead and in a big way.”<sup>139</sup> With that, Kimpton had won the day. But would he succeed in a campaign for \$32.8 million? This was one of the largest sums ever sought by a private American research university up to that time.

Robert Duncan, who had left John Price Jones in 1950 to become

138. “Mr. Watkins is much impressed with Bob Duncan and was given approval for securing him as counsel.” “Sixth Session,” p. 48, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1.

139. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

president of Kersting, Brown & Company, returned to Chicago in early 1955 and stayed, full time, until June 1956.<sup>140</sup> Duncan was impressed with Kimpton's vision for the future of the University, but urged him to make it more public: "If a majority of the leading citizens of the City could have the understanding of the University which you gave the group last evening, I think you would have no trouble in future years in getting all the money you need."<sup>141</sup> Duncan had very specific notions of the role of the president and his leadership. He believed that the president should articulate the ideas that would carry the campaign:

I have a strong personal feeling that if the President of the institution is incapable of writing (or having written) a compelling statement of the institution's opportunities (not needs) he is not fit for the job. Ideas raise money; if the head has not ideas on education, or if he has them and is incapable of projecting them to a widespread constituency, he is not in the right niche. These days an important function of a college president is to interpret his institution to those capable of giving it financial aid.<sup>142</sup>

140. Duncan was forced to take on responsibilities in the day-to-day running of the campaign that exceeded the role of adviser. His positive feelings at the end may in part have been an expression of his satisfaction in having done a good job, as opposed to coaching others to do a good job. It was an odd mixture of roles, but then the University was in a rather unorthodox situation to begin with. "Counsel was thus called upon to cover a wider field in these respects than is usually the case." Robert F. Duncan, "University of Chicago Campaign. An Interim Report Covering the Period from the Initiation of the Campaign Through June 30, 1956," p. 11, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 101, folder 1.

141. Duncan to Kimpton, March 7, 1956, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 100, folder 6.

142. "Summary of Remarks to Class in Fund-raising at Teachers College, Columbia University," October 31, 1956, pp. 13–14, *ibid.*

As in 1924, the campaign was a multi-front effort, seeking support from the alumni, the trustees, foundations, corporations, and outside major gift donors. The campaign devised a careful publicity schedule for the alumni, with many different letters and brochures, all specifically timed for greatest effect.<sup>143</sup> The alumni posed the greatest challenge, for many had become alienated from the University, dragging down giving levels. As Kimpton complained to his father, "the alumni gave us about \$200,000 last year and they ought to be giving us substantially more than that. We have about 55,000 alumni as opposed to Princeton's 20,000. Princeton's alumni give them about \$700,000 a year. Yale's alumni, numbering around 40,000, give them a million dollars a year."<sup>144</sup>

The alumni campaign was put in the hands of two senior alumni from the 1920s, Earle Ludgin (Class of 1920) and John McDonough (Class of 1928). Ludgin, a noted advertising expert in Chicago, assumed a vital role in designing letters sent to the alumni to re-enlist their loyalty and support. Ludgin's alumni letters won a national award, the Time-Life Award from the American Alumni Council in 1956, which avowed that the "erudite humor and effectiveness of the copy is spectacular in its quality."<sup>145</sup> The letters completely ignored Robert Hutchins and his educational reforms, and said nothing about the curricular controversies between the College and the divisions in the early and mid-1950s.

143. "Publicity Schedule for Alumni Campaign," June 25, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 100, folder 3.

144. Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, November 26, 1951, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 3.

145. *The 1955–1956 Time-Life Award-Winning Direct Mail Letters of the University of Chicago* (Washington, DC, 1956), p. 1.

Rather, invocations of the glories of an idealized student past were put forward, such as the comment that a new women's dorm would be in line with the traditions of Kelly, Beecher, and Green, which had been "charming and romantic in our day," and an additional note that "[t]he girls on campus are remarkably pretty these days, even to these bifocal eyes — well up to the standard of Kelly, Beecher, Foster, Green."<sup>146</sup> These materials were an amalgam of friendly boosterism and candid financial appeals. Much emphasis was placed on improving the quality of student life, on the importance of enhancing faculty research, and on defending the general prestige of the University.

There was, thus, a clear effort to develop themes that pre-1930 alumni could understand and accept. The main campaign statement, *The Responsibility of Greatness*, was a sophisticated attempt to run against the record of the Hutchins administration by rejecting the unpopular facets of Hutchins's rule without publicly repudiating him. Nowhere in this booklet was Hutchins mentioned, even to the point that William Rainey Harper had to be given credit for formulating the program of the College. In essence, the campaign sought to reach out to and co-opt alumni who had graduated before 1930, who occupationally and professionally would have fully established their careers by the early 1950s, who were now in a position to give substantial gifts, and whose connection to the University was once positive and could now be re-engaged. It was also quite likely that many of these older alumni had fond memories of Ernest D. Burton, thus linking Kimpton's revisionist efforts to the era of good feelings within the University alumni that Burton had worked so hard to achieve in the 1920s. George Watkins later remembered the situation he found in relation to his fellow alumni in 1951:

146. Letter of May 23, 1956, from John J. McDonough and Earle Ludgin, *Swift Papers*, Box 78, folder 4.

Almost all of the publicity in the news media was negative. Many of the alumni, and certainly most of the alumni of the classes prior to Robert Maynard Hutchins were shocked and outraged. Many of them were already spooky about [the] academic changes taking place in the College, and the decision about football compounded their concerns. They responded by not sending their children to the College. . . . And alumni financial support diminished drastically.<sup>147</sup>

Watkins's restorative theme was tricky, however, since trying to hide Hutchins was like trying to squirrel away an elephant. Inevitably, inter-generational tensions became apparent, such as those in the comments of those alumni who wrote responses to the fundraising letters they received. Of the 40 comments about Kimpton's administration that came in, 22 were favorable to Kimpton and "the way things are going now," while 18 were mildly or strongly hostile to the administration. Most interesting about these responses is that the median class membership of the positive responses was the Class of 1908, whereas the median membership of the opponents was the Class of 1946. What Kimpton and Watkins had clearly tried to do is to placate and reconnect with pre-Hutchins era alumni, while not further alienating the more recent graduates. They did the first brilliantly, but clearly had difficulty with the second, and in fact, managed to alienate many alumni of the Hutchins era.<sup>148</sup> Responding to the first nexus of alumni unhappiness—

147. "Interview of Christopher Kimball with George H. Watkins," August 25, 1987, p. 24. Various drafts of *The Responsibility of Greatness* are in *University Development Campaigns, 1955–58*, Box 1.

148. "Highlights from the 1955 Campaign Analysis," *Swift Papers*, Box 78, folder 4.



that generated among alumni who graduated before 1930—Kimpton and his colleagues inadvertently created a second nexus of alumni discontent on the part of graduates from the later 1940s and early 1950s, many of whom resented Kimpton's seeming trashing of the Hutchins College.

The work of the trustees and the alumni constituted bright spots for the campaign. The trustees achieved a 100 percent participation rate and raised \$4.5 million, close to their original goal of \$5 million. Leading the gifts from the trustees was a joint gift of Bell, Swift, and Ryerson for \$1.25 million. The alumni campaign was also vibrant and creative, and generated a respectable \$2.6 million. Special gifts from non-alumni remained a dilemma, however. To better understand how the civic elites viewed the University, the National Opinion Research Center proposed a survey in August 1954 on the views of Chicagoans about the University. (Clyde Hart of NORC had proposed such a survey of the general population of Chicago in 1949, but Hutchins's staff vetoed the idea as a waste of time and money.<sup>149</sup>) Kimpton allowed the survey, focused now on elite attitudes, to go forward.<sup>150</sup> The survey found that opinions about the University were in considerable flux, more so than those about Northwestern. Of the members of the University's Citizens Board, as many had a favorable impression of the University of Chicago as of Northwestern, but among other prominent leaders in the city, Northwestern had the clear advantage. The study also found that Lawrence Kimpton had substantially improved attitudes about the University in

149. J. A. Cunningham to Clyde W. Hart, September 30, 1949, "The consensus was that this survey would not be of value to us at this time." *PP 1952-1960*, Box, 127, folder 6.

150. Confidential Survey 360, Form 1, 8-9-54, *Swift Papers*, Box 79, folder 11. The survey conducted in August and September, 1954 with 304 members of the Citizens Board, with 156 other prominent men, and 31 prominent women.

the last three years — nearly two-thirds of the Citizens Board and half of the women and other prominent persons reported that their opinion of the University of Chicago had changed for the better over the past two or three years, in large part because of Kimpton’s work. But some of the findings were troubling, such as the fact that a majority of Citizens Board members agreed with the proposition that “the University of Chicago undergraduate college has too high a proportion of very bright but socially-not-well adjusted students.”<sup>151</sup>

These findings might have given some cause for optimism, but when preliminary major-gift solicitations of civic leaders in Chicago began in early 1955, Robert Duncan reported that the civic atmosphere still remained frosty: “[w]e are confirming our early discovery that, because of little continuous cultivation by the University in previous years, there are few ‘pools of wealth’ familiar with our needs and favorably disposed toward us.” Moreover, the climate within the city itself remained neutral if not “positively unfavorable” and “a number of cases have come to light which seem to indicate a deep-seated unhappiness with the University and especially with its current product. While there are favorable comments about the Chancellor, his administrative associates, and individual members of the Board of Trustees, we hear too often dissatisfaction with the University and especially criticism of the type of student and recent graduate.” Duncan concluded that “we are only expressing the opinion of many Board members when we say that the University is attempting to raise money in an amazingly complex situation and in the face of extraordinary handicaps.”<sup>152</sup>

151. “Attitudes of Prominent Citizens Towards Problems of Higher Education in the Chicago Area.” NORC, Report No. 53, October 22, 1954, marked confidential, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 185, folder 3.

152. Duncan to Watkins, April 25, 1955, *ibid.*, Box 100, folder 1.

On the foundation front, the University moved to try to reengage the big three New York–based foundations. Swift, Ryerson, Bell, Kimpton, and Watkins met the heads of the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford Foundations for dinner in May 1955 to present the University’s case. A cordial time was had by all; and, while the bids to Rockefeller and Carnegie were less successful, in December 1955 the University learned that it would receive a massive \$5 million gift for faculty salaries from the Ford Foundation.<sup>153</sup> While grateful for Ford’s support, Kimpton was disillusioned by the penchant of foundations to restrict their giving to focused projects, and to refuse general support for the core activities of the research universities. In a speech before the trustees and faculty in January 1956, Kimpton asked archly:

What really happens? First, and most important, the professor is usually enticed into doing something that he really does not want to do in terms of his own development as a scholar. Second, there occurs an ominous bulge in the pattern of the university, and it is very often a bulge that the university would not seek if it were operating with its own funds. Finally, all sorts of casual people of dubious distinction cluster ’round the project and drift ominously toward tenure commitments. At the very peak of this circus, when there are the most people and the most commitments, the lemonade money runs out and the university is left to support this side show that had no place under the main tent in the first instance.<sup>154</sup>

153. Memorandum, May 6, 1955, *Swift Papers*, Box 79, folder 18.

154. Trustee dinner speech, January 11, 1956, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 100, folder 1.

For Kimpton, this added up to a dangerous game:

As gifts in more recent years have come to the universities in increasingly restricted form, the administration of a university has become more difficult. Those fields of teaching and research that have captured the imagination of the public and the foundation executive have flourished and the salaries and facilities of such areas have burgeoned. Those parts of the university that have had no similar appeal—whatever their intrinsic importance—have starved and withered. . . . [W]e have recently launched a campaign to raise many millions of dollars. If we fail, it will seriously injure the University for years to come. And I am forced to add that if we succeed, it may also injure the University for many years to come, since we can be killed by restricted kindness. Our objective is to keep the University free, and unless we take careful heed, we may enslave it, for we can be degraded and disfigured by the money we seek and spend and we can lose our souls at the peak of our prosperity. I have had ample time to ponder on our origins as I have sat in the waiting rooms of the corporations and the foundations.<sup>155</sup>

Later in his life, George Watkins looked back at his six years with

155. Kimpton was in fact anticipating the processes of professionalization and project-oriented grant making within the foundation world that accelerated in the 1970s. See Peter Frumkin, “Conflict and the Construction of an Organizational Field: The Transformation of American Philanthropic Foundations.” Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1997, pp. 227–230, 386. I owe this reference to Professor Andrew Abbott.

Kimpton in the 1950s and took justifiable pride in having led a professional and successful effort.<sup>156</sup> But, in fact, by its conclusion in June 1958, the campaign had raised only \$22 million out of the \$32.8 million required for the original campaign objectives, and fully one-third of the total raised came as grants from the Ford Foundation, including very large grants for faculty salary support (\$5 million) and for the Graduate School of Business (\$1.375 million).<sup>157</sup> While the alumni and trustees segments fared quite well as was the case in the campaign of 1924–25, the major-gifts initiative among non-alumni donors was disappointing. The University's continued dependence on large foundation support, as opposed to major gifts from individuals, was striking. Kimpton himself had observed to his father in 1951 that "we have been very much on the outs with the rich people of our community for a long time and it is very important that they be cultivated."<sup>158</sup> Kimpton had large-sized hopes that he could re-engage the Rockefeller family, and when John D. Rockefeller Jr. asked to see him in 1953 he was encouraged: "This is the first gesture of friendliness that he has made toward the University for a long, long time. I hope something comes of it. He is still an immensely wealthy man, and he and his family have a huge stake in the University.

156. The progress of the campaign can be charted in the records of the Trustees' Campaign Steering Committee, from May 13, 1954, to August 2, 1957. These minutes provide a candid, behind-the-scenes view of how a major campaign is organized and executed. Watkins and Duncan served as the conveners.

157. "Campaign Gifts — Cumulative Summary, June 1, 1954–June 30, 1958," as an attachment to Edward L. Ryerson, "Report of the University of Chicago Campaign," *Kimpton Administration*, Box 255, folder 1; as well as the additional files in *University Development Campaigns, 1955–58*, Box 14. This report was drafted by William B. Cannon.

158. Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, December 13, 1951, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 3.

I do hope something develops in that regard."<sup>159</sup> In March 1955, during a five hour meeting with Rockefeller staff in New York City, Kimpton asked Rockefeller to give Chicago a large cash gift of \$8 million, including \$3 million to be used as a matching fund to raise other money. Kimpton was taken aback at the detailed knowledge that the Rockefeller staff had of the University: "They know an awful lot about this institution, and they even tripped me up on some of the detail. I am terribly impressed at how thoroughly they go into things."<sup>160</sup> Still, Kimpton's promises to restore the \$4 million in Rockefeller endowments that Hutchins had used in the late 1940s to cover deficits in the University's budget without consulting the family did little to incite enthusiasm on Rockefeller's part, and in the end another major gift from the Rockefellers proved to be an illusion.<sup>161</sup>

As his tenure wore on, Kimpton found fundraising all consuming and ever more frustrating: "Education these days is chiefly a matter of raising money and it's sure tough going."<sup>162</sup> By September 1956, Kimpton was deeply discouraged by the fact that the campaign was \$13 million short in its last year, and "I don't know where we are going to get it."<sup>163</sup> In fact, as early as 1956, the board realized that the needs of the

159. Letter of November 11, 1953, as well as December 21, 1954, *ibid.*, Box 4.

160. Letter of March 11, 1955, *ibid.*

161. Kimpton acknowledged the existence of these transfers to faculty leaders in 1952 when he was forced to explain to Carl Kraeling, the director of the Oriental Institute, why a substantial part of the endowment that the OI had possessed as late as 1946 no longer existed. See Kimpton to Kraeling, July 25, 1952, *Trevor Arnett Papers*, Box 1, folder 1.

162. Letter to Carl E. Kimpton, March 25, 1955, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 4.

163. Letter of September 27, 1956. "Our campaign for funds seems to have kind of bogged down at this point for one reason or another. I am really quite

University far surpassed the initial campaign goals of 1954–55. Neighborhood investments to stabilize the area adjacent to the University would be extremely costly, and much of the discussion at a second summit meeting of officers and trustees in February 1956 was about the possible need to take money from the endowment to invest in the neighborhood. Trustee Gardner Stern asked, “[I]f the neighborhood program is essential, would we object to taking profits from endowment for our goals?” Kimpton reminded the group that “if we lose the area we lose the character of the University and it might become an institution like C.C.N.Y. or N.Y.U.” Harold Moore thought that saving the “character of the institution” was more important than “maintaining the exact endowment with appropriate increases,” but Laird Bell responded that “we have dug our own grave in effect if we dip into endowments.”<sup>164</sup> Edward Ryerson later commented candidly, “[W]e had lulled ourselves into thinking that \$32,000,000 would be sufficient and that we must now recognize the cold fact that we must project plans which call for additional sums.”<sup>165</sup>

Moreover, the campaign’s partial successes proved frustrating for some cherished projects. At another meeting of officers and trustees in March 1957, a vigorous debate broke out over whether to start the Law School’s new building on the south side of the Midway, based on incomplete fundraising (only \$2.5 million had been raised or pledged, out of

discouraged about it. What it really means is that we worked terribly hard last year and raised a lot of money and now we have exhausted all of our sources of money.” Letter of November 12, 1956, *ibid.*

164. “Lakeside Conference II, February 15–19, 1956,” pp. 15–16, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 2.

165. “Lakeside Conference II, February 15–19, 1956,” p. 30.

a needed \$3.6 million), or whether to delay it in favor of completing already launched central projects and providing for additional budget underwriting. Dean Edward Levi wrote to Kimpton strongly urging that he be given a green light, even though the University would have to underwrite nearly \$1 million not in hand. Regretting that he sounded "hortatory," Levi insisted that not building the new school would significantly damage the Law School.<sup>166</sup> Trustees sympathetic to the Law School, especially Glen Lloyd and Henry Tenney, got involved. Tenney lobbied Kimpton hard, insisting that Levi had taken a second-rate Law School and helped it to blossom, and that it was a "miracle" that the Law School alumni had contributed over \$300,000 toward a new building.<sup>167</sup> Insisting that the needs of the neighborhood programs, student housing, the Laboratory Schools, and the regular budget ranked ahead of the Law School project, Kimpton opposed starting construction until the missing million dollars were raised, whereas Glen Lloyd argued fiercely for it. Finding no agreement, the trustees and officers adjourned to separate caucuses, but when they reassembled the next day consensus was still lacking.<sup>168</sup> At a subsequent meeting of the Committee on the Budget

166. Levi to Kimpton, March 20, 1957, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 253, folder 2.

167. Tenney to Kimpton, copying him on a longer letter he had sent to Glen Lloyd, March 20, 1957, *ibid.*

168. Robert Strozier, who took the minutes, described the collision as politely as he could: "There was uncertainty among the entire group as to the consensus of the final session of Lakeside IV. While there was not real disagreement, there was not concurrence about the prime needs particularly as they applied to [the] Law School. Mr. Lloyd's position which represented one of great enthusiasm for the Law School, for the ability to raise additional funds, and for the financing through the proposed revolving fund changed the categories and priorities



on April 1, 1957, Kimpton was overruled, with the board supporting Lloyd, based on the latter's scheme of a new "revolving fund" that, Lloyd promised, would provide the necessary money. Kimpton observed archly that "such a policy is a good one if we can raise new money, but a dangerous one if we cannot."<sup>169</sup>

### T H E C R I S I S I N T H E N E I G H B O R H O O D

Long before Lawrence Kimpton assumed the leadership of the University, it was clear that profound social changes were taking place in Hyde Park, Woodlawn, and Kenwood that would seriously impact the future

which had been presented by the members of the administration. Mr. Kimpton, while recognizing the value of the Law School project and also expressing his appreciation of the enthusiasm expressed by both Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Ryerson, expressed great doubts about moving ahead without further assurance of funds for the projects which he put in the first category. "Lakeside IV," *ibid.* John Kirkpatrick drafted an internal staff memo, dated April 1, 1957, that articulated the concerns of the administration relating to an early construction of the Law School. See his "Early Construction of the Law School," *ibid.* Kirkpatrick worried that allowing the project to go forward would reduce the pressure on the school's fundraisers and donors to generate the remainder of the costs.

169. Committee on Budget, April 1, 1957, *ibid.*, p. 10; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, April 11, 1957, filed in *Swift Papers*, Box 79, folder 26. Concerning the Law School project George Watkins later remembered that Lawrence Kimpton was "mighty upset about the proposal — and I was outraged — for I could see this seriously diverting support from the all-University goals. . . . Needless to say [the] other deans were furious — for they too had pet projects which they had set aside as campaign objectives to support the all-University campaign concept." "Interview of Christopher Kimball with George H. Watkins," August 25, 1987, p. 70.

stability of the University.<sup>170</sup> As early as June 1948, an older New Dealer on the faculty, Rexford Tugwell, complained to Ernest Colwell that "there are disquieting signs that the University might become the center of serious social conflict. . . . What the University's interest requires is that its neighborhood not be allowed to deteriorate. The essence of this is that it should remain largely institutional and residential, that the institutions should be respectable and that the residences should not be slums." Tugwell urged that the University embark on an ambitious and comprehensive urban planning process that would involve protective zoning, redevelopment of new housing, and maintenance-development contracts.<sup>171</sup> Muriel Beadle would later describe the state of 55th Street around 1950: "Economically, there had occurred a downward shift in income and buying habits. In one two-block stretch on 55th Street there were twenty-three taverns; the gutters were full of half-pint whiskey bottles; and crime was on the increase."<sup>172</sup> Robert Hutchins was deeply

170. The history of the urban renewal projects involving Hyde Park in the 1950s and 1960s has generated a substantial literature, scholarly, semi-scholarly, and popular, much of it containing emotionally charged judgments for and against the University's plans and motives. See Muriel Beadle, *The Hyde Park-Kenwood Urban Renewal Years* (Chicago, 1964); Peter H. Rossi and Robert A. Dentler, *The Politics of Urban Renewal. The Chicago Findings* (Glencoe, 1961); Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Cambridge, 1983); Rebecca Janowitz, *Culture of Opportunity: Obama's Chicago. The People, Politics, and Ideas of Hyde Park* (Chicago, 2010); Valetta Press, *Hyde Park/Kenwood: A Case Study of Urban Renewal* (Chicago, 1971); Brian J. L. Berry, Sandra J. Parsons, and Rutherford H. Platt, Platt, *The Impact of Urban Renewal on Small Business: The Hyde Park-Kenwood Case (Chicago, 1968)*; and Julia Abrahamson, *A Neighborhood Finds Itself* (New York, 1959).

171. Tugwell to Colwell, June 14, 1948, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 166, folder 3.

172. Beadle, *The Hyde Park-Kenwood Urban Renewal Years*, p. 4.

conflicted about what the University could or should do, however. He later admitted to Julian Levi that “you know, this neighborhood thing, as far as I was concerned was just a disaster. . . . I was schizophrenic about it.”<sup>173</sup> Little systematic efforts were undertaken during the last years of the Hutchins administration to confront these issues, and they ended up on Kimpton’s desk when he assumed office in the summer of 1951.<sup>174</sup>

A more general problem was the seeming standoffishness of the University in its relations with the city of Chicago. Although myriad faculty lived in and paid taxes in the city, and although many faculty even had research programs involving the city, over the course of the 1930s and 1940s an unfortunate gap seemed to emerge between the

173. “The Reminiscences of Julian H. Levi,” p. 37, University of Chicago Oral History Program, 1994. Conducted with Daniel Meyer, September 21, 22, and 23, 1992. Levi also noted that the “Board, as a matter of fact, was ahead of Hutchins. . . . Louis Wirth (part of this is reported in the Hutchins biography) went to the Board to say to the Board what this neighborhood situation was and how bad it was. There’s a story, I don’t know whether it’s true or apocryphal, that Wirth had written to Hutchins and Hutchins had responded, ‘At this University you teach, I administer’. What is not generally known is that the Board thereafter commissioned a study to be made by Booz, Allen and Hamilton as to what they ought to do. There had been a preliminary discussion which went nowhere about the idea of a land clearance project in Woodlawn. Then Booz, Allen and Hamilton had come in with their report which was remarkably close to what we actually did. I never saw that report for years. Kimpton didn’t see it. It surfaced purely by accident. Hutchins apparently never had passed it on to the Board.” *Ibid.*, p. 39.

174. There actually was some pressure on Hutchins—from the faculty, community, and board—to do something about the decline of the neighborhood before 1950. These efforts began in earnest in 1944–45, when the University began to take an interest in specific problem properties in the area, either by purchasing and rehabbing them or working with the police to enforce codes. Still, all of this was reactive and uncoordinated. Kimpton later referred to this conundrum when he complained that the University had merely “studied the problem” before 1950, which was in fact worse than ignoring it.

University and the civic and political elites of the city, about which professional fundraisers were only too aware. William Benton shrewdly remarked about this dilemma in 1937 that "[a] large percentage of the criticisms aimed at the University by businessmen in Chicago springs from ignorance of the functions of a real university. My surveys and interviews in Chicago show how wide-spread and how profound this ignorance is."<sup>175</sup> Yet the University was often its own worst enemy. When Robert Hutchins spoke out in 1941 on the issue in a speech on "The University and the City," his arguments were essentially to thank the city for being tolerant of the University's strong defense of academic freedom, and to express gratitude that the city fathers had agreed to provide a home for us in the 1890s. But beyond these simple assumptions, Hutchins's real message seemed to be: please admire us, but also leave us alone.<sup>176</sup>

The problem with such formulations was that when the University found itself in the kind of dire social and cultural straits that obtained in the 1950s, it was not self-evident to many Chicagoans and their political

175. William B. Benton, *The University of Chicago's Public Relations* (Chicago, 1937) p. 19. Thirty years later, the distinguished journalist and Chicago alumnus (Class of 1924) John Gunther remarked that "[s]everal old-style Chicago tycoons had ambivalent feelings toward the University in older days. They respected it — perhaps stood in a certain awe of it — but they did not really like it. They thought that it was off-beat, radically inclined, even pinko, although its Economics Department is one of the most conservative in the country. But the old mercantile aristocracy could not abide its devotion to what they called the visionary. And the Irish political bosses thought that long-haired professors dedicated to theory were crazy. They were suspicious of anything 'intellectual'. Chicago has traditionally been 'run' by State Street and the Irish (and other immigrant-descended) ward heelers, and to most of these the University was a puzzle." John Gunther, *Chicago Revisited* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 70–71.

176. Robert M. Hutchins, "The University and the City," 1941, copy in the *Mortimer Adler Papers*, Box 27.

leaders as to why saving the University of Chicago was also important to the city of Chicago. Lawrence Kimpton was brutally frank about these circumstances when he complained in May 1952: "There is, I am convinced, a great deal of misapprehension in our community about what the University is doing, about the importance of the University, about what it has and what it can contribute. A good deal of this has been our fault, if for no other reason than our lack of contact with much of the main stream of civic life. We must be prepared to take a more active, constructive role in Chicago affairs than before." In inheriting not only a complex local policy crisis, but also wider communications problems with the political power brokers and media elites of the city, Kimpton adopted an optimistic tone: "It has become fashionable in certain unexplainably smug publications to speak of Chicago as a 'tired' city, a city whose future lies wholly in its past. Chicago may complain more about its aches and pains than any other city, but it is by no means tired. And neither is the University. Both the city and the University have problems, some of them in common. By establishing better relations between the community and the University, it may become easier to surround these problems and annihilate them. Re-establishing our communication with the community, while a task that must be constantly born in mind, presents to us no insurmountable barriers. The facts are on our side. We are in a very real sense an ornament to Chicago, to the judgment of those pioneers who aided in our foundation."<sup>177</sup>

Beginning in the early 1940s, signs of deterioration in the neighborhood around the University were evident. As a result of the Depression and the war, many buildings had not been maintained for 15 years, and there had been little new investment in the area. In 1945, 53 percent of

177. Draft of "State of the University," June 1, 1952, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 12, folder 23.

the buildings in Hyde Park were more than 40 years old and 82 percent of the buildings in Woodlawn were more than 40 years old.<sup>178</sup> During the war a heavy in-migration of blacks from the South resulted in severe population pressures on the South Side. These conditions, in turn, led to predatory real estate practices: slum lords illegally converting six flats into 24 unit "kitchenettes," charging exorbitant rental rates, and not maintaining buildings to code. And, perhaps most troublesome, was the appearance of racial violence between whites and blacks on the neighborhood's borders.

The situation changed even more radically after the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelley vs. Kramer* in May 1948 that racially based restrictive covenants were unenforceable, which soon resulted in powerful pressures on the traditional "lines" separating black and white in Woodlawn and Kenwood and the movement of poorer black families into northern and western peripheries of Hyde Park. Between 1950 and 1956, 20,000 whites moved out of Hyde Park and Kenwood, and 23,000 non-whites moved in. In 1940, the non-white population of these two neighborhoods was 4 percent; by 1956, it was 36 percent.<sup>179</sup> These social dislocations were deeply shocking to long-time residents of Hyde Park.<sup>180</sup> George Wilgram of the Medical School, who left the University for Tufts and Harvard in 1960, later recalled his experience

178. See Hutchins to the board, November 9, 1944, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 106, folder 9.

179. Rossi and Dentler, *The Politics of Urban Renewal*, pp. 21–22.

180. "For residents of the area a striking indicator of its deterioration was a perceived increase in the crime rate. . . . Although statistics on crime in Hyde Park–Kenwood leave the most pertinent questions unanswered, it is fairly clear that at the height of the influx of newcomers into the community its crime rates were very high." *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31.

living in Hyde Park in the 1950s: “I have never seen anything like this in my whole life, and was completely thrown out of balance by this encounter with poverty, crime, and desolation.”<sup>181</sup>

The first of many turning points occurred on March 16, 1952, when an armed man invaded the apartment of a 28-year-old psychology graduate student in central Hyde Park, holding her hostage for five hours and attempting to rape her.<sup>182</sup> A huge protest meeting was called in Mandel Hall on March 27, 1952, to mobilize the community, where angry citizens condemned the failure of the police to patrol Hyde Park adequately.<sup>183</sup> Kimpton reported to his father: “There was a big mass meeting called for tonight that Marcia and I plan to attend. It is concerned with the deterioration of this community and the community’s determination to do something about it, particularly in the field of law enforcement. I am not at all clear what can be done, but I am clear that something has to be done and that the University has to participate actively. Hutchins never cared at all about this kind of thing, and had no interest in the community and its problems. I have felt very keenly that we must play a role whether we want to or not.”<sup>184</sup>

One immediate outcome of the meeting was a decision to create the South East Chicago Commission, a powerful new community organization. In June 1952, the SECC was established with a budget of \$30,000,

181. See Levi to Lloyd, January 3, 1963, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 25.

182. *Hyde Park Herald*, March 19, 1952, p. 1; *The Chicago Maroon*, March 28, 1952, p. 1. *The Chicago Maroon* reported that another attempted rape had occurred on March 10.

183. “Police Brass Roasted by Indignant Citizens,” *Hyde Park Herald*, April 2, 1952, p. 1.

184. Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, March 27, 1952, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 3.

with the University putting up \$10,000 on the assumption that the community would make the balance of the required funds. As Kimpton's quote to his father suggests, the initial goal of the commission was to force the city to provide more aggressive police protection, and early pronouncements from Kimpton and the other organizers were extremely aggressive about failings of the police, accusing the police department of archaic management and poor training practices, and of tolerating a culture of corruption (“the majority of the city's policemen are honest, but there are too many dishonest men on the force, and the department has no effective procedure for discovering and eliminating them”).<sup>185</sup> But it soon became apparent to Kimpton and his colleagues that the policing question was merely one part of a highly complex set of interventions that needed to be undertaken, and that more fundamental steps were urgently needed involving land use, community planning, and housing occupancy.<sup>186</sup>

Lawrence Kimpton had no training in or knowledge of urban planning or urban affairs, and for the first year or so one gets the palpable sense that he and his colleagues were constructing ad hoc responses,

185. “Report of the Citizen's Committee on Law Enforcement, May 19, 1952,” *Kimpton Papers*, Box 12, folder 11.

186. By mid-1953, he was focused on housing and real estate issues, and was none too optimistic: “I have been spending a great deal of time recently on the real estate problems of this community. It is in very sad shape and has gone so far down hill that there is extremely little that one can do about it. We are going to take a determined stand on conserving the area, but I don't know whether we can win this battle or not. The loss of a fit community for faculty and students to live in would be a great blow to the University of Chicago.” Letter to Carl E. Kimpton, August 7, 1953, *ibid*, Box 4.



driven largely by desperation.<sup>187</sup> In the fall of 1952, Kimpton, knowing his own limitations, reached out to Julian H. Levi, asking him to take the executive directorship of the South East Chicago Commission. The older brother of Edward H. Levi, Julian Levi was a graduate of the College and the Law School who worked as a successful private attorney in Chicago during the 1930s and 1940s, and then as the president of a local printing company. Admired by his friends and passionately feared by his enemies, Levi was a tough-minded, virtuoso political character, with superb negotiating skills and a reputation for both fearlessness and utter ruthlessness that was worthy of the best Chicago ward political traditions. As Jonathan Kleinbard would later recall, “he saved a neighborhood, and that way preserved a great University. . . . That is not to say that Julian was everyone’s cup of tea in those days. I am sure that the memory of him is a memory that some would like to forget even today. But you can’t or they can’t, and they shouldn’t be able or allowed to, since the distinguishing residential characteristic of the neighborhood is a tribute to his labors and many of the things he accomplished on the Plan Commission or through his advice to Mayor Richard J. Daley remain for the rest of us to enjoy.”<sup>188</sup> As Julian Levi remembered his initial encounter with Kimpton, “When I first saw Larry, it was kind of interesting. Larry was at Billings Hospital having one of these bouts with

187. As he put it to his father in July 1952, “I am still working quite hard on the problem of doing something about our neighborhood and community. We are in the impossible situation of being neither a first-class community, nor a slum. The finger of blight is thoroughly on the area and our desperate problem is to keep it from going further down hill. I haven’t had too much success up to this point, but we are working very hard on it.” Kimpton to Carl E. Kimpton, July 31, 1952, *ibid.*

188. Jonathan Kleinbard to Jay Pritzker, July 24, 1991, *Edward H. Levi Papers*, Box 25, folder 6.

his recurrent fever that had come as a result of overexposure to radiation during the Manhattan Project days. I said to him at the time, 'You know, I don't know anything about this sort of thing. Why are you asking me to do it?' He said, 'Well, we don't know anything either, but' he said, 'we'd better learn together.' My initial reaction was that this was something so amorphous and confused that to take it on just didn't make any sense at all."<sup>189</sup> Sensing the urgency of the crisis, Levi agreed to Kimpton's plea (initially Levi accepted the job for only one year, but he soon became a long term appointee, serving until 1980).

Julian Levi, in turn, became devoted to Kimpton. He later recalled about Kimpton's effectiveness in dealing with the members of the SECC, "The one thing they couldn't get over was to be able to sit in a meeting with the Chancellor of the University of Chicago and then at luncheon to be able to say: 'Well, Larry said so and so to me.' He worked absolute magic with these people. He was a remarkable, remarkable man. You always had the feeling that anybody who was that pleasant and that charming didn't really have any iron. He had iron, and he knew how to use it when he had to use it. But he was enormously persuasive with these people."<sup>190</sup>

Levi and Kimpton first tried to tackle the crime issue by forcing the city to commit to a more extensive police presence. Julian Levi later recalled that the then mayor, Martin Kennelly, did not at first take the University's plans seriously — responding with good wishes which essentially amounted to go jump in the Lake — until Levi persuaded the State Legislature in 1953 to revise the Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation Act of 1947 to give the University the right of eminent

189. "The Reminiscences of Julian H. Levi," p. 18.

190. *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

domain (if a redevelopment corporation secured the approval of 60 percent of the owners of property in a specific area, the corporation could take independent legal action to remove blighted properties).<sup>191</sup> Once Richard J. Daley succeeded Kennelly as mayor in 1955, this situation improved, for Daley proved to be a more attentive and responsive partner for Levi and Kimpton, especially in the years after 1957, and the cooperation of city agencies increased substantially with the highly professional planning staff that the University had assembled. Yet, ironically, as Rossi and Dentler pointed out as early as 1960, the fact that the University played so prominent a role in conceptualizing and implementing major urban policy programs and the parallel fact that it also had to rely on the personal good will and political clout of the mayor to push these initiatives through the municipal policy pipeline put University leaders at a strategic disadvantage. Under the terms of the Final Plan of 1958, no cleared public land could be sold to the University.<sup>192</sup>

This is not the place to recount in detail the controversial history

191. Ibid., pp. 24–25. “I began to get feedback from Hubert Will and people of his kind. That led me to the conclusion that we simply could not operate by cajoling the city of Chicago, by pleading with them. We had to somehow develop a position that really required them to respond whether they wanted to or not. Otherwise, we would be yessed to death, but nothing would happen.” For the legal distinction between blighted properties that could be designated as subject to land clearance, as opposed to those that would be subject to the more general norms of urban renewal, see the memorandum of Julian H. Levi to Harold A. Moore, October 17, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 231, folder 3.

192. “The approach also meant that the University of Chicago, to avoid charges of exploitation and collusion, had to forego gaining immediate advantages from renewal planning. The University had to arrange for its physical expansion through private investments; under the Final Plan no land is to be sold to the University.” Rossi and Dentler, *The Politics of Urban Renewal*, p. 276, as well as pp. 248–261, 290.

of Hyde Park renewal, but the general trends are important in order to appreciate the complexity of the initiatives that had to be undertaken. The core logic of Julian Levi's initial plan was to try to stabilize and rehabilitate the area between 55th and 61st Streets, from Cottage Grove to Stony Island Avenues, and to do so on the basis of economic prosperity and school stability, while seeking to avoid being cast in a racially exclusivist portrait. This meant that Kimpton and Levi consciously decided not to try to redevelop or otherwise intervene in Woodlawn or in most of Kenwood, and that the northern areas of Hyde Park between 51st and 55th Streets would be less of a priority, at least initially.<sup>193</sup> In August 1953, Julian Levi reported to the board of trustees:

I make four assumptions, none of which are any good, but they're the best that I can make. I'm going to assume first of all that we've got to dominate an area between 55th and 61st, Cottage to Stony. I don't think it's big enough, but I can tell you that anything smaller than that is impossible. Second of all, I'm going to assume that we're not going to get any help from anybody. I said, "I think we will get help, but we ought not to get into this thing on that basis. Third, I will assume that the only way that we can insist on the kind of stabilization policy we see

193. As late as 1957, Kimpton was characterizing the land north of 55th Street as a buffer zone: "Mr. Kimpton then spoke of the area between Hyde Park and Kenwood which represents a kind of buffer zone. This area is deteriorating rapidly in spite of everything that is being done. It would cost perhaps \$30,000,000 to control this entire area. He therefore said that he felt we should retreat to the Hyde Park area and abandon the property between 51st and 55th, Cottage and Lake Park." *PP 1952-1960*, Box 167, folder 1. The logic of the Final Urban Renewal Plan approved by the City Council in November 1958 disregarded this argument and included the area north of 55th Street in renewal and clearance planning.

here is to own the properties. And finally, we assume they're all going to come on the market."

Inherent in all of this are a couple of assumptions. Number one: there's no reason under any circumstance that the University ought to be doing any of this unless its academic mission is involved. We're not a public improvement association. We're not supposed to be a developer. We're not interested as a good government association. The only standard you ought to apply to this is whether the University of Chicago as an academic entity requires a compatible community. Second of all, you'd better understand what that 'compatible community' means, unpleasant as it is. There are two things about it. The overwhelming number of your faculty are convinced of the terrible importance of higher education. If they weren't, they wouldn't be teaching. They could be making more money doing something else. They are convinced that that opportunity has to be made available to their children. We can answer a certain amount of that demand through the Laboratory Schools. But there are always going to be faculty who very properly say that they want their youngsters to go to the public schools. You've got to have a community which is going to generate a sufficient number of pre-collegiate students that that public school is going to do its job.

I said, 'We're confronted with one other thing. There's no way in the world that we can look at this thing on the basis of racial exclusion. We're going to have to look at it on the basis of an economic screen. We've worked with Perloff and Hauser on this. You can develop what they think is a successfully integrated program provided that you have the proper economic

and social compatibility. But,’ I said, ‘again, that’s going to be awkward because it means, among other things, that there’s no room for public housing except on a very limited basis. . . .’ I said, ‘There’s one other thing. We’ve got to move if we’re going to move quickly. We can move now where the burden of our relocation is not predominantly black. If we wait it will be.’ I said, ‘One of the problems we’re having is that we buy time for awhile by giving up space. We lose all of Oakland and North Kenwood, we lose all of Woodlawn, but when you begin to talk about Hyde Park, you’re talking about a situation where you’ve got to have enough in the way of population to give you a high school base.’<sup>194</sup>

Perhaps the most important feature of this statement is its unequivocal assertion of the primacy of the University’s self-interest, which would guide Levi in the often quite aggressive tactics that he adopted in the coming years in Hyde Park and Woodlawn. Levi was convinced that strong, centrally controlled planning and executive policy implementation was needed, and that if the University provided this leadership, it was completely justified in framing the general social interest of the Hyde Park community through the (wide) lens of the University’s own needs. It is also relevant to remember that Julian Levi’s urban policy in-

194. “The Reminiscences of Julian H. Levi,” pp. 33–34. In a subsequent memo to Kimpton on the goals of the program in 1954, Levi argued that while the area between 55th and 59th Streets had to have top priority, the University should also make sure that “on the far side of the Midway steps should be taken to make it amply clear that the area from 60th to 61st is ultimately an area of University interest and dominance.” Thus, even in the early days of planning, Levi had his eye on the northern reaches of Woodlawn as well. See Levi to Kimpton, November 3, 1954, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 231, folder 1.

terventions came at a time when (as discussed above) the University was hemorrhaging students via collapsing enrollments, when it was losing dozens of distinguished faculty members, and when it was enduring perhaps the most severe financial crunch in its history, all of which generated a potent emergency mentality on his and Kimpton's part.

Over the next seven years, University leaders and the SECC, working in coordination with a new "Planning Unit" established under the direction of Jack Meltzer with offices on the University campus, proposed several waves of renewal interventions, beginning with the Hyde Park A and B project launched in April 1954 which cleared and redeveloped about 48 acres along 55th Street and Lake Park Boulevard, and included plans for a suburban style shopping center and townhomes along 55th Street.<sup>195</sup> This program was financed with approximately \$6.5 million of federal funds, and \$3.6 million in city and state funds. The A and B plan was followed in 1956 by a University initiative to redevelop 14 acres in southwest Hyde Park, from 55th to 56th Streets between Ellis and Cottage Grove Avenues, under the aegis of the South West Hyde Park Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation. A third, and much larger, intervention began in January 1956 when the city of Chicago contracted with the University's "Planning Unit" to develop what came to be called the Hyde Park–Kenwood Urban Renewal Plan that included 600 acres in 1.3 square miles bounded by 47th Street on north, Cottage Grove Avenue on the west, the Illinois Central railway tracks on the east, and 59th Street on the south. The plan called for the clearance of 101 acres, with 630 buildings (out of a total of 3,077) to be

195. A detailed summary of these plans is contained in Julian Levi, *The Neighborhood Program of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, n.d. [1961]). A parallel text is *The Neighborhood Program of the University of Chicago. Statements of Albert C. Svoboda and Julian Levi to the Board of Trustees, October 12, 1961.*

demolished, at a total cost of \$38.6 million in government funds. The plan wound its way through various administrative reviews, and enjoyed extensive community consultation.<sup>196</sup> The plan was approved by the Conservation Community Council in April 1958 and by the Community Conservation Board in July 1958, and it was forwarded to the Committee on Urban Planning of the City Council. In the weeks before the final vote in the Council, a Catholic priest, Monsignor John Egan, tried to mobilize support against the University, arguing that masses of poor people were being displaced without proper protections. Eventually, Mayor Richard Daley intervened, and the City Council adopted the plan by an overwhelming vote of 44 to 0 on November 7, 1958. Yet University officials were anxious about the outcome, all the more so given that Egan had tried to maneuver Levi into conceding more public housing in Hyde Park to protect Catholic parishes elsewhere on the South Side from being "inundated" by black residents forced to relocate out of Hyde Park as the price of not raising his protests.<sup>197</sup>

196. The politics of this process are well described in Rossi and Dentler, *The Politics of Urban Renewal*, pp. 134–239.

197. In a subsequent interview with Daniel Meyer in 1992, Levi reported what had transpired. Julian Levi: "What happened was that Cardinal Stritch died, that Monsignor Burke and a number of others concluded that the only way to deal with this problem was to try to suppress black migration into white parishes. That was the demand that Monsignor [Egan] and Nick von Hoffman made upon me before the hearings began on the Hyde Park–Kenwood project." Daniel Meyer: "What was their demand?" Levi: "Can you give us assurance that your black relocatees will not move into our white parishes? Just that simple. I thought something of this kind was going to happen, because I'd asked Jack Meltzer to accompany me. The evening was over, and he and I sat down and immediately reduced to paper (I have it) the recollection of that conversation. The thing began in a very funny way. Von Hoffman said to me, 'I'm going to be the devil's advocate.' And I said to Hoffman, 'I didn't know that we were going to canonize anybody. What do you mean?' Egan at that point, talks up and says,



Julian Levi later summarized the main objectives that Kimpton and he had sought to accomplish with the 1958 plan: "First of all it was totally incompatible with the history of the University of Chicago at its best, and the climate certainly of those years, to have come forward with a plan the purpose of which was to discriminate against anyone and specifically blacks. This had to be a plan that was non-discriminatory. Second, we had to have a community which would generate a sufficiently large pre-collegiate student body that would enable the public schools to do a first-rate job of collegiate preparation. We would not rely entirely on the Laboratory School, or for that matter on St. Thomas the Apostle . . . Third, approval of the plan required the vote of the majority of the City Council and the Mayor. We had

'What assurance can you give us that your black relocatees will not move into our white parishes?' I said, 'Well, I have to be perfectly candid with you, and I'm going to give you two answers. One is soft and the other is hard. The soft answer is very simple: don't talk to me. Relocation under the plan is going to be handled by the city of Chicago in accordance with the federal regulations. You want to know whether anybody is going to move and where, whatever the relocation process is, that's the burden of the city. I can't control it. One way or the other I wouldn't try to. You talk to them. But,' I said, 'I think you've got to get the hard answer. You're talking to me, I think, not only as representing the South East Chicago Commission, but also representing the University of Chicago.' And I said, 'Very candidly, it's not our business to slice up this town with anybody.' And I said, 'I'll be equally candid, it's not your business to do that either.' That was the end of the discussion. In the succeeding week, a series of attacks on the Hyde Park plan, which we now find were written by Hoffman, began to appear in the *New World*. There's no question about this. Jack Meltzer, whom I'd spoken to, said to me he even recalls a discussion of St. Philip Neri, which is the parish in South Shore, that that parish would be inundated, etc. We had been aware that something of this sort would happen for a long time." "The Reminiscences of Julian H. Levi," pp. 81–82. For Egan's perspective in this controversy, see Margery Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago. The Ministry of a City Priest* (Kansas City, 1991) pp. 94–110.

to put together a plan whose financial implications were such that the City Council would approve it. And the notion would not develop that Hyde Park–Kenwood was removing all of the chips on the table so that no other neighborhood could ever look forward to a renewal program.”<sup>198</sup>

The University’s final intervention came in July 1960 in a presentation to the Chicago Land Clearance Commission involving an area in Woodlawn immediately south of the Midway. The University already owned approximately 60 percent of the land between 60th and 61st Streets, from Cottage Grove to Stony Island, and it now proposed that the remaining 27 acres, most of which were filled with deteriorated buildings, be cleared and acquired by the University for future campus expansion. This proposal generated intense opposition on the part of the newly created The Woodlawn Organization (TWO), which eventually (July 1963) secured the University’s and the city’s commitment to support the creation of 500 units of low cost and subsidized housing on Cottage Grove Avenue between 60th and 63rd Streets as the price of approving the University’s land acquisition plans between 60th and 61st Streets.<sup>199</sup>

198. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

199. This agreement was mediated by Mayor Daley with Arthur Brazier and Julian Levi, and has been the subject of much historical lore. In contrast to Saul Alinsky and John Egan, Levi found Brazier to be a pragmatic deal-maker with whom he could work. Perhaps with an overly romantic spin, Levi later remembered, “We had this problem of working things out with The Woodlawn Organization, which was not too difficult once we got into the Mayor’s office and Arthur Brazier could talk directly to me without Von Hoffman or Alinsky or others, he and I found a ready and easy way to communicate.” See Levi, “The Reminiscences of Julian Levi,” p. 90, as well as pp. 91–93, 95, 136; and LaDale Winling, “Students and the Second Ghetto: Federal Legislation, Urban Politics, and Campus Planning at the University of Chicago,” *Journal of Planning*

The results of all of these plans were slow but increasingly conspicuous, and resulted in the decades between 1960 and 1990 in what Rebecca Janowitz has fairly characterized as a “racially balanced community,” but also a community based on substantial wealth, affluence, and even privilege.<sup>200</sup> In total approximately 925 acres of land were part of the planning process, with 14 percent of the total subjected to land clearance and with the expenditure of a total of \$200 million in federal, state, local, and University funds. The University’s own expenditures between July 1, 1954, and June 30, 1961, involved \$6.8 million to acquire neighborhood properties that were deemed to be deteriorating or sub-standard and to finance various campus expansion projects and an additional \$3.2 million to purchase and renovate 24 neighborhood apartment buildings for the use of graduate and married student housing.<sup>201</sup>

These interventions resulted in over 640 small businesses losing their premises, only a small number of which were able to revive their enterprises. Julian Levi later recalled that “clearing commercial is far more devastating than clearing a residence. You clear commercial property, you’re dealing with people’s livelihood. What happens is, you have a clear conflict. One principle that ought to govern all of this is you don’t do any of this without a maximum degree of public discussion, public

*History*, 10 (1), 2011: 71–72; John Hall Fish, *Black Power/White Control: The Struggle of the Woodlawn Organization* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 17–73; and Arthur Brazier, *Black Self-Determination: The Story of the Woodlawn Organization* (Grand Rapids, 1969), pp. 60–65.

200. Janowitz, *Culture of Opportunity*, pp. 137–138.

201. These figures were provided by Albert C. Svoboda to the board of trustees on October 12, 1961. Svoboda also projected the need for an additional expenditure of \$7.6 million for the purchase of threatened properties in the five years after 1961.

disclosure, public education. On the other hand, the moment that you do that you in effect develop a situation where particularly commercial tenants are not going to renew leases and where owners are going to be confronted with tremendous losses. It's also going to affect tenants."<sup>202</sup> Still, the deepest public controversies in the execution of these plans came over the forced housing relocations, which were made necessary by the demolition of blighted properties. Under the massive 1958 renewal plan, buildings containing 4,371 families were demolished, clearing approximately 15 percent of the buildings in the plan area, in an effort to de-densify the neighborhood by razing sub-standard properties. Of these families, 1,837 were white, and 2,534 were black, making the non-white relocatees about 58 percent of the total.<sup>203</sup> The majority of those who were forced to move were lower income families, and of those who did not return to Hyde Park, the percentage of blacks was substantially greater than whites. Over time those who criticized the plan targeted this issue, accusing the University of racial discrimination in the form of "Negro clearance."<sup>204</sup> Kimpton for his part genuinely believed that the plan was not racist, but was driven by fundamental economic and social constraints and the desire to create an inter-racial neighborhood with high quality housing and good schools, a quieter, less dense, and more amenity-filled neighborhood where University faculty members would

202. Berry, Parsons, and Platt, *The Impact of Urban Renewal*, pp. 77–81, 155, 170–172; Levi, "The Reminiscences of Julian Levi," pp. 55–56.

203. Testimony of John I. Fitzpatrick, 1959, p. 133, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 102, Folder 2. In the central renewal areas designated Hyde Park A and B by the planners, the percentage of white relocatees was higher: 1,032 white families, 84 black families, and 51 Asian American families lost their housing. Ibid.

204. See the critique in Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, pp. 167–170.

want to live and raise their families and where parents would be willing to send their children as students. Early on in the renewal planning, in December 1952, he insisted that “the problem of community deterioration is not a racial problem. The enforcement of zoning, housing, and building codes, the prevention of overcrowding, the insistence upon proper standards of maintenance have nothing to do with the race, creed or color of either the owner or the occupant of any building. A blunt insistence on effective law enforcement and effective action to prevent the deterioration and misuse of property is neither anti-white or anti-Negro. It is simply pro-government.”<sup>205</sup>

Subsequent critics of Lawrence Kimpton’s role in urban renewal, particularly Arnold Hirsch, have accused him of public dissimulations and outright racism, judgments that seem to me to be unduly harsh and distorting of Kimpton’s personal values and strategic intentions.<sup>206</sup> Other critics have suggested that the University under Kimpton’s leadership overreacted and overreached, acting in a precipitous and almost dictatorial fashion where more citizen participation and more civic consultation with local community groups would have been prudent. Given the extensive neighborhood deterioration and crime levels that were already apparent by the early 1950s and what Rossi and Dentler have characterized as the “primitive state of government machinery in the city before 1956,” it is hard to imagine that a cluster of more modest initiatives — less decisive, less transformational, and less interventionist — would have achieved the rapid and enduring structural changes that

205. “Speech to the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity at Mandel Hall,” December 27, 1953, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 12, folder 37.

206. See Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, pp. 153–154.

were needed to protect the livability of the Hyde Park neighborhood for large numbers of faculty families and students, initiating a level of sustained progress that was already apparent to long-time residents of Hyde Park by the 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>207</sup> Hence, Kimpton and Levi believed that the second argument was simply not plausible as a realistic set of policy actions and that, if the University failed to exert rapid and decisive action, the Hyde Park neighborhood would have gradually lost a significant percentage of faculty families and students as permanent residents.<sup>208</sup>

As for the first objection, Kimpton's goals were both straightforward and transparent: he wanted a stable, prosperous, and substantially middle-class neighborhood because he was convinced that future faculty and students coming to the University would expect such conditions in order to agree to become permanent residents of Hyde Park in the decades to come. Kimpton was perhaps less concerned that

207. See Rossi and Dentler, p. 276.

208. I believe that this explains Levi's impatience with those whom he called "little people" in the local community whose intentions may have been highly idealistic, but whose political effectiveness and legal experience in dealing with the city and with the Federal government was quite limited. Various memos in the *Kimpton Administration* files convey his frustration with "bleeding hearts" and local block organizations, as well as with local organizers like Julia Abrahamson of the Hyde Park Community Conference, whom he thought was too easily influenced by sundry local lobbying interests and who was unwilling to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive negotiations. For example, Levi to Kimpton, September 29, 1954, March 4, 1955, and April 7, 1955, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 231, folders 1 and 2. See also the comments in LaDale Winling, "Students and the Second Ghetto: Federal Legislation, Urban Politics, and Campus Planning at the University of Chicago," *Journal of Planning History*, 10 (1), 2011: 81, note 42.

veteran faculty who had made Hyde Park their home for long tenures since the 1920s and 1930s would suddenly leave in the 1950s than with the prospect that he and his presidential successors would be unable to persuade new faculty, coming to Chicago from more stable and safe residential environs elsewhere in the nation, to live in the Hyde Park neighborhood.<sup>209</sup> This may explain the fascination of University planners with suburban-like amenities (shopping centers) and green spaces that were so characteristic of 1950s urban planning.<sup>210</sup>

Kimpton also hoped that the newly designed neighborhood would end up being, to some degree, both inter-racial and multi-racial, but he also believed that both racial and economic/class balance were important and that it was a fateful but brutal fact that many whites, including many white University of Chicago faculty, would not feel comfortable living in a neighborhood in which poor, impoverished African Americans constituted the overwhelming majority of the

209. By 1959, Kimpton would argue that “faculty who have actually lived in Hyde Park like it, and I seriously doubt that it now constitutes a major factor in the decision of a faculty member to leave the University. But bringing a new and distinguished faculty member to our campus is a different problem.” Quoted in Levi, *The Neighborhood Program*, p. 31.

210. It must be said, however, that the planners were quite conscious that most Hyde Park residents used the Loop as a primary source of shopping and recreation and they neither expected nor wanted those relationships to change: “There is no possibility of the creation here of a full regional type of shopping center. A substantial proportion of the population is now and has been for many years oriented toward the Loop. . . . The proposed redevelopment and conservation being undertaken in this area will not change this pattern. If anything, the orientation towards downtown Chicago will be increased.” *South East Chicago Renewal Project No. 1* (Chicago, n.d. [1954]), p. 73.

residents.<sup>211</sup> That the University was engaged in social engineering on a vast and unprecedented scale involving the lives of thousands of lower income residents was, moreover, undeniable, and the social turmoil manifested in these years was bound to elicit strident criticisms about the University's policies and about its motives that cast a long shadow into the decades ahead.<sup>212</sup> In the end, Muriel Beadle's sober assessment from 1964 about the tensions between various advocates for renewal of Hyde Park is quite instructive about public attitudes four years after Lawrence Kimpton had left office:

But the greatest compromise of all, and the bitterest pill that the community had to swallow, was to accept the fact that the

211. From the very first, Levi was insistent that it should be a goal of the University's efforts to get rid of "slum and blight which attract lower class Whites and Negroes." Levi to Kimpton, November 3, 1954, marked confidential, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 231, folder 1. This fundamental assumption in turn may help to explain Julian Levi's almost paranoid concern with racial balance in local neighborhood schools and in rental properties, a policy which was extremely controversial at the time and remains deeply so today. As Winling has rightly noted, "Julian Levi was particularly sensitive to the impact of racial demographics at local schools, arguing that significant minority school populations would provoke white disenrollment." Winling, "Students and the Second Ghetto," p. 84, note 83.

212. Kimpton was certainly aware of the bitter controversies in which he had placed himself. When he resigned as chancellor in 1960, the *Chicago Defender* wrote a harsh editorial attacking him. Kimpton sent John W. Swearingen of the Standard Oil Company the editorial, with the comment, "Dear John, I thought you might be interested in seeing the splendid editorial that the *Defender* wrote in connection with my resignation from the University. I somehow gather that they do not like me very well. When you come right down to it, I guess they have pretty good reason." Letter of April 8, 1960, *Kimpton Papers*, Box 17, folder 10.



stated objectives of conservation and renewal could not be obtained unless 1) the community accepted integration, 2) treated integration as a class problem; and 3) discriminated against lower-income families and individuals. It took a long time and a colossal amount of talk before the community came to this conclusion. Initially . . . there were two segments of radically diverse opinion: those who were vigorously *for* integration and opposed any control; and those who were vigorously *against* integration and wanted plenty of control. . . . From the beginning, all groups in the community had known that deteriorated structures would have to be rehabilitated or replaced and population reduced. This in turn meant displacement of the people who occupied those structures. And a great many of them were Negroes who would not be able, for financial reasons, to live here once sub-standard housing was no longer available. The pro-integration segment of the community therefore had to accept the idea that you can't have a middle-class residential community unless the majority of the people who live in it have middle-class incomes.<sup>213</sup>

213. Beadle, *The Hyde Park–Kenwood Urban Renewal Years*, pp. 17–18. Rebecca Janowitz has recently (2010) provided a more nuanced and, in my view, fair evaluation of these processes, arguing that “it is impossible to judge how sincerely white Hyde Parkers welcomed black neighbors. It is equally impossible to determine how willing either black or white members of the middle class were to live with poorer people of either race. Regardless, the neighborhood achieved a lasting racial balance and continued to be economically diverse. If a substantial number of whites intended to keep out all but a handful of black people, they failed. If both black and white members of the middle class intended to keep out the poor, they too failed.” Janowitz, *Culture of Opportunity*, p. 135.

Lawrence Kimpton provided heroic service to the University. He helped to transform and thus to save the neighborhood of Hyde Park as a congenial place for University faculty (and many other citizens) to live and raise their families; he enhanced faculty salaries (the median for full professors rose from \$10,416 in 1951–52 to \$13,257 in 1959–60) and he eventually slowed the exodus of faculty that began in the early 1950s; he negotiated a successful, if controversial, truce between the College and the divisions over the undergraduate curriculum; he presided over a generally successful fundraising campaign; and he began the long, rocky road back to a reasonably sized undergraduate College.<sup>214</sup> In his eulogy to Lawrence Kimpton in Rockefeller Chapel in January 1978, George Watkins insisted that his friend had literally “saved” the University of Chicago, and there is much truth to that statement. But Kimpton was not simply a gifted “fix-it man” struggling with awkward and unseemly troubles. He maintained an eloquent, future-oriented vision of the University even while imposing austerities and dealing with very practical problems.

Yet the old timer Harold Swift, who had great personal affection for Kimpton, was not persuaded that all was well. In the fall of 1959, Swift wrote to Kimpton arguing:

I understood you to say [in a conversation they had on September 19 about University finances] that you considered the University financial picture relatively good. I might agree to this if I were assured of prosperous conditions in the nation for the next ten or fifteen years. However, if we should have a national condition similar to the early 1930s— which we

214. “Median Faculty Salaries,” April 8, 1959, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 255, folder 2.

barely got through by the skin of our teeth because we had a great many reserves which could be called upon — I believe we would be in worse shape than we were in 1930, because we do not have reserves equivalent to those we had then and our budget responsibilities are greater in geometric proportion than at that time. Therefore, I cannot think of the University's financial picture as being in relatively good shape until our reserves and budget are in like proportion to the 1930 reserves-budget situation.<sup>215</sup>

Swift's invocation of 1930 was especially apt, given that the "reserves" of the University in that year had been fortified by the heroic work of Ernest Burton in the 1920s. Swift's comment might be rephrased to suggest that what Kimpton was really trying to accomplish was to return Chicago to that state of blissful solvency and academic luster that Burton and his colleagues had sought to achieve. Yet we have already seen that Ernest Burton had identified serious problems involving the educational structure of the University and its resource base that needed urgent attention, particularly the stability of its financial position, its capacity to attract steady support from philanthropic sources, and the size, the role, and the identity of the University's undergraduate College as a part of the larger political economy of the University. Kimpton's drastic attempts to rebuild and to expand the College reflected urgent financial necessities, but because he failed to persuade the faculty to construct a coherent and workable *educational alternative* to the Hutchins's experiment — other than ceding chunks of the curriculum to

215. Swift to Kimpton, September 29, 1959, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 255, folder 5.

the graduate departments — Kimpton left office with little forward progress in place. Nor was Kimpton able to make any significant progress on Burton's schemes for a more integrated pattern of student life based on a substantially residential college campus, given the grim budgetary situation in which he found himself.<sup>216</sup> Kimpton had had the courage to identify huge problems facing the University, but his formulas for educational change and for extracurricular enrichment were inevitably too reactive and too modest, the latter being hamstrung by the University's need to spend massive funds on neighborhood investments. Kimpton left office having "killed off" the Hutchins College curriculum and faculty, but not having put in place an attractive alternative that could in fact meet his most cherished longer-term goals.

These controversies would continue to play out in the decades to come, during the provostship and the presidency of Edward H. Levi. ■

216. Kimpton admitted while "he would prefer a campus on which the majority of the students lived in residence halls . . . in reality we must expect a large percentage of our student body to be made up of commuting students." "Planning Conference, March 4–7, 1954," Fifth Session, *Kimpton Administration*, Box 252, folder 1.





*Edward H. Levi, undated*

PART IV  
EDWARD H. LEVI

A CHICAGO PRAGMATIST

**E**

dward Levi was a lifelong Hyde Park resident and the son and grandson of Jewish rabbis. He fondly remembered his grandfather, Emil G. Hirsch, as a supporter of William Rainey Harper and as the man who had helped to broker Julius Rosenwald's huge financial support of the University.<sup>217</sup> Levi received all of his formal education at the University of Chicago. He attended the Laboratory Schools for primary and secondary school, and he graduated from the College in 1932 and the Law School in 1935, where he was editor-in-chief of the *Law Review*. While he was in the College, Levi participated in a Great Books seminar taught by Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler, and he was captivated by their bracing

217. Comments to W. H. McNeill, *Levi Papers*, Box 46, folder 3. See also Levi's speech to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, May 26, 1968, *ibid.*, Box 298, folder 4; and the comments in Levi to Robert Rosenthal, December 16, 1981, *ibid.*, Box 34, folder 5.

intellectual style in class and beyond.<sup>218</sup> Levi then spent a year on a Sterling Fellowship at Yale from 1935 to 1936. In May 1936, Dean of the Law School Harry A. Bigelow recommended Levi as an assistant professor at Chicago, noting that Levi was said to be a “very good” scholar and teacher. Of Levi’s personality, Bigelow commented that he was “vigorous but not unpleasant.”<sup>219</sup>

After Levi returned to Chicago from Yale in September 1936, Levi re-introduced himself to Robert Hutchins by sending the materials on “The Elements of Law” that he and Roscoe Steffen had prepared at Yale, while also urging that Hutchins consider Friedrich Kessler of Yale for a faculty appointment at Chicago, all with the deferential notation that “I feel that the form of this communication may be a breach of etiquette, but this is a pretty important matter and I am willing to risk it.”<sup>220</sup> Three years later, Levi made the bold proposal that Hutchins and he collaborate on a book: “I am trying to read some books and write some things having to do with the philosophy of law. . . . Now the proposition

218. “Hutchins and Adler presented an enormous excitement and presence.” Interview of Edward Levi with George Dell, March 2, 1978, *ibid.*, Box 44, folder 10. Levi later remembered, “I had wonderful courses, wonderful seminars, a lot of individual work, and in fact there were also outstanding lectures, also. I was in one of Adler’s seminars and I was in a year long seminar with Boucher. . . . (I could recite a long list of professors to whom I, as a student, was indebted).” Levi to McNeill, September 17, 1990, *Levi Papers*, Box 46, folder 1.

219. Appointment recommendation of May 4, 1936, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 335, folder 12. For Levi’s role as a faculty member in the Law School and as Dean of the Law School, see the excellent analysis in Dennis J. Hutchinson, “Edward Levi: Legal Scholar, Legal Educator,” presented at the symposium in honor of Edward H. Levi at the University of Chicago, September 21, 2012.

220. Levi to Hutchins, September 19, 1936, *Hutchins Administration*, Box 127, folder 14.



is that you and I write a book on the philosophy of law. The procedure will be that I will keep writing on these things, and then you can do something with them. I won't ghost write them because then I will lose my job for not having done any writing. If this is an impertinent and otherwise bad suggestion, I suppose you will know what to do with it."<sup>221</sup> These casual notes suggest how deeply Levi admired Robert Hutchins throughout the 1930s, which is critical to understanding Levi's subsequent work as a University leader in the 1960s and 1970s.

Between 1940 and 1945 Levi served in the Justice Department, working with Thurman Arnold in the Antitrust Division and then as a special assistant to Attorney General Francis Biddle. He returned to Chicago in 1945, and in 1950 he was appointed dean of the Law School, serving from 1950 and 1962. Levi proved himself to be an effective and trusted dean and an imaginative fundraiser. He was also a brilliant teacher and an incisive scholar. His little book, *An Introduction to Legal Reasoning*, remains a classic even today.

#### K I M P T O N ' S L E G A C Y

In March 1960, Lawrence Kimpton announced, quite unexpectedly, that he would resign as chancellor of the University of Chicago. Kimpton had devoted most of his administration to responding to enormous problems facing the University in the 1950s, including the distress of the neighborhood, the collapse in College enrollments, and an acute budget crisis that resulted in dreadful losses of distinguished senior faculty between 1952 and 1959. He felt completely exhausted after his nine years of service, and in early 1960 he confided to his former vice president for

221. Levi to Hutchins, June 19, 1939, *ibid.*

development, George Watkins, that "I'm planning on leaving the University." Kimpton refused genuine and heartfelt pleas from key trustees to reconsider his decision, even though Watkins warned him that if he left office in 1960, he would go down in history only as "the guy who saved the neighborhood."<sup>222</sup>

The search for Lawrence Kimpton's successor commenced in the spring of 1960, but proved more difficult than expected. The two top candidates — McGeorge Bundy of Harvard and Clark Kerr of Berkeley — both toyed with the idea of the Chicago presidency but eventually rejected it.<sup>223</sup> The then chairman of our board of trustees, Glen Lloyd, personally contacted McGeorge Bundy, the dean of the faculty of arts and sciences at Harvard, to ascertain his possible candidacy. Lloyd was particularly taken with Bundy, and upon Bundy's initial negative reaction he asked David Rockefeller to intervene to persuade Bundy to change his mind. Bundy did not do so, but instead wrote a detailed and highly insightful five page critique of Chicago's predicament that is still worth reading today. Bundy argued that the University, once great, had "slipped academically in the last ten years." Although Bundy found much that was attractive about Chicago's traditions, he feared that no permanent recovery could take place without a massive recapitalization of the University and that "unless there is a really radical reinforcement of the unrestricted financial resources of the University, above and beyond the

222. Interview of George H. Watkins with Christopher Kimball, August 25, 1987, p. 109.

223. "I should say again, after more reflection, that my own commitments are quite firmly in California at the present time and beyond the immediate future my dream is to again be a faculty member — and I never have been able to give up all connection with teaching and research even after eight years as Chancellor and more recently as President." Clark Kerr to Glen Lloyd, July 14, 1960, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 21.

efforts that the ordinary devoted President and conscientious Board of Trustees are always making for their institution, I see no prospect that this University can, as a whole, play for the next generation the extraordinarily important innovating role it has played in the past.” Bundy’s prescription was stunning—the University needed an immediate cash infusion of at least \$200 million. This infusion was merely the beginning of a longer-term process of financial rebuilding, the goal of which was to put the University in a state where “with luck this time the place could be put beyond the need for another such transfusion.” Bundy concluded by posing a paradox: “Perhaps we have a paradox here—the trustees are looking for academic leadership, and they are saying to themselves that this is the one thing they need. . . . But the trustees of our present-day universities have come to put so much weight on the happy choice of a man that they do not look as sharply as they should at the economics of greatness.” Or, to put the matter even more baldly, “in a way it is queer that I should spend so much time on money, which is nothing, to a university, in and of itself. There are rich and lousy places, as there are poor and good ones. But I am persuaded, on all the evidence, that there are no poor and great ones, no matter who is president.”<sup>224</sup>

Although he was taken aback by its boldness, Lloyd was clearly impressed with Bundy’s missive, and later in the decade he recalled with some fondness to Bundy that “back in the 1960s you were the most helpful single person in one of my assignments. You wrote an extraordinary letter which I believe to be as pertinent today as it was then.”<sup>225</sup>

224. Bundy to Rockefeller, September 2, 1960, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 6. Bundy’s candidacy was especially advocated by Trustees William Benton, David Rockefeller, and Charles Percy, in addition to Lloyd himself.

225. Lloyd to Bundy, December 27, 1965, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 6.

With Bundy and Kerr out of the running, the committee came up with a less than compelling short list, at the top of which was George Beadle, a professor of biology at the California Institute of Technology who had won the Nobel Prize in 1958 and who had served as the chair of the Division of Biology at Caltech since 1946.<sup>226</sup> Given the need to conclude their deliberations, the committee chose Beadle. The trustees wanted (or were persuaded by senior faculty that they wanted) a distinguished academic leader. That is, as a prize-winning scientist with an international scholarly reputation, Beadle was chosen because he seemed to be everything that Kimpton was not. It seemed that after nine years of painful restructuring and belt tightening, many senior faculty looked to the other end of spectrum for an inspired intellectual leader.

During the course of the presidential search the issue of the structure of central governance emerged, and Glen Lloyd and other key trustees toyed with the idea of creating a dual presidency or some other dualistic power-sharing arrangement. In fact, this was an issue that had concerned the board even during Kimpton's term. Now, one trustee, George A. Poole, felt strongly that "that it would be a dereliction of the very highest magnitude on the part of the trustees for us to even approach an individual who might replace Kimpton . . . without having first worked out the exact organization plan we are asking him to use in operating the University."<sup>227</sup> In April 1960, Kimpton, now a lame duck, broached such one version of such a plan with Committee of the Council of the University Senate, namely, the idea that the chancellor would

226. On Beadle at Caltech, see Norman H. Horowitz, "George Wells Beadle, 1903–1989," *National Academy of Sciences Biographical Memoirs* (Washington, DC, 1990), pp. 38–40.

227. Poole to Lloyd, April 5, 1960, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 21. Various other schemes are contained in *ibid.*, Box 24 and Box 26.

become a full-time salaried officer and deal with external relations and fundraising of the University while a president would actually run the academic affairs of the University.<sup>228</sup> In the end, the board decided not to move in this direction of such a “co-presidency,” but the episode reflected a keen sense on the part of key board members that Kimpton had exhausted himself in trying to manage the ever more complex external relations of the institution and that more systematic central leadership needed to be brought to the internal academic and financial affairs of the University. Another option was that put forward by John J. Corson, a consultant from McKinsey & Company whom Glen Lloyd brought in during the summer of 1960 to “look over our general organizational set-up” and to advise on the presidential search. Corson strongly recommended to Lloyd that the board impose a new dual management structure by creating a provostship.<sup>229</sup>

George Beadle was appointed without any definite resolution of this issue, but it is clear that the idea of some kind of dual governance team

228. Committee of the Council, April 26, 1960, and May 10, 1960; and the draft of a proposed press release by George Poole, dated March 28, 1960, in *Lloyd Papers*, Box 21.

229. See Lloyd to Corson, July 19, 1960, *ibid.* “The more we talk and observe the more we realize you were absolutely right about the idea of a provost.” See Lloyd to Corson, June 1, 1962, and Corson to Lloyd, April 17, 1962, *ibid.*, Box 25. Lloyd later gave an address at Harvard University in 1962 on “University Management. Some Essential Ingredients,” in which he made use of Corson’s theories. Trustee Gaylord Donnelley advocated a position identical to that of Corson: “I still believe the ideal organization would be a lay chairman of the board, a president, and/or chancellor who would be the executive head but an academician. Reporting to him would be a person who might be called vice chancellor, provost, or vice president, also an academic man who would be considered the No. 2 man in the University.” Donnelley to J. Harris Ward, June 16, 1960, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 24.

was thus already in the minds of the trustees when they arrived at the choice of Beadle. Kimpton himself had toyed with the idea of creating a semi-independent second officer, but given the hostility of the faculty to the Hutchins-Colwell experiment, he had decided against it.<sup>230</sup> Instead, he relied on R. Wendell "Pat" Harrison as a vice president to execute day-to-day academic affairs and budgetary planning. Harrison had served faithfully and dutifully, but Kimpton later recalled that on all-important academic matters the faculty still insisted that they had a right to deal with him personally.<sup>231</sup> Moreover, by 1960 Harrison himself was in poor health (he had a heart attack in 1961), and was only capable of day-to-day stewardship.

The transition from Kimpton to Beadle was not easy. Beadle took office in May 1961. He had had little relevant senior administrative experience to fall back upon in taking charge of a complex campus culture

230. See R. W. Harrison to Lloyd, July 25, 1960 ("because of the objection by the faculty, Larry, as you know, has been unwilling to recommend appointment of a President."). *Lloyd Papers*, Box 24, as well as Herman Dunlap Smith to Lloyd, February 10, 1960, *ibid.*, Box 26. Kimpton admitted to Smith that Harrison "is not giving the leadership that is needed."

231. "Although Mr. Kimpton and Mr. Harrison have been able to work together admirably with some such relationship in effect, Mr. Kimpton has found himself still involved in academic matters to a heavy degree — in part, no doubt, because it was the part of his responsibilities that appealed to him most but also because the structure of the University's administration made him and only him the ultimate authority on academic matters. Meanwhile, to cite just one example, anyone who was considering a large gift to the University was unwilling to give it to anyone except the head of the institution — and perhaps justifiably so. No vice-president in charge of development could hope to 'stand in' for the Chancellor in such negotiations. The trustees were particularly concerned with the problem at this time because it obviously affected their approach to possible successors to Mr. Kimpton." Minutes of the Committee of the Council of the University Senate, April 26, 1960, pp. 227–228.

that was, then as now, challenging even for locals to navigate. Given that Harrison was ill, Beadle relied on Lowell Coggeshall to assist him. Coggeshall, who was the dean of the Division of the Biological Sciences from 1947 to 1960, had been the runner up in the presidential search in 1951. He was a careful, methodical administrator who had established a reputation as a highly effective fundraiser by negotiating a huge gift of \$17.6 million from the Louis Block estate in late 1955.<sup>232</sup> To help shore up the day-to-day administrative functions, Beadle also recruited John T. Wilson of the National Science Foundation in July 1961 on the assurance that he would eventually hold the rank equivalent to that of a vice president (this was in his appointment letter), but, like Beadle, Wilson was an outsider to the faculty culture at Chicago.<sup>233</sup> By the fall of 1961, senior staff meetings were increasingly disjointed, and major agenda items were being dealt with in a kind of committee on public safety mode. Coggeshall and Wilson tried to bring some system to the process, but a palpable sense of drift was apparent, and no one seemed able to generate a comprehensive strategy for rebuilding the academic prestige of the University.

George Beadle proved to be an engaging personality and a friendly colleague, but also a somewhat indecisive administrator. He also had difficulties communicating with the board and with the senior faculty. It was clear that someone was needed to take charge of the running of the University, and it soon became apparent to the key trustees that this was not George Beadle. The trustees were particularly concerned that

232. For the story behind the gift, see Lowell T. Coggeshall, "The Biological Sciences Division, The University of Chicago, 1949–1962," pp. 49–54, *Coggeshall Papers*, Box 7, folder 2.

233. Beadle to Wilson, July 18, 1961, *Office of the President. Beadle Administration*, Box 256, folder 7.

Beadle could not develop a coherent plan for spending the \$3.5 million presidential suspense fund that they had assembled (which was a lot of money in 1961) or for a more general fundraising drive that Lloyd and others wanted to launch in 1962.<sup>234</sup>

The situation was further complicated by the fact that Beadle himself took a personal liking to Lowell Coggeshall, and soon proposed to Board Chairman Glen Lloyd in August 1961 that Coggeshall be his new permanent second in command.<sup>235</sup> Lloyd was clearly disinclined to accept this idea, rightly sensing that Coggeshall represented more of the same gradualism, whereas the trustees wanted decisive leadership. By the early winter of 1962, disquiet on the board with Beadle's ineffective leadership style was growing.

234. Lloyd reported to the board in the spring of 1962, "I am sorry to report that it [the strategy behind the fund] has not worked out as rapidly as expected. No plan has yet been completed for use of the fund and no appointments of the type contemplated have been made." Draft of message to the trustees, 1962, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 25. See also Lloyd to William Benton, September 7, 1961, in which Lloyd tried to put a positive spin on Beadle's slow pace in proposing a new plan of the University. As the new year beckoned, Lloyd's patience seemed to wear out. Lloyd also complained that some of the trustees had failed to participate in the fund: "A number of Trustees have participated either very little or not at all." A year later, Lloyd commented to Edward Ryerson that the University seemed to do well at foundation fundraising, but that it was "weak" in making contact with wealthy Chicago families. See Lloyd to Ryerson, March 12, 1963, *ibid.* He made the same comment to Benton in September, 1961: "The most obvious reason for this difference is that Harvard, Yale and Princeton are not only older but have a much stronger tie-in with the wealthy families of the nation than The University of Chicago has ever had."

235. Beadle to Lloyd, August 28, 1961, *ibid.*



THE ORIGINS OF  
EDWARD LEVI'S APPOINTMENT  
AS PROVOST

In late 1961 or early 1962, attention shifted to Edward Levi. I had the privilege of discussing with Edward Levi in the summer of 1993 how he became provost, and the story that he told me was surprising, but given the broader context understandable. Levi had been a key member of the presidential search committee in 1960; he had voted for Beadle; and in early December, according to Muriel Beadle's recollections, he had lobbied Beadle to accept the job.<sup>236</sup> Even at the time Levi's own name had emerged as a possible presidential candidate, and, equally important, Levi in his role as dean of the Law School had had a long-standing and close personal relationship with Glen Lloyd, who was an alumnus of the Law School and one of Levi's major alumni fundraisers in the 1950s.<sup>237</sup>

Sometime during March, Levi was contacted by Glen Lloyd who informed him that the board was concerned about the drift in academic planning and lack of strong directional leadership in Beadle's team and that they, together with Beadle, had decided that a new number two position should be created and that he, Levi, should take it. Levi, according to his own account to the present writer, demurred and said that he did not want this job, at which point Lloyd leaned over the table toward him and said (and I quote Levi directly here), "Ed, you were a member of the search committee, you urged George to accept, and thus you helped to get us

236. See Muriel Beadle, *Where Has All The Ivy Gone? A Memoir of University Life* (Chicago, 1977), p. 6.

237. The *Hyde Park Herald* endorsed Levi as a possible successor to Kimpton in an editorial on October 5, 1960.

into this mess, and now you are going to help us get out of it.”<sup>238</sup>

Levi’s recollection to me is confirmed by the written records of correspondence between Edward Ryerson and Glen Lloyd in early 1962. The former chairman of the board, Edward Ryerson, was asked to meet with Beadle and to convey the board’s unhappiness with the lack of movement. During this meeting, Ryerson urged Beadle to assume stronger and more thoughtful leadership, and stated the need to appoint a strong number two. Ryerson dutifully reported back to Lloyd that in a “very frank and satisfactory discussion” he (Ryerson) had “laid great emphasis upon the importance of his [Beadle] demonstrating his ability to bring some new leadership to the University of Chicago before he could expect outside interests, like Ford and others, to be convinced that we were determined to raise our standards of administration and scholarship. I said this was what the Trustees expected and had shown their confidence in him by putting up the initial funds to underwrite such a program.” Ryerson was not altogether convinced that Beadle would act, and feared that “he may lack the decisiveness to get it done without a good deal of prodding and pressure from outside influences.”<sup>239</sup>

In the end, Glen Lloyd himself was forced to provide the necessary prodding and pressure, meeting several times with Beadle alone and finally in a joint meeting with both Beadle and Coggeshall in what must have been a slightly awkward conversation, in which Coggeshall was

238. Conversation between Edward H. Levi and John W. Boyer, July 12, 1993, Quadrangle Club.

239. Ryerson to Lloyd, undated (late March 1962), *Lloyd Papers*, Box 25. Lloyd makes reference to having asking Ryerson to undertake this meeting in a letter of March 22, 1962, *ibid.* He also noted that he had met with Beadle several times and that “the talks were very harmonious and we were in agreement, but still nothing happens.”

offered a membership on the board of trustees as a kind of consolation prize.<sup>240</sup> That the final deal was brokered by Lloyd personally is confirmed by another leading trustee, Fairfax Cone, who in congratulating Lloyd wrote that “I think that your thoughtful construction of a new top administration at the University is an inspired thing.”<sup>241</sup> Levi, in turn, got the job description that he wanted, which was far more than simply a senior vice president.<sup>242</sup> The new position would differ from a conventional vice presidency in that the provost would be an independent statutory authority, distinct from the president, and would be responsible for the academic administration of the University, for academic planning and faculty appointments, as well as all budgetary matters involving academic affairs. The University’s budget officer would henceforth report to the provost.<sup>243</sup>

The decision to create a new kind of executive authority proved to be of immense importance for the future of the University. The trustees were uniformly pleased. Fairfax Cone spoke for many when he wrote to Levi, “I am one of a large number of people who think that

240. “In searching for a way to compensate for this apparent downgrading of Cogg, some of us feel that it would be a very good thing to elect him to the Board of Trustees.” Lloyd to Ryerson, April 5, 1962, *ibid.* Beadle wrote to Levi offering him the job on March 24. See Beadle to Levi, March 24, 1962, *Levi Papers*, Box 12, folder 7.

241. Cone to Lloyd, April 13, 1962, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 25.

242. Lloyd later wrote to Ryerson that “it wasn’t entirely easy to define the job and give everyone concerned the detail that Ed Levi wanted. Ed took the position that he was in no way seeking such a position and unless his job was defined clearly he wanted no part of it. This required a lot of reconciliation with Cogg’s position and special circumstances.” Lloyd to Ryerson, April 17, 1962, *ibid.* The official drafts of Levi’s new position are in the same file.

243. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, April 12, 1962, p. 53.

your appointment as Provost is the best thing that has happened to the University of Chicago in a long while."<sup>244</sup> Levi's joining the administration gave a strong sense of academic direction to the University that was able to build off of the brilliant defensive work of Lawrence Kimpton, and to push the University back on the track of being able to sustain its claims of being a nationally illustrious institution of higher learning.

#### EDWARD LEVI'S STRATEGY FOR RENEWING THE UNIVERSITY

The University was in an extremely fragile state in 1962. Edward Levi recognized that even though Lawrence Kimpton had undertaken heroic efforts in the 1950s, the University had suffered severe losses in faculty and student enrollment, and that a major intellectual and academic recapitalization effort had to be initiated immediately. I will focus on four key areas in which Levi took critical action.

#### INVESTMENTS IN NEW FACULTY

One of Edward Levi's first priorities was the rebuilding of the faculty. Over the course of the 1950s, the University had lost a series of eminent scholars to other universities, and many departments were reeling from pessimism and despair. Levi later remembered, "The faculty fell in numbers from 722 to 671 and everybody who was in the educational business at the time knew that if you wanted to get a top professor, the place to look for him was at the University of Chicago . . . between 1950 and 1959 there was a flight of faculty from the University which would have

244. Cone to Levi, April 13, 1962, *Levi Papers*, Box 77, folder 2.

made a most extraordinary university.”<sup>245</sup>

Levi was particularly sensitive to the need for robust investments in faculty salaries and in encouraging the departments to pursue bold, aggressive hiring policies. In April 1963, he argued to the board of trustees that “because of the a) many offers being made to our faculty personnel, b) the neighborhood problem, c) the fact that the University has slipped, and d) the University’s other kinds of unique and unusual problems, it is necessary that the University pay higher salaries than any other academic institution in the country if it is to regain its previous position of leadership.”<sup>246</sup>

Perhaps the best symbol of Levi’s audacious, if still untested, confidence was the new program of 10 University Professorships, first formulated in June 1962, which was designed to bring to Chicago internationally notable scholars at (for the time) outrageously high salaries of \$20,000 to \$30,000. Along with the 10 University Professors, Levi proposed that the board also create an additional 10 Distinguished Service Professorships for distinguished scholars already on the faculty. Five of the new DSPs were to be created at once, and were to be named in honor of worthy past faculty luminaries or distinguished former board members: Max Mason, Albert A. Michelson, William B. Ogden, Paul S. Russell, and Harold H. Swift. An additional five DSPs were approved, but banked for future use until funds could be raised to endow them.<sup>247</sup> So focused was Levi on the importance of these new senior initiatives actually succeeding that he also proposed that the University consider providing

245. Edward H. Levi, Speech to the National Leadership Conference, October 15, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 200, folder 2.

246. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, April 11, 1963, p. 61.

247. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, June 14, 1962, pp. 112–114.

"special housing of a luxurious nature near campus" where these new luminaries might live when they arrived in Hyde Park.<sup>248</sup>

Over the coming years, Levi succeeded in recruiting six new University Professors and a host of other distinguished senior and junior faculty.<sup>249</sup> He was greatly concerned with the competitive status of our faculty salaries, and he wanted to be as near to the top of the national market as was humanly possible. And by 1966, he could proudly announce that "unlike the situation in the 1950s when you were scared to death if a member of the faculty got an offer because you couldn't see how the institution would stand another professor leaving . . . quite unlike that — since 1960 it's a question of what will make the department stronger. Is he somebody we want to keep? That isn't always true . . . that's bragging, but it's almost true." Levi would take pride in the fact that "I think that we are one of the few universities in the country that could have gone down as much as we did and come back as strong as we did, and I'm quite willing to say that this shows some kind of inner strength and inner values."<sup>250</sup> Edward Levi increased the size of the total professorial faculty (including clinical appointments in the Biological

248. See the minutes of the senior staff meeting of May 2, 1962, in the *Lowell Coggeshall Papers*, Box 7.

249. The six University Professors were Leonard Krieger, Henri Thiel, Albert Wohlstetter, Francois Ayala, Constantine A. Trypanis, and David Atlas.

250. Speech to the National Leadership Conference, October 15, 1966, pp. 8, 11, *Beadle Administration*, Box 200, folder 2. To give an example of but one department, between 1962 and 1967 the Department of History recruited John Hope Franklin, Ping-ti Ho, Arthur Mann, Richard C. Wade, Leonard Krieger, and William R. Polk, all at the level of full professor, thus completely transforming the intellectual portrait and stature of the department.

Sciences) to 894 by 1965 (it had been at 769 in 1959). Many of these appointments were of critical importance to the future luster of the University. It was a tribute to Levi's success in recruiting and retaining top scholars that he would write to the director of development, Richard O'Brien, in 1966 to the effect that "we are in terrific need of more Distinguished Service professorships — like twenty more."<sup>251</sup>

### THE GRAND STRATEGY OF THE FORD PLAN

The rebuilding of the faculty was but one component of a larger set of goals that Edward Levi put forward, and these dovetailed nicely with the exigencies of University fundraising. Lacking a mega gift of the kind imagined by McGeorge Bundy, the University was forced to adopt a different strategy, to launch a major fundraising campaign at the heart of which would be a large grant from the Ford Foundation.

During the course of the 1960s, the Ford Foundation made available a series of giant challenge grants to leading universities and colleges around the country. This program, created in 1959 and designated as the Special Program in Education initiative, was an attempt by the Ford Foundation "[t]hrough substantial assistance on a substantial scale . . . to make a significant contribution to the process by which a few universities and colleges can reach and sustain a wholly new level of academic excellence, administrative effectiveness, and financial support."<sup>252</sup> Between 1960 and 1967, the foundation allocated huge sums of money to 16 universities and 61 colleges. In total, until its termination in 1968, the program spent \$349 million that, in turn, generated an

251. Levi to O'Brien, January 13, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 259, folder 8.

252. "Discussion Paper. Special Program in Education," September 1963, Nr. 002221, *Ford Foundation Archives*.

additional \$991.85 million in matching funds.<sup>253</sup>

The Special Program in Education was a splendid and even visionary poster child for the post-Sputnik élan, expansionism, optimism, and self-confidence of the early and mid-1960s. Along with Stanford, Columbia, and NYU, the University of Chicago was the recipient of the largest of these matching grants, \$25 million in 1965.<sup>254</sup> To secure such a grant, a university had to undergo a major long-term planning process, and it had to persuade the foundation that its goals were both serious and realistic.

Immediately upon taking office as chancellor in 1961, George Beadle contacted Clarence Faust, former dean of the College and then vice president of the Ford Foundation, to explore the possibility of support from the Ford Foundation for the University of Chicago. Chicago had already received numerous grants from Ford, many of which were of significant size and scope, but a grant under the Special Program initiative could be expected to be of extraordinary proportions. Initially, the reaction of the foundation was noncommittal, since the original purpose of the Special Program in Education was to assist promising, second-tier colleges and universities in attaining a stronger status, not to provide huge resources to the elite research universities.<sup>255</sup> It required various letters and visits by

253. "Termination of the Special Program in Education. Information Paper and Recommended Action," November 1968, Nr. 001356, *Ford Foundation Archives*.

254. In 2012 dollars, this would amount to about \$200 million. The grant was to be matched on a 3:1 basis.

255. In February 1963, Beadle reported to the board that he had visited President Henry Heald of the foundation to ask for a \$25 million grant: "The President [Beadle] indicated that it was difficult to appraise the prospects for this grant; that it appeared that the Foundation may be searching for a formula that would warrant and justify the making of a grant of this size, and for this



Beadle, soon supplemented by those of his newly appointed provost, Edward Levi, to merit the University the chance to apply for a major challenge grant in the summer of 1964.<sup>256</sup> Final approval for the University to submit a proposal came in early July 1964, and Gladys Hardy, a Ford program assistant, visited campus later that month to assist our local administrators in planning the organization of the profile.

When he assumed the provostship in the late spring of 1962, Edward Levi had intended to launch such a comprehensive planning process in any event, so Ford's planning requirements and our own internal dynamics fit well together.<sup>257</sup> Working with the deans and the directors of all the units, Edward Levi pulled together an enormous body of data about the University's situation and its future needs, and between the

purpose, to the University of Chicago rather than to some other University which may have similar problems and needs; that although he did not receive any great encouragement as a result of his discussions with the Foundation, on the other hand, the officials of the Foundation made no attempt to discourage him." Minutes of the Board of Trustees, February 14, 1963.

256. In an inter-office memorandum, Henry Heald reported on April 8, 1964, "Mr. Faust and I had lunch with Chancellor Beadle and Provost Levi on April 1, 1964. They outlined the important progress which has been made at the University since Beadle came there and emphasized the need of the University for a large scale addition to resources. They still hope that the Ford Foundation will find some way to assist them in this endeavor by making a major grant in the pattern of the Special Program. . . . Our problem remains the question of whether we want to extend the Special Program to universities of this general quality, whether we could make a special exception for Chicago and what effect it would have on our relationships with the other half-dozen top universities were we to do so." *Ford Foundation Archives*.

257. See Leonard K. Olsen to Levi, October 24, 1962, *Beadle Administration*, Box 256, folder 2. Levi visited F. Champion Ward at the Ford Foundation to enlist his support, and this too proved of crucial importance. See "Report of the Campaign Planning Committee, May 21, 1965," *Lloyd Papers*, Box 24.

autumn of 1964 and early 1965 he almost single-handedly fashioned this material into an ambitious two-volume report, known as the Ford Profile.

Edward Levi presented a 50 page summary of the Ford Profile on February 11, 1965, to the board of trustees, where it was debated extensively.<sup>258</sup> On March 15, 1965, the board voted unanimously to adopt the Ford Plan as the University’s basic strategy for the future. In presenting the plan to the board, George Beadle emphasized that this was in fact a plan and that Ford expected the trustees to stand behind it: in voting for the plan, “[t]his implies agreement in general with the projected needs for the next 10 years and the plans for raising the funds needed to meet these needs. It is tremendously important that there be substantial consensus among all of us — Board, Officers, Faculty — for this will determine the future of the University.”<sup>259</sup> The enthusiasm of the board may be gauged by a private letter in June 1965 from Robert Gunness, an executive vice president of Standard Oil and a member of the Chicago board to Julius Stratton, president of MIT and a member of the Ford board of trustees, lobbying for Ford’s approval of our application. Gunness wrote that “there exists at Chicago an Administration and a Board of Trustees who are prepared to undertake the task of providing the essential financial support required. Building on great strengths, existing and potential, a monumental educational achievement is bound to result.”<sup>260</sup>

258. “Report of the Presentation of the Provost to the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago on February 11, 1965,” *ibid.*

259. George Beadle, Handwritten Notes for Presentation to the Board of Trustees, March 15, 1965, *Ford Profile files.*

260. Robert C. Gunness to Julius A. Stratton, June 25, 1965, *Ford Profile files.*

The brilliance of Levi's plan was that it accommodated almost everything the University seemed to need, and we needed a great deal. Edward Levi would later comment to the board in October 1966 that Chicago was not a university created *ad seriatim* — if Harper had tried to do that, the University would never have come about — but this also meant that it was difficult to repair or rehabilitate it *ad seriatim*.

The logic of the plan presented to Ford was simple. Chicago would continue to expand the total number of faculty in the arts and sciences and in the professional schools. Having gone from 596 faculty in 1960 to 692 in 1965, we would continue to increase to 974 positions by 1975. Thus, the Ford Plan assumed that Chicago would continue to increase its non-clinical faculty ranks over and above the 96 new faculty positions that the University had already authorized from 1960 to 1965. Total faculty, including clinical ranks, would rise from 922 in 1965 to 1,227 in 1975.

Faculty compensation in the arts and sciences and professional schools would simultaneously rise from \$10.9 million in 1965 to \$26.1 million by 1975. Chicago would also embark on major capital improvements including a new research library for the humanities and social sciences, a new science library, a new chemistry building, a new geophysical sciences building, a new high energy physics building, and new research and teaching facilities in the biological sciences, as well as new facilities for music and the arts. Also included were the remodeling of Cobb Hall and the transformation of Harper Library as an administrative center for the College. Equally important, the University would invest \$21 million in new undergraduate residence halls, \$13.9 million in new and remodeled graduate student facilities, \$2 million in a new student theater, \$1 million in a new skating rink, and \$3.5 million for a new gymnasium and a new swimming pool.

This massive recapitalization of the University would be paid for by more than doubling the level of tuition income available to the University. This doubling would result from increasing the size of the College—which would rise from 2,150 students in 1965 to 4,000 students by 1975—and from rising graduate enrollments (another 1,100 arts and sciences graduate students would also be added, who would bring in additional tuition revenue, as well as 585 additional professional school students). In addition, a massive fundraising effort that would focus on unrestricted giving as part of a \$300 million capital campaign would run from 1965 to 1975. Phase One of the Campaign for Chicago—with a goal of \$160 million over the next three years—was launched in the autumn of 1965, concurrent with the announcement of the Ford grant.

The gamble of the Ford Plan was that it presumed a series of years of planned budget deficits, after which the University would return to stable and balanced budgets through extraordinary success in generating new, unrestricted gift income and its optimistic enrollment targets. But the real strength of the proposal lay in the way it combined detailed and thoughtful financial and programmatic analysis with a vision of what Chicago once was and what it must continue to be as a whole and totally integrated university. Edward Levi often invoked the Harperian image of Chicago as “one” university, and this principle was no more acutely present than in the Ford Plan. For Levi, the stakes were high—merely to continue to survive, as we did in the 1950s, could not be enough. Indeed, merely surviving was a recipe for ultimate disaster. Rather, the bold aim of the plan was to make a great university still greater and still stronger, restoring that luster of distinction that had been imperiled in the 1940s and 1950s:

It is asked today whether the University can continue to serve as a leader, a teacher, a critic, and as a creative force exerting deep influence on other universities, on education in general, and on society as whole. In other words, there is a basic question of existence, because if Chicago cannot live on in a prominent position, then it has run its course and should fade away. The plans set down by faculty, administrators, and Trustees indicate a determination to thrive and grow.

Of the University's fundraising prospects, Levi's draft profile boldly asserted that "[t]he University of Chicago is confident it has enough associations and roots in the region to match a Ford grant of unprecedented magnitude, a grant that by its size and terms would demand the ultimate in effort and contribution."<sup>261</sup>

The officials at the Ford Foundation seemed to concur. In a 14-page docket memorandum that Clarence Faust submitted to the Ford Foundation's president, Henry Heald, in August 1965, the staff of the Special Program in Education argued that even though the original initiative excluded "the half dozen or so international leaders among American universities, including the University of Chicago" in favor of the "second echelon of private universities in the country,"

261. The profile exists in two versions. The full profile is a two volume manuscript on file in the Ford Foundation Archives in New York City. The extensive back-up data for the profile, including many drafts of planning statements on the future of the divisions, schools, and the College generated by Levi and others, are in the Ford Profile files in the Special Collections Research Center. In addition, the University also produced a detailed executive summary, "Summary of a Profile. The University of Chicago." My quotes are taken from the "Summary," p. 3.

[i]t has been clear from the beginning, however, that there are special circumstances at the University of Chicago that might justify its inclusion in SPE. As a relatively young institution, it does not have nearly the depth of financial support from wealthy alumni that characterizes some of the Eastern seaboard universities. Moreover, there has even been some question as to whether Chicago still belongs among the few American private universities of international renown. It is only now beginning to emerge from a series of academic and financial crises extending back over more than two decades.

The report then asserted:

[a]fter a thorough study of the institution, the staff is convinced that the University of Chicago should be included in the program and that a substantial Foundation grant would enable the University to regain and solidify the leading position it once held among international centers of academic excellence.

Among the many features of the plan that the Ford officials found fascinating were Levi's vision for the College:

After more than two years of planning and debate the University in the fall of 1965 will embark on still another phase of its thirty-five year experiment with undergraduate education. The new plan for the College is largely the work of Provost Edward Levi and will be administered by a new Dean of the College, Wayne Booth. The undergraduate student body will be grouped into five sub-colleges, four of which will mirror

the four graduate divisions, while the fifth will be an inter-divisional multi-disciplinary unit. . . . The individual sub-colleges will have considerable autonomy in the development of curriculum, and it is hoped that they will ultimately be independently endowed. One of the key objects of the plan is to provide units of instruction and of residence which are small enough to allow the kind of intimate association and discussion which has been of such value in the small liberal arts college and which is often lost in the large university context. . . . The quality of the College faculty will be raised through selective salary increases and post-doctoral fellowships. An overriding goal of the new plan is to associate the faculty of the graduate divisions more directly and more continuously in the development of the undergraduate curriculum and in undergraduate teaching.

The resulting discussion among the members of the Ford board was summarized as follows:

The University of Chicago, through quiet but heroic efforts over the past decade, has extricated itself from a state of disarray which could have spelled ruin for a lesser institution with less capable leadership. The Ford Foundation's ability to make a very large grant to the University at the present time represents a rare opportunity to contribute decisively to the renaissance of what once was and may well again be one of the world's great universities.<sup>262</sup>

262. Clarence Faust to Henry T. Heald, August 17, 1965, pp. 2–3, 10–11, 14, Grant File PA65-367, *Ford Foundation Archives*.

On October 15, 1965, the Ford Foundation officially notified the University that its request for a special \$25 million grant had met with approval. Five days later, the University announced the Campaign for Chicago. The next several years were exciting, to say the least. Much of the Ford Plan was in fact realized. Faculty growth continued apace, so that by 1970–71 we had a total of 1,108 faculty at the University of Chicago, a figure that exceeded the number of faculty that the Ford Plan predicted for that year by 27 positions.<sup>263</sup> Indeed, as early as 1967, George Beadle proudly reported to the foundation that the increases in the faculty were running ahead of the totals predicted in the Ford Plan.<sup>264</sup> The continued success of the new University Professorships helped greatly, as did the flexibility and new resources that allowed incremental faculty numbers to increase impressively. Faculty salaries also increased apace—by 1966, Edward Levi would inform the board that we were third in the country, just slightly behind Harvard. Levi observed, “I think we can say that on balance the University is much stronger in terms of its faculty now than it was in 1960 and that if one looks at the new faculty appointed over the ones that left, we come out ahead, and then if one looks at the younger faculty who have come along and we have retained, we come out even more ahead.”<sup>265</sup> Another and more sober way of viewing the implications of the 45 percent increase in faculty numbers that occurred between 1959 and 1969 was offered by Levi in 1969:

263. The profile projected 1,081 faculty in 1970–71, whereas we ended up with 1,108. See John T. Wilson, “Notes on the 1970–71 Academic Budget,” *Presidents’ Papers*, Addenda, Series 97-6, Box 20.

264. George Beadle to Howard R. Dressner, October 9, 1967, Grant File 65-367, *Ford Foundation Archives*.

265. Transcribed Remarks in the Minutes of the Board of Trustees, October 15, 1966, p. 10.



In 1959 total faculty compensation for professors and associate professors was \$6,761,000. Endowment income [in 1959] was \$6,939,000. This comforting proportion, if that is what it was, no longer exists. Total faculty compensation for professors and associate professors today is \$18,377,000, and endowment income is \$11,632,000.<sup>266</sup>

Long-standing research and capital needs were also to be met. On the facilities front the new Joseph Regenstein Library was constructed. If one building symbolized the optimism and confidence that seemed to reign at the University of Chicago in the mid-1960s, it would be this magnificent edifice, the funding for which was secured in 1965, the cornerstone laid in 1968, and the official opening held in 1970. After decades in which a new central library seemed everyone's second highest priority, the momentum of the Ford Plan created a plausible context in which the library could rise to become the highest priority, and it is not surprising that the briefing documents for Beadle and Levi in their meeting with representatives of the Regenstein family in October 1965 stressed that they should emphasize the imposing ambition of Edward Levi's planning study and that the new library would be "the cornerstone of our long-range plan."<sup>267</sup> Regenstein Library was thus a tribute to the

266. Edward H. Levi, *The State of the University*, November 4, 1969, p. 2.

267. Memorandum of October 7, 1965, *Beadle Administration*, Box 383, folder 1. Regenstein Library had many advocates, but it is striking that Edward Levi devoted his first meeting with the academic deans of the University in the 1962–63 academic year to a discussion of the importance of a new library, in an attempt to elicit their voluntary support for the project, as opposed to lecturing them that it was a priority of the central administration. Without Levi's advocacy, I doubt that the project would have been brought to a successful fruition. See Levi to Coggeshall, September 6, 1962, *Beadle Administration*, Box 384, folder 3.

efficacy of the Ford Plan, and George Beadle acknowledged to McGeorge Bundy in September 1966 that “the Ford challenge grant was a powerful factor in helping us get the ten million dollar pledge [from the Joseph Regenstein Foundation].”<sup>268</sup>

But many other new research buildings were authorized and completed in the later 1960s and early 1970s — the Henry Hinds Laboratory for the Geophysical Sciences, the Searle Chemistry Laboratory, the new High Energy Physics Building, the Albert Pick Hall for International Studies, the Wyler Children’s Hospital, the A. J. Carlson Animal Research Facility, the Social Services Center, and the Cummings Life Science Center — altogether an impressive list. But the biggest challenge in the Ford Plan concerned student facilities, especially student housing. The original plan called for “[n]ew residence halls, a new gymnasium and other athletic facilities, additional student common rooms . . . all these items will be part of a sustained move toward a brighter, more rewarding campus for the College.” Levi admitted that “the University now faces the absolute necessity for substantial plant improvement. . . . Three fourths of the \$166,000,000 needed for plant must be available within the next five years.”<sup>269</sup>

#### THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COLLEGE

A third area of great concern to Edward Levi was the College. Lawrence Kimpton’s reform efforts in the 1950s had been hugely controversial. And in spite of all of the efforts undertaken during the 1950s the College struggled to move beyond a total four year enrollment of barely more

268. George Beadle to McGeorge Bundy, September 12, 1966, Grant File 65-367, *Ford Foundation Archives*.

269. “Summary of a Profile,” pp. 6, 15.

than 2,000 students. This was the situation Edward Levi inherited as provost. As noted above, a bold increase in student enrollment, almost doubling the size of the College to 4,000 undergraduates, became a critical planning variable for the University's submission to the Ford Foundation, so that Edward Levi had to confront the many ongoing problems of the College's organization and operations in order to give his larger vision of the future of University any plausible possibility of success. Reporting to the board of trustees on his plans for the future of the College in October 1964, Edward Levi observed that "it is anticipated that student enrollment will climb from the present 2,200 to 4,000 over the next 10-year period." According to the transcript of the meeting, the trustees found Levi's proposed plan to be "an exciting and beguiling one."<sup>270</sup>

Beyond the level of strategic planning, Edward Levi's most concrete intervention involving the College came when Dean of the College Alan Simpson resigned to take up the presidency of Vassar College and Levi appointed himself to succeed Simpson *pro tem* as acting dean of the College. In the years 1962–63, Simpson and others had pushed the idea that the College should be subdivided for curricular and governance purposes into what they called "multiple colleges." Alan Simpson's proposals came at the end of a fractious period of 12 years during which the College's curriculum had been repeatedly reformed and reformed again. In spite of Simpson's rhetorical talents, his scheme ran into a band saw of faculty opposition, arising both from turf-based particularism and from doubts about whether such a plan would fragment the undergraduate experience. By the end of 1963, Simpson was convinced that his plan had gone down in failure. But Simpson's departure for Vassar gave Levi the chance

270. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, October 8, 1964.

to appoint himself as acting dean of the College in the spring of 1964 and to use that unusual status to resurrect the idea and push it in a revised form through the College faculty later the same year.

In a long programmatic memo sent to the faculty in August 1964, Levi proposed a series of structural changes.<sup>271</sup> The faculty of the College would no longer meet as a plenary body but would elect a representative council. This council would have full and total jurisdiction over all levels of the undergraduate curriculum. The College in turn would be divided into five administrative/curricular "area colleges," four of which would parallel and be closely integrated with the four graduate divisions. The fifth college — it came to be called the New Collegiate Division — would be an agency for experimental and interdisciplinary programs that could not be accommodated in one of the other area colleges. Each sub-unit — they came to be called collegiate divisions — would be led by a senior faculty member — the collegiate masters — and would be authorized to determine the specific components of the College's general-education curriculum that were relevant to their area and to have oversight of curricular structures in their disciplinary domain beyond the first year of the College. The first year of a student's experience in the College was declared to be a general or Common Year in which the student "belonged" to no specific departmental major or specialization.

Levi's reasons for implementing this model were most certainly driven by his conviction that it would be desirable to have, as he put it, "a kind of federalized educational program of five separate, but interdependent areas concerned with the four-year undergraduate program."

271. "Memorandum to the President and to the College Faculty," August 25, 1964, Minutes of the College Faculty.

But it is also clear that curricular flexibility was not the only reason, for Edward Levi reported to the board of trustees in 1963 that “if five or six programs can be developed with a faculty for each program serving approximately 400 students then the opportunity would be created a) for further growth and b) of placing upon different faculties the responsibility for innovating and developing programs and recruiting from the Divisions and elsewhere the teaching personnel that was required.”<sup>272</sup> Levi subsequently observed in 1965 that “it is assumed that the College enrollment will about double, moving from 2,100 to 4,000 within the ten years, but the plans for the reorganization of the College into collegiate divisions will preserve the small college flavor important to students, despite the doubled enrollment.”<sup>273</sup> Levi’s structural reorganization of the College into five sub-units was thus organically linked to the larger demographic logic of the Ford Plan.

A second, equally strategic issue involved Levi’s desire to preserve the integrity of the College as a functioning faculty responsible for all levels of undergraduate education. Here Levi’s personal loyalties as an alumnus of the College and as a personal admirer of Robert Hutchins may have come into play, for Levi was insistent that some central body had to have policy authority over the undergraduate programs as a whole. Robert Streeter had raised serious questions in 1958 about the fragmentation of responsibility over undergraduate education among the departments, and Levi was determined to create agencies — the College Council and the collegiate divisions — whose robust political and administrative legitimacy would undergird the constitutional durability

272. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, February 14, 1963; October 8, 1964.

273. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, March 15, 1965.

of the larger College as a University-wide institution.<sup>274</sup>

Lastly, a federated College closely linked to the divisions would enable the College to become, in Levi's mind, a "generalizing influence" for the University as a whole, an ideal that Levi thought essential to the future of the University. Levi insisted that "a college which provides a forum for the discussion of evolving theories which encompass and point the way to new knowledge and restate fundamental themes adds greatly to the life of the University and to the reality of the community. Moreover, it is through the College that the University may well exercise its greatest influence upon future teachers and scholars and their students in colleges and universities throughout our country."<sup>275</sup> Levi also hoped that the new collegiate divisions would generate new, experimental curricular initiatives and programs that would bring together faculty from a wide variety of scholarly interests, and thus enrich the general pedagogical environment for both faculty and students like. He argued that "if the College finds its mission and its role within the University in this unifying and inquiring function, the College will gain in strength to fulfill this task only if the members of the faculties within the University are in fact willing to engage in undergraduate teaching in sufficient numbers."<sup>276</sup>

274. This is clear from Levi's comments to the board in October 1964, in which he noted that one of the great problems facing the University after Kimpton's reforms was that the departments were basically given de facto responsibility for the final two years of the progress of undergraduate students, whereas Levi wanted to ensure that "the College faculty be in charge of the four-year undergraduate program."

275. "Memorandum to the President and to the College Faculty," p. 5.

276. Remarks at the Conference on the Knowledge Most Worth Having, February 4, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 200, folder 6.

Edward Levi gambled that this wider engagement with undergraduate teaching across the University would, over time, enhance both the intellectual prestige and institutional prominence of the College. One cannot underestimate the boldness of this vision, for what Levi was in fact attempting to do was to blend elements of the ambitions of Ernest Burton, Lawrence Kimpton, and Robert Hutchins into a new institutional synthesis that would, at last, ensure the College a sustainable level of University-wide political legitimacy. Sixty years later, we may take satisfaction in the fact that Edward Levi's goals have proven plausible and efficacious but, as we will soon see, final success came slowly and only many years after Levi had left office.

In spite of grouching on the part of College stalwarts who feared that the new collegiate divisions were yet another irresponsible power-play by the graduate divisions that would lead eventually to the disappearance of the College as a ruling body, Edward Levi's reforms were officially adopted by the faculty in November 1964.<sup>277</sup> The changes were salutary and they have proven themselves effective in functional constitutional

277. See the later comment of Mark Ashin to Levi in 1992: "I am emboldened, however, to do something that I've wanted to do for many years — and that is apologize for having been such an obnoxious opponent of your ideas of revitalizing the College way back in 1962–63. I was totally wrong, and you were entirely right. What I thought was a formula for dissolution has proved to be a recipe for salvation. The close association of the Collegiate Divisions with their cognate graduate components, for all of the tensions and staffing difficulties that have to be dealt with annually, has kept the College vital and influential within the University — and I want to thank you for having the foresight and the strength of purpose to overcome the opposition of people like me, people so locked into the perception of what they thought was an ideal that they could not see that the current form of that ideal was a dead husk. I realized this many years ago, but was too abashed to say anything about it until now." Letter of June 10, 1992, *Levi Papers*, Box 12, folder 3. Ashin was an alumnus of the College (Class of 1937) and received his PhD in English from Chicago in 1950.

terms, but they did not address many thorny issues of the curriculum, and they had no impact on the equally profound student life problems that the College faced. They were an important, and necessary, step toward more effective governance, operating on a constitutional level to give greater credibility to the administrative and political functioning of the College. One sees this clearly in a gloss on the reforms by Warner Wick, the University dean of students at the time, who wrote that Levi's plan sought to focus "attention upon the mechanisms of deliberation and action whereby all persons concerned may pursue their heart's desire . . . The essential point is that the College faculty as it is presently organized does not function well either as a deliberative body or as an agency with power to carry out academic policy. It is too diffuse, and perhaps more important still, neither it nor its subdivisions have the statutory power to plan and control the entire span of a student's program from his first year onward to his Bachelor's degree. Because there are no effective centers of deliberation about of education, nothing is happening. If important things are to happen, they must first be made possible."<sup>278</sup>

Edward Levi did have curricular views about the shape of undergraduate education, and even today they have a radicalism that echoes that of Robert Hutchins. In a speech at the University of Pennsylvania Law School in May 1969, Levi asked archly why law should not be taught on the undergraduate level, as part of a larger interrogation of why higher education had become so distended, costly, and temporally exaggerated: "why not make law study clearly undergraduate with some courses available to all students followed by more specialized work for those who desire this? This shocking suggestion has at least three points to commend it. The first is that it is of the greatest importance that the

278. *The Chicago Maroon*, November 20, 1964, p. 4.



average college student have access to some training in basic legal theory. And second, this should be offered in terms of the serious consideration of legal problems so that college education can be revitalized by a professional standard of proficiency — we once could say excellence — building upon problems which can be perceived. And third, placing the lawyer's professional education at this point would respond to the law student's desire to take other broadening courses while he is engaged in law study.”<sup>279</sup> In a sense Levi was trying to accomplish what Hutchins had tried between 1942 and 1946, but in reverse. Rather than cannibalize the high school years in favor of early college, we should cannibalize the professional school years in favor of a more creative merger of college and professional school.

Yet, these views were for the bully pulpit, and for better or worse Edward Levi did not try to force any specific kind of curriculum at Chicago, although he was decidedly in favor of older undergraduates specializing in something, as opposed to continuing to study everything, and he made no bones about his approval of integrating pre-professional studies in the undergraduate curriculum in the name of making education less costly and more efficient.<sup>280</sup> He also openly argued that “in my

279. *Levi Papers*, Box 298, folder 16; as well as Levi to Albert Sabin, March 12, 1974, *ibid.*, Box 299, folder 12.

280. “There is something peculiarly unlovely — and not at all fair to your own ‘system’ of education at the University of Chicago in the attack on the undergraduate education of medical people. At Chicago, the pre-medical student — as elsewhere — if he is going to go ahead without requiring more than four years of undergraduate work, must take certain biological and related courses. Is this wrong? We surely don't mean that to learn a structure so that it can be operated spoils the undergraduate work. Or do we? There is something which is slightly alarming about humanists repeating over and over again that taking their courses is the only way.” Levi to Wayne C. Booth and James M. Redfield, January 22, 1968, *Beadle Administration*, Box 199, folder 3.

own judgment the distinction between general education courses as liberal arts courses, on the one hand, and specialized courses as non-liberal arts but graduate on the other, has been stultifying to the College and to the Divisions.”<sup>281</sup> No one could possibly question Edward Levi’s devotion to the liberal arts, but the history of serious curriculum reform efforts at Chicago has manifested again and again a permanent duality marked by noble and earnest ideals on the one hand and messy, political-disciplinary patronage on the other. Levi accepted the fact that the faculty should shape the curriculum, but he also knew that shaping would be a deeply political process and many of the results might be different from those desired by well-meaning architects.

Yet Levi’s vision for the College — that it become a unifying and coordinating force for the whole of the University — was a creative intervention that would, over time, come to have strong legs.

**LEVI’S DISCURSIVE STRATEGY:  
THE SPEECHES**

A fourth and final domain to which Edward Levi devoted considerable effort was public rhetoric about the University. Between 1964 and the early 1970s he delivered a series of programmatic speeches on higher education, 14 of which were later compiled in a book, *Points of View. Talks on Education*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1969. Essentially, Levi sought to reintellectualize the office of the presidency by a series of high-level rhetorical exercises that were both aesthetic and substantive.

Edward Levi began his program of public rhetoric as an effort to re-articulate the mission and ideals of the University to its own

281. Remarks at the conference on the Knowledge Most Worth Having, February 4, 1966, *Beadle Administration*, Box 200, folder 6.

constituencies, to renew pride in the University as special and distinctive, and to energize its best inclinations and ambitions. The early speeches portrayed the University as multiversity that was genial but also that had great unity and ideological coherence. Over time, Levi's talks became more "externalist" and more defensive as he tried to engage the student protest movement of the later 1960s and confront what he felt to be unjustified demands made by government and key sectors of civil society that might change the mission and disrupt the very identity of the universities.

Levi sought to accomplish three broad purposes with these speeches — first, to rearticulate and reanimate the special cultural identity of the University of Chicago to its own constituencies, the faculty and the alumni; second, to explain how close to disaster the University had come in the 1950s and to give his audiences confidence that its leadership had now found a way back from the precipice; and finally, to explain the broader purposes of the research university to the public at large at a time when, especially in the later 1960s, the universities seemed to be caught in a vise between popular anti-intellectualism on the one hand and strident demands for social and political relevance on the other.

The last function became more prominent in the later 1960s, as Levi experienced the protest culture of the later 1960s and the sharp political crossfires in which the universities were caught between the competing interests of government, industry, and civil society. He complained to Thurman Arnold in December 1968 that "some years ago I would have thought that the money problems alone were enough to overwhelm us. To this we now have to add the mood of our society as it touches the universities."<sup>282</sup> As he stated in Washington in 1968, "One

282. Levi to Arnold, December 23, 1968, *Levi Papers*, Box 12, folder 1.

has to ask again what is the greatest service of the university. Its greatest service is the preservation of an intellectual tradition. The University is the home of ideas. Many of these ideas are incorrect and foolish. Many are persuasive, dangerous, and devastatingly impractical. Faculties are not selected for a general ability to be prudent and practical. If the desire is to make of the universities one more government agency, then all that will result is one more governmental agency." Levi also insisted that "undue reliance upon universities as handy agencies to solve immediate problems, remote from education, can only end in corruption of the universities. And the danger is greater because corruption is easy and attractive, particularly when it is dressed up as a relevant response to the problems of our day."<sup>283</sup>

Inevitably in reading these speeches, one is tempted to compare them with the great speeches of Robert Hutchins from the 1930s. The comparison is not irrelevant, given the personal and professional ties that connected Levi with Hutchins from the mid-1930s to the end of Levi's career. Levi admired Hutchins's educational philosophy and later commented about Hutchins's speeches that it was "rare to have a university president able to do that."<sup>284</sup> He confessed to George Dell in 1977, "I had [a] father-son relationship with Hutchins and almost all that I now am is due to him."<sup>285</sup> Levi was equally convinced, as he put it to Bill McNeill in 1990, "I think the Hutchins's legacy is an important plus for the University, and because of its continuity with the Harper influence,

283. *Beadle Administration*, Box 199, folder 9.

284. Comments on the manuscript of William McNeill's book on the Hutchins era, 1990, *Levi Papers*, Box 46, folder 2.

285. "Interview with Edward Levi, Prof. of Law, U. of Chicago, November 4, 1977," in *Levi Papers*, Box 44, folder 10.

is a central factor to the present strength of the University.”<sup>286</sup> Like Hutchins, Levi compiled a book, and it was perhaps not surprising that in trying to persuade Levi to publish his book with the University of Chicago Press, Morris Philipson would twice write to Levi, invoking the name of Robert Hutchins as an example of a former president who published with the press.<sup>287</sup> The warmly congratulatory letters that Levi received from loyalists of the Hutchins era, such as F. Champion Ward and Mortimer Adler, and from Robert Hutchins himself, on the occasion of Levi’s appointment as provost in the spring of 1962 were predictable in viewing Levi’s appointment as a return to policies more congenial to the Hutchins’s heritage. Indeed, Edward Levi professed himself deeply sympathetic to the educational “old times” that these men represented.<sup>288</sup>

Yet there were limits to this comparison. One sees these limits openly in Levi’s speech on the University and public service that he gave before the alumni gathering in Washington, DC, in June 1968, which in my view was one of his best efforts. Levi argued that while universities had to be cognizant of and responsive to the social problems of the communities in which they resided, it was essential to remember that the central purposes of the university involved the cultivation of knowledge

286. Levi to McNeill, September 17, 1990, *ibid.*, Box 46, folder 1.

287. Philipson to Levi, January 17, 1968, and October 7, 1968, *Levi Papers*, Box 299, folder 11.

288. He wrote to Sydney Hyman in 1989 that “I do not think that Hutchins was a failure except in the sense that every noble person probably does not reach the goals that he sets for himself.” Letter of October 6, 1989, *Levi Papers*, Box 23, folder 9. When Hutchins visited campus to speak in 1962, Levi wrote to him: “Your talk was like old times, which I wish would come again.” Levi to Hutchins, April 24, 1962, *ibid.*, Box 77, folder 3.

and the preservation of an intellectual tradition, and it was essential not to confuse a university with “handy agencies to solve immediate problems.” The speech merited a string of accolades from various senior faculty members, with one faculty member, Edwin McClellan, allowing that “I feel very proud that you are going to be our president.” But a cautionary note came from Bill McNeill, a distinguished historian and as much a Chicago local as Edward Levi. Knowing Levi’s deep personal ties to Hutchins, McNeill observed that Levi’s speech did not have the simplicity and naiveté that inspired the best of Hutchins’s speeches in the 1930s and came across as too discreet and apologetic about what he was trying to accomplish. He urged Levi that “as you take full control of the reins of power within the University you ‘let yourself go’ when you can — and speak with simplicity and candor and faith about the things the University ought (and in some measure does) pursue.”<sup>289</sup>

McNeill’s analysis discounted the fact that Levi’s university was not the same as Hutchins’s university. Levi faced a different set of external constituencies and a profoundly different public culture than had Hutchins. Hutchins’s certitudes came in the midst of the economic disasters of the 1930s, but that upheaval did not challenge the fundamental moral character of the American research university. In contrast, in the later 1960s Edward Levi found himself facing a Corcyra-like, revolutionary morass in which words and received understandings about higher education and the basic purposes of universities no longer seemed to hold sway or give comfort. As Levi put it in an eloquent address at the University of Iowa on June 7, 1968, two days after the assassination of Robert Kennedy, “we live under the domination of much more powerful

289. McClellan to Levi, May 16, 1968; McNeill to Levi, May 14, 1968, *Beadle Administration*, Box 200, folder 4.

and different means of communication. We have not mastered our responses to these new messengers. They convey, but they also substitute for reality. The sights and sounds which were always there confuse us, and in truth some never existed before. The result is the cliché, the slogan, the half truth become sovereign through ritualized usage as we search for guides. . . . In this atmosphere, commitment makes its own rules. Words are treated as weapons to be used if they work. At the same time ambiguities of non-verbal communication are exploited. The end is taken to justify the means. Paradoxically, in this atmosphere events control us even while we believe we control them.”<sup>290</sup>

Ironically, if Hutchins was Levi’s spiritus rector, the historical figure whom he often most invoked was William Rainey Harper. Levi relied on Harper for his mainstay argument (what John Wilson later called “Mr. Levi’s catechism”) about the University’s oneness or wholeness. For example, in 1969 he insisted that Harper “was demanding a unity that was not found in many institutions. . . . The thought that this must be one University, not a segmented institution, was always predominant . . . . At times it has given the institution the assurance or a feeling of necessity to go it alone.”<sup>291</sup> This was a structural argument, but also a moral one, in that Levi insisted that the unity of the community was what had

290. “The Responsibilities of the Educated,” *Levi Papers*, Box 298, folder 5.

291. *Levi Papers*, Box 298, folder 11. See also “The University and the Modern Condition,” November 16, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 200, folder 5. Levi’s reliance on Harper became even more acute as the financial crisis of the early 1970s unfolded. His State of the University address in January 1972 presented an extensive reflection on Harper’s vision for the early University. See “The State of the University, January 25, 1972,” *The University of Chicago Record*, 1972, pp. 17–25. See also his talk to the annual faculty-trustee dinner in January 1971, in *Levi Papers*, Box 300, folder 16.

enabled us to hold together in the dark days of the 1940s and 1950s, and that it was this unified community that would now reemerge in the brightness of reform and renewal in the 1960s. This image inspired, because it was meant to inspire. Of course, one might interrogate this cultural imaginary and ask if in fact Harper had actually accomplished what Levi claimed he had accomplished. But that is a question for another time and place. By invoking this particular reading of Harper, Levi historicized the University's special notability by using a powerful, over-determined standard of judgment, and he also challenged his contemporaries to take seriously the need for the University to survive on its own terms, and not the terms of any external interest group or governmental agency. Or, as John Wilson put it, inspired by Levi's reading of Harper, "Harvard may have more money, but Chicago has more university."

**L A T E R   D E V E L O P M E N T S  
I N   E D W A R D   L E V I ' S  
P R E S I D E N C Y**

George Beadle announced his retirement from the presidency in late June 1967, and the board set in motion procedures to find a successor. This time the process went quickly. The two committees were appointed in August 1967, and by mid-September they had agreed upon their nominee, Edward Levi.<sup>292</sup> This was perhaps the fastest presidential search the University has ever mounted.

292. Beadle's resignation was announced on June 27, 1967, and Levi's appointment was announced on September 14, 1967.



Edward Levi officially took office in mid-November 1968. The early months of his presidency were virtually consumed with managing the great student sit-in of January and February of 1969. The history of this sit-in, as well as those that preceded it, was deeply complex, and I think that it is fair to suggest that it hit Edward Levi very hard on a personal as well as professional level. Indeed, in a posthumous memoir by Wayne Booth that was published in 2006 on his experiences as dean of the College from 1964 to 1969, Levi is reported as having on several occasions threatened to resign because of the student tumults affecting his University.<sup>293</sup> Booth also records the passionate extremes which the participants in those hard and perplexing times confronted, with emotions running from brash threats against the students and against the College itself to sincere fears about the integrity of the University, and including a level of visceral hostility by some senior faculty against the students that Booth characterized as dreadful: "The behavior of some faculty members was atrocious. One arrived at most meetings [of the senior administrative steering committee during the sit-in] wearing his army uniform with all of his badges. Another suggested, before the students actually got in [the Administration Building], that we leave some cash distributed about the office desks so that we could have students arrested for theft."<sup>294</sup>

Edward Levi was caught in the middle of these terrible upheavals, and his most powerful impulse must have been, I think, to somehow

293. Wayne C. Booth, *My Many Selves. The Quest for a Plausible Harmony* (Logan, Utah, 2006), pp. 191–193. For a second very useful memoir, see James W. Vice, "Memoirs. Demonstrations: 1968–1969; 1973," private MS., 2004.

294. Booth, *My Many Selves*, p. 194.

find ways to hold the University together.<sup>295</sup>

The tumult of the sit-in eventually passed, but more fundamental challenges remained. Unlike most of our previous presidents before they took office, Edward Levi knew only too well the real financial conditions of the University, and in November 1968 they were only guardedly promising. In spite of the infusion of cash and pledges from the campaign, the University's budget was barely balanced. Levi's conundrum was clear in private memos and correspondence that presented a much less optimistic and less happy view of the University's financial problems. In a memo to his staff in February 1967, he asserted, "I am now convinced that we are in a major financial crisis."<sup>296</sup> When Morris Janowitz of Sociology approached him with ambitious plans for his department in May 1968, Levi sharply responded that "we must keep in mind that the University is really hard up. . . . I mention this because I do think we have to face up to the limitation on funds. And we may have to cut back on basic educational enterprises. . . . I believe *some dreadfully serious problems* are involved, and I would like to talk to you about them. If we had more funds, we could handle some of the problems better."<sup>297</sup>

295. One of the most significant decision points was the issue of whether to call in the city police to evict the demonstrators. Both Wayne Booth and James Vice, in their memoirs on the sit-in, report that Levi strongly sided with those opposed to summoning the police, and James Vice insists, based on his own knowledge and a communication from Kate Levi, that Levi would have resigned the presidency if such a decision had been taken. But this decision was not popular with faculty hardliners, and Vice further reports that "I was told by [former University Dean of Students Charles] O'Connell that some of Levi's closest faculty friends cooled toward him over this." "Memoirs," pp. 24–25.

296. Memorandum, February 27, 1967, *Beadle Administration*, Box 256, folder 13.

297. Levi to Janowitz, May 2, 1968, *Beadle Administration*, Box 199, folder 3.

Finally, Edward Levi decided that it was time to go public. In early December 1969, Ben Rothblatt, an administrator in the provost's office, published in *The University of Chicago Record* an unusually lengthy budget report, the main argument of which was that the University of Chicago was in fact not a wealthy institution and that its annual deficit was bound to increase unless significant new revenue streams could be identified. Rothblatt specifically reported about the Campaign for Chicago that had just concluded that

[i]n some respects, however, the Campaign fell short of its program goals. Less than half of the announced goal for building funds was attained; capital needs are therefore still enormous. A considerable portion of the Campaign funds pledged and received are for long range or other future programs and cannot immediately be put to use. Funds for immediate needs were in relatively short supply, and much of the underwriting of current operations has come from the unrestricted funds provided by the Ford challenge grant.

Rothblatt then remarked that “the last payment of the Ford grant will be made in the current academic year. The University, therefore, faces the problem for 1970–71 and beyond of finding other funds to provide budget support for current operations.”<sup>298</sup>

Concurrently, Edward Levi issued his annual report to the University that, amid the confident rhetoric that is appropriate to such documents, echoed Rothblatt's document in alerting the faculty to a

298. “The University and its Budget,” *The University of Chicago Record*, December 1, 1969, pp. 10–11.

potential structural hole in the University's academic budget that amounted to nearly \$6 million. Levi explained that the Ford challenge grant had been used to cover the serious budget deficits during the later 1960s, but that grant was now about to disappear and he alluded to the fact that it might not be possible to secure a sufficient increase in unrestricted funding to cover the margin. A "hole" in the budget of about \$5.69 million was thus possible, accentuated by our failure to assemble unrestricted gifts anywhere near what was needed to balance the budget. To give you a sense of the magnitude of the problem, a \$5.7 million deficit in 1970 would be the equivalent of a deficit of approximately \$30 million in 2012.<sup>299</sup>

Of course, the challenges that Chicago was about to face were not untypical. If the 1960s were the golden age of American research universities, the 1970s proved a different environment indeed. Economic stagnation, rampant inflation, the image of disarray in the later 1960s that many universities projected to their external, gift-giving constituencies, the withdrawal of federal research and fellowship dollars — all these factors ushered in a climate of budgetary austerity if not crisis.

299. *The State of the University*, November 4, 1969, pp. 5, 8. The situation that Levi sought to describe in modulated, even reassuring, words would be described in a different language by Trustee James Downs several months later. When Levi invited Downs to join an Economic Study Commission to investigate the University's economic situation, Downs responded with a letter on the "fearsome financial situation" of the University in which he observed, "I am certain that you are much more aware than I that the 'pursuit of excellence' at the University has been the major element that has put us on a collision course with insolvency. From my specialized point of view (that of 'sound' business planning — a concept which may well be obsolete) I would only point out that our new building program alone is compounding our operational losses — a fact dramatically demonstrated by the new library, but duplicated in virtually every new construction project." James C. Downs Jr. to Edward H. Levi, March 4, 1970, *Presidents' Papers*, Addenda, Series 97-6, Box 25.

Chicago too found itself faced with a looming fiscal crisis, but the specific nature of our crisis was directly affected by the events that occurred in the spring of 1969. The logic of the Ford Plan was predicated on the capacity of the University to increase unrestricted giving in support of current operations and to sustain increased enrollments, translating into incremental tuition revenues, with an estimated doubling of tuition dollars by 1975. The November 1969 reports were a signal that our earlier optimism about the sustainability of massive increases in unrestricted giving to cover our now inflated current expenditures might have been exaggerated, but what these documents did not yet confront — and what their authors may not have even been fully aware of in the late summer of 1969 — is that more severe challenges lay immediately ahead because of negative trends on the enrollment front.

At this point my narrative must return briefly to the Ford Profile. Remember the vision behind the profile: more students and more wonderful facilities, not to mention more faculty, to (respectively) house and teach those students. Between 1965 and 1968, College enrollments began to grow steadily, as did faculty numbers, but housing resources did not follow suit. Indeed, the expansion of the College was predicated on the capacity of the University rapidly to assemble vast new resources of student housing. Even though the University formulated an ambitious plan for new student facilities, in fact the Ford campaign raised no funds toward that project, which remained stillborn. As early as October 1966, Edward Levi expressed pessimism to the board over the ability of the University to meet these expectations. He was particularly concerned with the need to invest heavily in research facilities and libraries on the one hand and facilities for the College on the other. He noted, “I want to say that I think that the student facility problem is in some ways the greatest problem among all the other greatest problems that the

University has. We have a crisis on housing. I don't quite know what we are doing about it frankly.” He further commented that

I think that it's quite wrong to put the College at the bottom of the heap and to say, well, after we build the other buildings, we will have some buildings for the College. And I know it is a terrible problem. . . . I think that the problem is this — that Harper didn't create the University of Chicago *ad seriatim* and if he had tried to, he couldn't, and I think that is our problem. I think that by trying to go after each of these projects as though we were going to take one and then when it was over, we would take the next one. . . . you do not get the impact and by the time you get around to the area which is very important you have something rather sick on your hands. . . . I think that kind of shoving back and forth is not giving the University the kind of impetus that it ought to have.<sup>300</sup>

Unfortunately, not only did the campaign of the 1960s fail to generate sufficient unrestricted gift funds to replace the Ford money but it also failed to produce the huge sums needed for the originally ambitious program for improvements to student life. Warner Wick, the dean of students, was quoted by the *The Chicago Maroon* in May 1966 to the effect that the costs of new housing were “staggering” and “[t]he difficulty with money for housing is that it usually comes from unrestricted grants, the same money that is the backbone of our academic program. Thus housing is in direct competition with our most serious academic

300. Transcribed Remarks in the Minutes of the Board of Trustees, October 15, 1966, pp. 11–12, 22–23.

needs.”<sup>301</sup> Essentially, the expansion of the faculty and the array of impressive capital investments in faculty research during the 1960s had helped to solve the “neighborhood” problem, as it pertained to the senior faculty. But the students’ “neighborhood” problem remained — they still did not have the physically and culturally welcoming place to go to college for which Ernest Burton had so passionately argued in the 1920s. To make matters worse, the solution for the faculty — prestigious appointments, academic excellence for the departments — seemed to the students to do little to respond to their concerns and unhappiness. If Edward Levi was to achieve his goal for the College — that it serve as a powerful integrative mechanism for the whole University — much more would have to be done than simply hiring new University Professors.

The miserable state of student housing became supremely relevant when in mid-March 1969, less than a month after the end of the sit-in, Dean of the College Wayne Booth announced at a meeting of the College Council a decision to reduce the size of the College’s entering class in the fall of 1969 from 730 to 500. Booth argued that “[t]oo many first-year students at Chicago have again this year been reported as miserable in their quarters, uninspired in their instruction, and unrenewed by their extracurricular life.”<sup>302</sup> This was the public face of a decision that had, in fact, been generated in the president’s office and imposed on Wayne Booth (so Wayne Booth later insisted to the present author). At the time, Booth protested vigorously against the reduction, but he was overruled and essentially told to use the housing situation to justify the decision, which did make it plausible. Moreover, it was striking that the decision to reduce the entering class of under-

301. *The Chicago Maroon*, May 3, 1966, p. 1.

302. Minutes of the College Council, March 18, 1965, p. 49.

graduate students by one-third came so quickly on the heels of the student disruptions and in the middle of the disciplinary proceedings that followed the sit-in of 1969.

*The Chicago Maroon* caught the general negative tenor of undergraduate life at the beginning of spring quarter of 1969 when it observed:

Perhaps the most compelling reason [for reducing the size of the College], and the reason least discussed is something that makes the University of Chicago College unique: walk up to any College student at any time, ask him how he feels, and three times out of four the answer will be, "Miserable."<sup>303</sup>

These missing students — collegiate as well as graduate — not only meant that the financial goals articulated by Edward Levi in the Ford Profile were never met, but they — by their absence — also caused havoc in the already strained budgets of the early and mid-1970s. Between 1968 and 1973, total University enrollments fell from 8,335 to 7,258 students. The decision taken in 1969 to reduce the size the College was not the only cause of the failure of the Ford Profile, but it certainly contributed mightily to that failure. Perhaps it was understandable that Provost John Wilson would later assert in October 1972 that "[t]welve hundred additional students, or even half that number, would do a great deal to alleviate the pressure on the general funds of the University."<sup>304</sup> In the same vein, a report of the faculty Advisory Committee on Student Enrollment chaired by former dean of the College Roger Hildebrand

303. *The Chicago Maroon*, April 1, 1969, p. 4.

304. "1972–73 University Budget," *The University of Chicago Record*, October 31, 1972, p. 96.



in March 1974 stated bluntly that

[o]ur failure to meet past enrollment projections either in the long run or the short run has been a direct cause of our present deficits. The 1965 proposal to the Ford Foundation, on which funding and faculty growth were then based, projected a 1974–75 quadrangles enrollment 2,700 above the current actual figure (10,204 vs. 7,496). . . . Furthermore, the continuing decline in enrollment impedes the initiation of a campaign for outside funds. Donors more willingly support universities with growing lists of applicants. It is urgent and imperative that we reverse the downward trend of the last four years.<sup>305</sup>

The committee called for a concerted effort to add 1,100 additional students to the quadrangles by 1980 and a reduction in the faculty by approximately 75 faculty positions over the following three years. However, both goals soon proved unrealistic.

Beyond enrollment problems, the University faced other serious financial problems that were analyzed in several remarkably detailed reports to the faculty on the University's financial situation by Provost John Wilson between 1970 and 1975. Not only did the market value of the endowment fail to keep up with a growing pattern of inflation, but endowment payouts even in nominal dollars to the budget in 1979–80 (\$16,379,000) were below those allocated in 1971–72 (\$17,075,000). Coupled with the dreadful performance of the stock market in the mid-1970s and the University's ongoing deficit spending, these trends ate

305. "Report of the Advisory Committee on Student Enrollment," *The University of Chicago Record*, May 28, 1974, p. 97.

into the income that could be derived from University investments.<sup>306</sup> Unrestricted gifts to the University also declined in the early 1970s, falling from \$4 million in 1970–71 to a low of \$3.1 million in 1974–75, and returning to healthier levels only later in the decade.<sup>307</sup> John Wilson remarked about the “gift estimate” in the 1970–71 budget

306. “In the years 1972 to 1978, some \$28.5 million was withdrawn in pursuance of the TRIP formula. It was, of course, assumed here and at the many other non-profit institutions adopting the total return approach that these withdrawals would be made up for by capital gains on common stock holdings, but the great stock market collapse of the middle 1970s confounded that expectation. In addition to the withdrawals mandated by the TRIP formula, an additional \$10.0 million was withdrawn from funds functioning as endowment between 1971–72 and 1975–76 to meet current deficits and in 1979–80 another \$2.75 million was withdrawn for that purpose.” Kenneth W. Dam, “The University Budget, 1980–81,” *The University of Chicago Record*, December 31, 1980, pp. 220–21. Dam’s report offers a good survey of the University’s economy as a whole in the 1970s. I estimate that the total deficit underwriting of the academic budget between 1950 and 1975 and the extraordinary expenditures to shore up the neighborhood—both drawn from funds functioning as endowment—amounted to at least \$50 million. It was most certainly the case that the withdrawal of that level of capital from the University’s endowment between 1950 and 1975 cost the University many hundreds of millions of current endowment in 2012 dollars. If one includes the loss of projected tuition income that never materialized because of the University’s failure to meet its own student enrollment targets between 1955 and 1975, and the subsequent loss of alumni contributions that followed on the heels of those missing students, the loss in endowment dollars was much more dramatic. Indeed, the beginning of the relative decline of the size of the University of Chicago’s endowment, compared to the endowments of private peer universities like Stanford and Princeton, begins and accelerates during these years.

307. Earl Cheit suggested in his study of the “academic depression” of the early 1970s that the decline in alumni and other external giving had to do (in part) with negative reactions to the student disturbances, like the 1969 sit-in. Earl F. Cheit, *The New Depression in Higher Education. A Study of Financial Conditions at 41 Colleges and Universities* (New York, 1971), pp. 11, 19.

that it gave him “the greatest cause for concern,” arguing that meeting the gift targets needed to balance the budget that year would require a “minor miracle.”<sup>308</sup> The miracle did not happen. Reductions of federal aid to research and graduate education made the situation still more perilous.

Finally, on top of everything else, patterns of foundation giving also changed in ways that were deeply unsympathetic to the deficit-dependent budgetary practices of the research universities. This is clear in the behavior of the Ford Foundation toward the University of Chicago. If one compares the generosity of the Ford Foundation toward Chicago during the fifteen years from 1956 to 1971, as opposed to grants provided between 1972 and 1986, the difference is striking, revealing the massive dependence of the University on Ford support in the initial post-war period: between 1956 and 1971 the Ford Foundation provided over \$95 million dollars to the University of Chicago, whereas between 1972 and 1986 Ford support declined precipitously to \$4.8 million. Chicago encountered this trend in an ironic instance of the other shoe dropping. As we struggled with the monotonic frustrations of budget austerity in the early 1970s, there was always the hope of one more outside intervention. Thus, it was not surprising that in the summer of 1973 Edward Levi would again journey to New York, this time in the company of two trustees and a senior faculty member, to again ask for a major grant from senior officials at the Ford Foundation. The University followed their visit with a detailed memorandum which again, as in 1965, sought to state the University’s financial case, but which was less compelling because it was more defensive in tone. Unlike the buoyant atmosphere that obtained in 1964–65, Edward Levi’s inter-

308. “Memorandum to the Faculty,” July 31, 1970, p. 3, *Presidents’ Papers*, Box 20.

vention in 1973 was undertaken out of deep necessity and considerable apprehension, and this time Ford’s response was quite different.

In a fascinating internal memo Ford officials Harold Howe and Earl Cheit analyzed shrewdly and sensibly the financial difficulties of the University in the early 1970s. They argued that

[t]he picture presented by the President and Trustees of the University in July, 1973 might be described in the phrase of the party-goer who had an extra drink, “I feel more like I do now than I did when I came.” In Dr. Cheit’s terms it was the same but more so. Chicago faces a \$6 million deficit, both this year and next, out of an operating budget (excluding the medical school) of some \$75 million. The Trustees have approved these deficits with the reservation that the University plan and mount a drive for \$300 million in new funds.<sup>309</sup>

After acknowledging that Chicago’s situation was made even more acute because of its small undergraduate enrollment and “because its alumni tend to be concentrated in employment that has rewards other than money,” they concluded that “the University of Chicago has special problems in raising large-scale funds.” They continued:

Chicago leaders have serious concerns about its future. While they defend its use of capital to maintain quality in recent years (quality they surely have), they recognize the need to discipline themselves for a difficult future. . . . They see only one way out

309. Harold Howe II and Earl F. Cheit, “The Situation of the Major Research Universities in the United States with Special Emphasis on the University of Chicago,” September 15, 1973, Nr. 012658, *Ford Foundation Archives*.

of this dilemma: a \$20–30 million vote of confidence by the Ford Foundation.

The desired vote of confidence, and the desired huge sum of money, did not come. For Howe and Cheit made it clear that “there is little we can do in direct response to its [Chicago’s] persuasive case.” Moreover, in a subsequent letter to Edward Levi in November 1973, even this initial view of the University as having a “persuasive case” seemed to shift substantially. After undertaking an analysis of the University’s financial situation, Howe and Cheit now argued that the University’s plans for controlling expenditure growth were still “inadequately focused.” What was needed was a plan that would “be directed toward establishing better control of the internal processes of the institution and more generally of relating that plan to the larger aims of the Fund Drive and the funding of the University.” Later in the same letter they returned to the issue of undergraduate enrollment targets, a point that must have been of some sensitivity given Levi’s extravagant plans to Ford eight years earlier:

Your plans for graduate enrollment seem quite reasonable. We were, however, puzzled by the undergraduate enrollment situation. Given the rich mix offered by the University, we cannot understand why the University should have difficulty recruiting another thousand undergraduates. We believe that that issue bears some serious investigation.<sup>310</sup>

Instead of another major grant, Edward Levi thus received gratuitous advice along the lines that more expenditure controls, better planning,

310. Harold Howe II and Earl F. Cheit to Edward H. Levi, November 6, 1973, copy filed in the *Ford Profile files*.

and larger undergraduate enrollments would surely lead Chicago to the promised land of budgetary probity.

Thus, University leaders were forced to launch Phase Two of the Campaign for Chicago in the summer of 1974 — a campaign that should have been started in 1970 but was temporarily sidetracked because of the impact of the 1969 sit-in and the fall in enrollments — lacking a major challenge grant. This new campaign immediately ran into trouble, and, with Edward Levi’s resignation to become attorney general in 1975, it had to be quietly scaled back, with the final results by 1978 painfully below the originally stated goals.

The University’s reaction to the convergence of all of these problems was renewed budget cutting, modest reductions in faculty size, and other austerities. The 1970–71 budget had been constructed on the assumption of a no-growth policy in faculty size and a total quadrangles enrollment of 8,300 students, but the actual number of students who showed up was 600 lower. In turn, for the 1971–72 fiscal year, the Deans’ Budget Committee recommended an across-the-board reduction in academic unit budgets of 5 percent, but the final reduction was actually closer to 7 percent.<sup>311</sup> In October 1972, Wilson informed the faculty that a serious deficit might still emerge in the 1972–73 budget, and highlighted the need for more attention to

a planned downward adjustment of total faculty size, to a level which is congruent with unrestricted funds available and with first-order intellectual standards. Meeting this requirement will be a more difficult exercise than any the University has faced in

311. “1971–72 University Budget,” *The University of Chicago Record*, October 11, 1971, p. 109.

the budgets of the last three years. But to put off the confrontation for another year will not solve our fundamental budgetary problem. To do this will, through the effects of continued constraints, initiate a more serious erosion of the quality of the University.<sup>312</sup>

During the 1972–73 cycle, it was also reported that the “condition of the stock market raises [the] question of [our] ability to meet the endowment estimate.”<sup>313</sup> The endowment problem was worsened by the fact that unrestricted giving to the University also dropped substantially, from an annual high point of \$6.8 million in 1966–67 to \$3.3 million in 1971–72. Total gifts sank from \$34.6 million in 1968–69 to \$24.1 million in 1971–72. During the 1972–73 fiscal year, the University had to budget the use of \$3 million drawn from the endowment to cover the operating deficit, even though such action reduced future income.

In 1973–74, the general situation was still quite serious. During the late spring of 1973, it became apparent that even the already austere budget for 1973–74 had overestimated enrollment by 200 students, leading to a “new” deficit within the “old” deficit of an additional \$500,000, shares of which each of the units had to cover. In December 1973, Edward Levi then released a summary of an unusually candid and tough-minded Deans’ Budget Report. This time the deans asserted openly that the ongoing deficit was eroding the future viability of the University and recommended that the budget gap be closed within three years. Among other recommendations they also urged that “[a] rigorous

312. “1972-73 University Budget,” *The University of Chicago Record*, October 31, 1972, p. 96.

313. “Preliminary General Budget, 1972–73, Notes,” in *Presidents’ Papers*, Box 20.

examination should be made of academic units which might be eliminated in toto” and that “the size of the faculty, as of other segments of the University, will need to be trimmed.”

Levi indicated his agreement with the deans’ recommendation that the deficit be closed within three years, concluding his own report with the observation that

[t]he University has attempted during the last three years to meet its economic problems without dramatic gestures which overemphasize the austerity required, and in such a way as not only to maintain but to improve the quality of our University. It may be that the absence of dramatic gestures has contributed to a failure to communicate to ourselves or the friends of the University the seriousness with which we must approach our problems, but I doubt this.<sup>314</sup>

Three years later, the problems were still apparent. Another report of the Deans’ Budget Committee in December 1976 stated candidly that the University of Chicago was still facing budget problems “in especially severe terms” because

it has a long history of being an academic overachiever in relation to its financial base. It has engaged in adventuresome risk taking in budgeting. With the advantage of hindsight, one may note an overexpansion of the size of the faculty in the decade 1960–1970: the number of faculty members increased from 813 in 1960–61 to 1139 in 1970–71, without a corresponding

314. *University of Chicago Bulletins*, January 7, 1974, pp. 1–2.



increase in continuing financial resources. As a result, dangerous gaps developed between income and expenditures.<sup>315</sup>

The 1970s were a time of considerable self-reflection involving cogent attempts to explain the miserable budgetary situation. The various reports of Edward Levi and his provost, John Wilson, to the faculty combined an honesty and surprising candor about the crisis with constant efforts to invoke the higher destiny of the University. And, as always, life went on. Yet the student crisis of the later 1960s had long legs in its negative impact on the demographic structure of the College and on the student and young alumni culture of our campus; and the increasing financial gloom and budgetary downturn after 1970 was perplexing and even frightening, compared to the bright days of the mid-1960s, when in the afterglow of the big Ford grant everything seemed possible.

To the very end of his presidency, Edward Levi enjoyed extraordinary respect, trust, and admiration on the part of the senior faculty and the board. Gaylord Donnelley's characterization of Edward Levi in a confidential letter to Glen Lloyd in January 1975 was quite typical: "Throughout the country he [Levi] is recognized now as the best president of a university; so he has brought great honor to the University and to us as Trustees."<sup>316</sup>

In what ways was the University better off after Edward Levi's service from 1962 to 1975? On the positive side there was a reassertion of faculty control of institutional planning, serious and crucial investments

315. "Report of the Deans' Budget Committee for 1977-78," *The University of Chicago Record*, March 16, 1977, p. 5.

316. Donnelley to Lloyd, January 29, 1975, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 21.

in key intellectual and scientific resources, above all Regenstein Library, a stunning increase in the size of the faculty in the early and mid-1960s, the rebuilding of key departmental leadership structures, the creation of the University Professorships and the substantial expansion of the other named professorships, and investments in key new facilities in the natural sciences. The huge grant of \$25 million from the Ford Foundation in 1965 was not the \$200 million that McGeorge Bundy stipulated, but it was a large and encouraging gift, and it set the stage for the era of good feelings that defined the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the University in 1967 and led popular commentators to proclaim that Chicago's "rising eminence [is] posing a challenge to Harvard as No. 1."<sup>317</sup> When Franklin Ford, who had succeeded McGeorge Bundy as dean of the faculty of arts and sciences at Harvard, proclaimed that the University of Chicago was "a giant, a 'world university'" in the spring of 1967, Edward Levi might feel justifiable satisfaction.<sup>318</sup>

Moreover, Edward Levi's dignified defense of the University's values chronicled and paralleled a stunning intellectual and cultural recovery in the 1960s that built upon the material recovery that Lawrence Kimpton had achieved in the 1950s. In a way, the period 1951 to 1975 is a whole thing, and if one asks the question in a slightly different way — was the University better off in 1975 than in 1951, the answer is even more positive. Indeed, a private note that Edward Levi drafted after Lawrence Kimpton's tragic death in 1977 reminds us of their unity. Levi wrote, "Lawrence Kimpton became Chancellor of the University at a crisis time

317. *Chicago Tribune*, June 25, 1967, Section 1A, p. 1.

318. Franklin L. Ford, "Our Universities: National and Regional Roles," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 43 (1967): 229.

when drastic action was required. Extraordinary budget problems had to be met. The area problems [in Hyde Park] were such that many persons believed that they could not be solved and the University would have to move. Kimpton gave extraordinary leadership to the University, with a full recognition of the historic purposes and unique qualities of the University which had to be preserved and, as is always the case, strengthened. He did not give lip service to these qualities; he made them possible by his willingness to face the issues that had to be met. He was a person of great talent and insight, innate modesty and courage, who loved the University, appreciated its past and made its future possible.”

One could also apply these lines to Edward Levi himself. And Levi then added, but deleted, a telling line that might characterize the thoughtful leadership that he demonstrated in the final years of financial grimness that he experienced in his own presidency, “His [Kimpton’s] role was not the one he would have selected, but it was the role required.”<sup>319</sup>

On the debit side of these years was the continuing problem of the College, and the failure to meet the enrollment targets for graduate or undergraduate students that the University itself had established with the Ford Foundation and with the federal government.<sup>320</sup> Equally important, there was a continued frustration about student life and frustrations of students with student life that haunted Levi and other senior administrators in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Most senior

319. *Levi Papers*, Box 25, folder 4.

320. By 1972, Levi seemed to have abandoned any hope of significant enrollment improvement. In a public relations pamphlet developed for potential donors about the identity of the University in 1972, he announced that we were a small university and that the College would be about 2,100 students. Clearly, the ambitious plans of the 1960s had totally collapsed. See Edward H. Levi, *An Adventure in Discovery* (1972), p. 15.

faculty believed that Edward Levi had saved the moral integrity of the University during the great sit-in of 1969. David Riesman would later argue that under Levi's leadership Chicago was the "only major research university to have come through the 1960s relatively unscathed and . . . unpolarized." Personally I believe that, from a senior faculty perspective, Riesman's judgment was correct.<sup>321</sup> But we must also acknowledge that many students and younger alumni did not see things that way *at all*, and that the bitter feelings held by many students and alumni from the later 1960s and early 1970s became corrosive elements that, in turn, created negative sentiments among wide segments of our alumni culture for decades to come.

Edward Levi was particularly unlucky in his hopes for rebuilding and expanding the College, enabling it to become an institution of University-wide integration. Levi's attempt to resolve the conundrum created by Harper's rhetorical perplexity relating to undergraduate education comprehended an issue of chronic import for the wider welfare of the University that, as we have seen, had also deeply concerned Ernest Burton and Lawrence Kimpton.

For all his imaginative theoretical planning in the mid-1960s, one thing to be learned from Levi's experience is that the College could not be reborn exclusively from investing in distinguished faculty research. It required (and continues to require) investments in high quality undergraduate teaching and in the physical infrastructure of the campus to enrich the visible conditions of student life and to enhance the research opportunities, the extracurricular resources, and the career advising programming for our undergraduates, set in the context of a formal curriculum that balances strong general education with sufficient space for

321. Riesman to Levi, January 2, 1981, *Levi Papers*, Box 34, folder 2.

attractive specialized training programs. All this had to be undertaken with as much administrative foresight, financial courage, and creative energy as Edward Levi devoted to rebuilding the faculty's research profile.

Real progress, with real traction, on giving the College a prominent and sustainable institutional status within the wider University only began in the administration of President Hanna H. Gray, when College enrollments were increased from 2,500 to over 3,400 and when more systematic and sustained investments were devoted to student life. This progress continued and investments accelerated, with various bumps and controversies (the so-called Core Wars of the late 1990s, etc.) in subsequent administrations, with the result being that we now have a College of 5,600 students, slightly larger than Yale and Princeton, but still substantially smaller than Harvard, Stanford, and Columbia. The current size of the College and its stunning successes in admissions in recent years give the University the permanent structural capacity to be able to support financially the wider political economy of the arts and sciences in good times and in bad, ensuring that we will be able to recruit and retain the best faculty and students for the College and for the Graduate Divisions in the decades to come.

These demographic changes since the 1990s have also substantially increased the size of our alumni population and, given the loyalty that our College students and our alumni are showing toward the wider welfare of the University, this too is a positive development. Lawrence Kimpton's goal of stable financial equilibrium anchored in a larger undergraduate college has now been achieved, but so too has Ernest Burton's hope for a much more vibrant residential campus, given the investments that the board of trustees has made in the Palevsky, South Campus, and (recently announced) 55th Street/University Avenue residential complexes. Both goals — financial strength and residential

coherence — have been achieved within a rigorous intellectual culture and a balanced curriculum that sustains the best of the pedagogical achievements of Robert Maynard Hutchins and his era and gives the College and the University a rare status within the exceedingly competitive world of the elite private universities of the United States. I believe that Edward Levi would have been delighted with this recent triangulation of fiscal confidence, cultural integration, and intellectual achievement.

Looking back on the years of Edward Levi's leadership, one cannot but be struck by how hard it must have been to juggle these competing concerns and crises and to do so with the eloquence, the long-range perspective, and the patience that Levi brought to bear. It is telling to compare the letter that McGeorge Bundy had sent to David Rockefeller in September 1960 with a letter that Edward Levi sent to the Ford Foundation in January 1974, responding to criticisms that foundation officials had made about the financial state of the University. The latter document was especially ironic in that its ultimate addressee was none other than McGeorge Bundy, who was now president of the Ford Foundation. After 12 years of dedicated, exhausting, and determined leadership Edward Levi found himself writing a 16-page, single-spaced response defending his record to the officials of the Ford Foundation, a letter that conveys both his evident anger and supreme frustration. In place of the optimism and élan of the original Ford application in 1965, Edward Levi was now forced to recount and explain the series of budget deficits that the University had again been forced to endure between 1970 and 1974, as well as the failure of the University to meet its ambitious student enrollment targets, and he concluded with the sobering thought: "I think that there is an assumption that the University of Chicago is a wealthy institution which does not need help to retain its

quality. I think our problem is serious, that our effort to retain quality has been important and reasonable, and has had to be tried, but that we must be in a position for a sharp further curtailment if that is necessary. The curtailment is likely to require the further elimination of whole areas.”<sup>322</sup>

In fact, the University struggled to maintain its distinctiveness in the face of dangerous (and in a few cases self-inflicted) liabilities and against fiercely competitive winds of change, and there is a kind of perennial quality to this narrative in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s that made it both remarkable and daunting.<sup>323</sup> McGeorge Bundy had argued in 1960 that intellectual distinction of a special kind was a much coveted treasure, but the University needed deeply reliable financial enabling structures both to underwrite its current academic and cultural programs and to be able to continually renew itself, and the ultimate success of the University was dependent on both capacities. More than anyone else, Edward Levi knew this, and his leadership between 1962 and 1975 was an essential intervention to restore and to protect our intellectual distinction, while trying to build up the capacity of the University’s unrestricted financial resources. Levi succeeded brilliantly with the first, and he made some progress on the second, but also confronted harsh and sometimes bitter financial realities that must have seemed to him, at times at least, undeservedly frustrating. As he characterized his personal

322. Levi to Howe, January 10, 1974, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 25.

323. It says much about the apprehensions of at least some of the trustees in the early 1960s that there was actually a discussion about trying to persuade the Mott family to give the University an endowment gift of \$250 million in return for renaming the University in honor of Mott. “I was one of the group that held up their hands feeling that it would be worth changing the name of the University to receive the Mott money.” See R. P. Gwinn to Glen Lloyd, December 3, 1962, as well as George A. Poole to Glen Lloyd, November 28, 1962, *Lloyd Papers*, Box 25.

relationship to his own understanding of the University's identity in 1970, "it is a love affair with an ideal, never in favor and fast disappearing."<sup>324</sup>

Edward Levi admired Robert Hutchins for conjuring up images of a youthful, exciting, and endlessly restless University, and for deploying those narratives about the University's identity to elicit wide public notoriety. But Levi was also a sensible and cautious leader who, in contrast to the occasionally reckless behavior of Hutchins, knew the dangers of getting too far ahead of the faculty, even in times when he felt that the faculty were blisteringly wrong. The many committees that he appointed, the many reports that he wrote, the many lunches and dinners with countless and sometimes disgruntled or apprehensive students and faculty members that Levi endured were manifest attempts to guide and teach the faculty and the students, nudging them in the right way, even if in some cases they refused to go where he wished. ■

324. Levi to Vernon A. Eagle, January 26, 1970, *Levi Papers*, Box 299, folder 11.



PART V  
CONCLUSION

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**L**awrence Kimpton once joked that all sorts of people have tried to monkey with the *Geist* of the University of Chicago, and that none of them ever won — the University defeated all of them.<sup>325</sup> Yet, in fact, all three of these presidents monkeyed profoundly with the character of the place, and for the better. Ernest Burton's intervention on behalf of the College was critical to reversing a policy direction that would have proven disastrous for the later moral (and financial) welfare of the University, and for its national public reputation. Burton was also the first University leader to understand that John D. Rockefeller was deadly serious in his expectation that the University needed to cultivate a wide range of civic and alumni support for its future welfare. Lawrence Kimpton's service, in turn, was truly exceptional in pulling the University back from the brink of financial insolvency and urban blight, while undoing many of the less plausible and unattractive features of the College program forced through by Robert Hutchins in 1942. Edward Levi in turn built upon Kimpton's work and, in a grand vision for the University articulated in the mid-1960s, he reimaged the luster and the scholarly ambience of the place, but in a very different context from that experienced by either Harper or Hutchins.

Yet presidential (and provostial) administrations are never final things. They begin with great optimism and enormous ambition, and

325. *The University of Chicago Record*, February 28, 1978, p. 19.

eventually settle into the sober, hard-board realities of governance. Ambitions bump up against constrained resources, and wise choices must be made, hopefully for the greater good of the central purposes of the University. As much as we might want to affirm Edward Levi's rhetoric of the University's faculty being marked by a culture of oneness, in fact we have always relied on a small group of leaders to make these choices, leaders who have the vision, the fortitude, and the luck to be able to sustain the academic luster of the institution, but who also have the skills to guarantee its fundamental possibilities and its longer term security. Or, as Levi put it in response to yet another proposal for spending money that the University did not have in 1964, "we have to balance the central strength of the University as against all kind of good and important works, which in the long run are only possible for us if we have that central strength."<sup>326</sup>

The identity of this University is formidable, based above all on its intellectual luster and high academic standards. Each generation of faculty leaders has confronted the need to rearticulate that identity in ways that resonate with the past, yet also to take advantage of present and future opportunities, and to do so in the context of the University's complex educational mission. The three presidents whom I have discussed today sought to reimagine the College in a more dynamic and publicly efficacious way, and each encountered frustrating barriers that hindered their hopes and aspirations. Each was forced to deal with the financial quandary of needing to preserve the existing accomplishments of the University in tandem with wanting to invest in attractive new programs. Each presided over major fundraising campaigns to secure the University's financial welfare that were partially successful, but that also

326. Levi to Margaret Rosenheim, June 25, 1964, *Levi Papers*, Box 34, folder 4.

highlighted the isolation of the University from the civic elites of the city of Chicago, a chronic problem that frustrated John D. Rockefeller and his family, who wanted the University to be Chicago's university and not their own private university.<sup>327</sup> All three presidents confronted those tensions between student demography on the one hand and presumed ideological identity on the other that Ernest D. Burton first highlighted, rhetorical disjunctions between the "undergraduate" and "graduate" in our everyday discourse that continue to impact our institutional identity. Even today one still encounters inaccurate and (in my personal view) incautious images of the University as "primarily a graduate school," when in fact the great majority of students in the arts and sciences who are in residence on our campus, who walk the quadrangles every day with their friends and compatriots, and who need classroom instruction on any given day are our 5,600 College students (over 80 percent of all students in the arts and science disciplines needing in-class instruction each day are undergraduates).

Today the University continues to possess a vibrant and a highly distinctive identity as an institution of higher learning devoted to above all to what Edward Levi once called "the intellectual and rational tradition broadly conceived."<sup>328</sup> But that portrait is based as much on Chicago's unique educational programs and its innovative teaching

327. Burton put this dilemma well when he observed: "Mr. Rockefeller has given to this University Thirty-five Million Dollars. Thirteen years ago, when he made his last gift of Ten Million Dollars, he said it was his last. It has always been his desire to simply stimulate the City of Chicago and to make it its own. We cannot look further to him. We cannot blame him that he has made us a present, both of the University and of the opportunity [to secure the loyalty of the people of Chicago]." Address at the Chicago Club in New York City, December 30, 1924, p. 10.

328. Levi to Jay L. Lemke, April 29, 1970, *Levi Papers*, Box 299, folder 12.

practices as on the luster of its faculty research. This identity has defined the mission of the University since its inception, and it has proven surprisingly resilient within different cultural, social, and economic contexts. The history of the last 10 years has shown the University's remarkable capacity for robust cultural continuity in the midst of significant demographic change. We have proven that we can have a nationally distinguished, highly competitive liberal arts College with a unique academic profile, anchored in intellectual rigor, filled with student pride and success, and sustained by a robust loyalty on the part of our College alumni, all at the heart of a great University that affirms even more vigilantly the intellectual and rational tradition. We have now ensured the status for Chicago that William Rainey Harper, Frederick Gates, Thomas Goodspeed, and the other founders of the University most coveted, namely to be the most competitive and most distinguished liberal arts college *and* research university in American higher education between the two ocean coasts, with our peers on those coasts increasingly looking with envy and admiration at what is happening at Chicago. That we have come so far and accomplished so much is a tribute to the vision and determination of men like Burton, Kimpton, and Levi. I believe that each of these presidents left the University stronger and more vibrant than they found it, and it is proper and fitting that our history will judge them as having been among the University's most distinguished academic leaders.

Let me close by thanking all members of the faculty for your dedication to the College and to our students. It is a pleasure and honor to serve as your dean, and I am grateful for your support for our students and our alumni. May we all have a safe, stimulating, and fruitful academic year. ■













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