

Honoring Our History



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Introduction

Allen Johnson provides the historical context for the founding of the General College, including the influence of John Dewey's ideals. Johnson states, "The origin of the [General College] idea can be traced directly to the earlier efforts of political and educational leaders to build a democratic society by designing and offering effective general education programs in American colleges and universities." It was Lotus Delta Coffman, fifth president of the University of Minnesota and "an advocate of educational equality" who acted upon the democratic ideals of Dewey and others in founding GC "to serve an increasingly heterogeneous student body."

Cathy Wambach and Tom Brothen continue to inform us about the history of the General College through their chapter on the Minnesota Point of View, which demonstrates the significant impact of a group of University of Minnesota psychologists not just on the founding, mission, and counseling emphasis of GC, but also on the student personnel movement throughout the U.S. Wambach and Brothen also address the role of assessment in the early years of GC.

Katy Gray Brown builds upon this historical context by focusing more explicitly upon the multicultural mission of developmental education as practiced in the General College. She asserts, "The pedagogical approach of developmental education, designed to engage a broad spectrum of learners, becomes a fundamental aspect of the social mission of the University." Like Johnson, Brown reminds us of "the importance of access to the fulfillment of the land-grant vision of community service."

David Taylor, Dean of General College for the past 15 years, also contributes his historical perspective on the politics of GC's transformation over the years in response to external political forces and internal initiatives of the administration, faculty, and staff. Since 1985 GC has shifted its focus toward becoming a nationally recognized program for teaching, learning, and research in the field of developmental education. Taylor notes how over the years GC has undergone several periods of change in response to external constituencies and popular rhetoric about the role of access programs in higher education. In the University's future vision of becoming a world-class leader in research, GC's history as presented by Taylor illuminates how identities are changed and transformed over time and specifically how students are impacted.

From the Beginning: This History of Developmental Education and the Pre-1932 General College Idea

Allen B. Johnson

ABSTRACT

This chapter traces the evolution of ideas that led to the planning and implementation, in 1932, of the general education program at the General College at the University of Minnesota. The first of these ideas embodies its basis and rationale in the nation's effort to build a democratic society. The second idea embraces the pioneering efforts to understand how learning occurs and how developmental strategies can enable individuals to achieve both academic and life goals. These ideas were shaped into a program that would serve those students deemed as nontraditional, underserved, and discards of higher education.

One day in 2002 while I was examining documentation concerning the beginnings of the General College, a colleague asked me what I was doing. I said "I am researching and planning to write about the origin of the General College." "Well," he said, "that shouldn't be too difficult; the college began in 1932."

That comment reinforced the importance of the idea that most things do not originate out of the clear blue and suddenly emerge with a physical presence. Instead, they begin in the human mind as an idea. I am reminded of H. G. Wells' quote that "Human history is in essence a history of ideas" (*American Heritage College Dictionary*, 2000, p. 673). The origin of the General College resulted from an assemblage of ideas that developed in the minds of educators several years before it first opened its doors on October 3, 1932. In fact, the concepts upon which the college was built began in the minds of political leaders and educators, many of whom would never know the physical General College. In addition to ideas, the politics and circumstances of the times played major roles in determining which ideas would be carried forward to realization and which would not.

It should also be noted here that reference is made to the origin of the General College, but the title “General College” actually did not come into existence until June 1933. I will, therefore, for lack of a more appropriate phrase, be referring to what I call the “General College Idea” as I discuss the pre-1932 college planning. The word “Idea” embodies the concepts, principles, thoughts, and convictions of many educational and political leaders that culminated in the building of a collegiate unit that would provide meaningful and realistic educational opportunities for all who sought them. This culmination is a combination of ideas over time, or more specifically, historical events, the combination of which eventually resulted in a historical event, namely the creation of the General College.

It is the aim of this chapter to trace and clarify the role of developmental education in enabling the nation to establish a truly democratic society. As the country looked to general education, which Boyer and Levine (1981, p. 35) defined as those interests and connections we all share with each other, as a means of mediating social and political disagreements and periodic unrest that happened throughout its history, it was implicit that to establish a stable government, each citizen must have an opportunity to contribute to the building of, and at the same time, benefit from a democracy. Developmental education encompassed an important component of general education because it enabled the individual student, who lacked adequate preparation, the opportunity to develop needed skills or knowledge allowing him or her to advance further in academic career and life goals than would have been possible without them (National Association for Developmental Education [NADE], 1995).

In order for a democracy to work, an educational system must produce an educated and enlightened citizenry. To accomplish this task the education system must reach and serve each individual learner. This is where the enabling processes we call developmental education must be applied to help the learner realize his or her academic and life goals. Developmental education, therefore, embodies how a college experience should address the needs of those students whose skills, knowledge, attitudes, and preparedness are not yet adequate to help them to be academically competitive and successful. Obviously, this is a smaller but very significant part of the original General College Idea. A more comprehensive history encompassing and linking the pre-1932 General College Idea to the post-1932 college operational history is being planned and composed as part of the much more extensive written history of General College.

Building a Democratic Society

In order to lay the foundation for the discussion on developmental education, it is necessary to identify and highlight the ideas, along with the people who expressed the ideas, and selected events in U.S. history that played significant roles in advancing the concept of general education, which eventually served as the basis for the General College Idea. The foundation of this idea was based on the national need to build and strengthen a democratic society through the establishment of meaningful and effective general education programs.

It should be noted that general education programs were not automatically put into place in colleges and universities because of an altruistic desire on the part of educators to democratize society, but instead were seen as a way to avert crises that, in a cyclical fashion, arose, especially at the lower-division level. Colleges periodically initiated general education programs in an effort to mediate student unhappiness, improve retention, stabilize financial income, counter the force of overspecialization, and establish a student-centered curriculum that made sense to the lower-division students. Miller (1988, pp. 29–31), however, reminded us that there were times during the history of higher education when colleges and universities did not adequately serve the educational needs of a significant number of students, especially freshmen and sophomores. Often during those times the highly specialized degree programs that focused on the preparation of professionals were emphasized and received the most attention and resources. At the same time, the general education that was intended to broaden the student's intellectual background was neglected due to indifference and the unwillingness of educational leaders to put sufficient resources into it.

As the pendulum swung toward greater specialization, some education leaders saw the need to restore general education as the solution to their problems. Many colleges and universities proceeded to design what they thought would meet the student needs and at the same time alleviate administrative problems cited earlier. It should be noted with caution that many colleges and universities independently designed and implemented their own particular version of a general education program, meaning that there were many different versions describing what general education was and still is. Most of them, however, do conform to the notion that general education highlights the commonality of interests and concerns that all persons share.

As introduced before, the most significant thinking that eventually led to the General College Idea addressed higher education's national role in nurturing and building a democratic society that considers the common people as the primary source of political power and is based on the principles of

social equality and individual rights. Miller (1988) credited two major events in American history for challenging and forever changing the classical European emphasis that had dominated American college curricula since the 1600s when Harvard College was established. One event was the encompassing effect of the aftershocks of the American Revolution (1775–1783), followed by the beginning of the American Industrial Revolution. Both forces would reform American higher education as they gave ever-increasing power to the common people. Miller continued that the profound influence of the Industrial Revolution began just “as the wave of democracy, spirited by Thomas Jefferson and brought to a crest during the Jacksonian period, swept over the nation” (p. 10).

Jeffersonian and Jacksonian Influences

Thomas Jefferson (U.S. President, 1801–1809) focused his energies on establishing or applying his meritocratic view of democracy to higher education by urging free primary education followed by government support for those students deemed as having exceptional merit. Miller (1988, p. 10) highlighted Jefferson’s belief that a natural aristocracy existed among men and that higher education should be selective and prepare this group for professional, civic, and governmental leadership. Even though Jefferson advocated for the education of the privileged, he succeeded in designing a curriculum that broke away from the traditional classical European curriculum by being much more student-centered and utilitarian. His creation of the University of Virginia, therefore, provided meritorious students an opportunity to prepare themselves for civic and professional leadership. As a part of the utilitarian curriculum, he believed that the students should have the opportunity to choose courses from eight different programs of study. In addition, he also believed that to prepare an educated populace necessary for the success of the republic, these students also must include the study of law and politics. Miller also noted that Jefferson’s beliefs about a student-centered and utilitarian curriculum should be credited as being central to the general education movement later in the 20th century.

The views of Andrew Jackson (U.S. President, 1829–1837), differing greatly from Jefferson’s elitist beliefs, significantly expanded and further defined education’s role in building a stronger democratic society. He emphasized that the educational needs of the common person were paramount. Miller (1988) gave special importance to this belief by saying that the “Jacksonians talked about democracy in terms of ‘real people,’ i.e., the planters, farmers, and mechanics on whom the Industrial Revolution and the settling of the frontier depended and who were fast becoming a force in national politics” (p. 11).

The Jacksonian view gave rise to the land-grant college movement and stimulated the Industrial Revolution's demand for trained and educated workers, which resulted in the growth of vocationalism in higher education (Miller, p. 11). Another reason for increasing the educational opportunities for everyone arose as the nation extended the right to vote to a larger percentage of the male population, causing public officials and educators to become alarmed as they realized that "illiterates" could now vote and have influence on the course of the country. The implication that Americans deserved an opportunity to advance their education as far as they could defined the need for developmental education during Jackson's time. This resulting need for compulsory education created a great demand for teachers at all levels and called upon colleges to prepare them. The Jacksonian view may very well have served as the catalyst for the establishment of ideas that eventually led to the creation of the open-door, student-centered General College 100 years later.

The utilitarian views of Jefferson and Jackson began to show themselves in major ways during and right after the Civil War (1861–1865). Miller (1988, p. 14) introduced Charles Eliot, President of Harvard beginning in 1869, as a key figure in carrying forward the notion of utilitarian education. He strongly advocated for the free elective system, the goal of which was to allow individual students the opportunity to define their own courses of study, with some faculty input, in an effort to prepare themselves for a place of their own choosing in life. This free choice, general education system not only satisfied the students' interests, but as Eliot believed, was to insure "an intelligent public opinion," that was the "indispensable condition of social progress" (Miller, p. 15). The reemergence of this belief will appear later as University of Minnesota President Coffman and other leaders justify the establishing of the General College.

The expansion of the idea of social utility as a rationale for a university curriculum grew out of Eliot's leadership. A great impetus for this notion was the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862, which provided a funding mechanism by which each state could create at least one college designed to "promote the liberal and practical education of the industrialized classes in the several pursuits in life" (Levine, 1978, p. 558). The Morrill Act resulted in the expansion of public education, increased access to higher education by the nonelite, including ready access to the practical utilitarian studies of agriculture and engineering, and stimulated the growth of Western higher education. Cornell University, a land-grant institution in New York, pursued a mission, quoted by Miller (1988) from Ezra Cornell's Charter address, which was "to fit the youth of the country for the professions, the farms, the mines, the manufactories, for the investigation of science, and for mastering all the practical questions of life with success and honor" (p. 16).

During the late 19th century, however, the zeal and enthusiasm of the utilitarian movement gradually resulted in increased specialization and fragmentation. The resulting reemphasis on research pushed free-elective, open-door general education onto the back burner in most universities until after World War I. After the war, however, in reaction to the overemphasis on research and specialization, a general education renaissance dominated the post-war period during which the General College was created.

Focus on Developmental Education

To begin a discussion of developmental education, Levine (1978) and Cross (1976) defined terms that have been used historically. Levine stated “that basic skills are the abilities and basic knowledge is the information a student needs to embark upon college study” (p. 54). He went on to differentiate the term remedial from compensatory and developmental. “Remedial education implies improvement of student skills and knowledge for the purpose of entering a program for which the student was previously ineligible with an emphasis on correcting weaknesses” (p. 55). Cross (1976) stated that “developmental or compensatory education emphasizes the building of new strengths or the enhancement of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that may not necessarily be needed to qualify students for more advanced academic programs” (p. 30). She continued that “compensatory education seeks to overcome deprivations associated with the home, family, and earlier study through increasing educational enrichment” (p. 31).

Levine (1978) noted that skill and knowledge requirements in American higher education can be traced back to 1640 when Harvard required that entering students must be able to speak and read Latin and know Greek grammar (p. 55). One hundred years later, Yale was the first college to require arithmetic. By the late 19th century, the admission standards at several colleges required entering students to have taken additional subjects in response to the classical curriculum that still prevailed. In the 1700s and 1800s, many of those colleges developed relationships with preparatory schools that provided the students with the necessary skills and knowledge and served as feeder schools. These opportunities were mainly available only to the privileged, however, which caused the majority of 19th century nonelitist colleges, in an effort to be financially solvent, to lower entrance requirements. In some cases these institutions became open-door colleges (actually revolving-door) or established their own form of preparatory divisions. By the early 1900s a proliferation of high schools resulted in less need for preparatory units. However, most colleges still admitted students who could not meet entrance standards, due to intense competition for students, wide variation of school

requirements, and an effort to fulfill institutional financial needs. In fact, in 1907 more than half of the students entering Harvard and Yale had not satisfied the colleges' entrance requirements. As a result, Levine said that to solve their problems, colleges began creating remedial courses in order to bring students up to grade level in deficient areas (p. 57).

Cross (1976), in her study of compensatory education, found that the remedial courses in the early 1900s were voluntary how-to-study courses that dealt with note taking, good study habits, and health, based on the belief that the student's deficiencies were mainly due to immaturity and lack of discipline rather than to lack of ability or poor training. Levine (1978) and Cross made it clear that colleges struggled with providing for the developmental needs of students from the very early years of the nation's history.

The Contributions of John Dewey

One of the most respected and prolific writers on educational philosophy in American history was John Dewey (1859–1952). He grew up in Vermont and received degrees from the University of Vermont and Johns Hopkins University (Levine, 1978, p. 256). In the earliest years of his professional experience, he was an instructor of philosophy for 1 year at the University of Minnesota. He subsequently served 5 years as chairman of the Philosophy Department at the University of Michigan. From 1894 to 1904 his career blossomed at the University of Chicago, where he was professor of philosophy and pedagogy and director of the School of Education. He developed its Laboratory School, where he had the opportunity to try out many of his more progressive ideas where the students lived and learned in a highly social context. He began a writing career on educational philosophy that eventually spanned a period of more than 70 years, resulting in a bibliography that required 153 pages for a complete listing (Bernstein, 1966, p. 187). From 1904 to 1931 Dewey was a professor in the Philosophy Department at Columbia University, during which time he continued to achieve national and international acclaim for his efforts to define a philosophy of education for a modern industrial society by capturing the voice, accent, and temperament of the American tradition and the nature of the special uncertainties that would lie ahead (Levine, p. 257).

Dewey's Democratic Ideal

John Dewey (1916, p. 100) stressed that the democratic ideal is based on two criteria. One criterion addresses the numerous and varied points of common interest between individuals and between societies with the reliance on the collective recognition of mutual interests as a major factor in successful social interaction and control. As a result of these common interests, the second cri-

terion emphasizes that interactions between individuals or social groups result in easier exchanges and readjustments when confronting new situations, challenges, or problems. Boyer and Levine (1981, p. 35) later highlighted this sharing of common interests and connections as the prevailing definition of General Education.

Dewey's Aim of Education

Dewey (1916) believed and stated that the “aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education and that the object and reward of learning is the continued capacity for growth” (p. 117). The quote, “enable individuals to continue their education” (p. 117), is also an appropriate statement of the overriding goal of developmental education. In a paraphrasing of its current statement of goals of developmental education, the National Association for Developmental Education (1995) further delineated Dewey’s stated aim that education preserves and makes learning opportunities possible for each student by enabling the individual to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to attain academic, career, and life goals through the acquisition of needed competencies based on appropriate assessment of the learner’s needs.

Mason (1975, p. 115) expanded on this notion as he addressed Dewey’s liberal and progressive thinking. He stressed that any process that enhances learning has two sides—one psychological and the other sociological. The learner’s emotional and behavioral changes and development must take place in the context of the individual’s surroundings and social environment. Dewey also struggled with the relation or balance between the cultural, emotional, and behavioral influences. Levine (1978), in reference to Dewey’s statement of the aim of education “that the object and reward of learning is the continued capacity for growth,” expanded the meaning of the phrase to “set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class, or economic status” (p. 257). He went on to say that Dewey’s method of accomplishing these changes was by “a constant reorganizing and reconstructing of experiences” (p. 257). This notion will reemerge later in this discussion concerning the views of President Coffman and Malcolm MacLean, the first director of General College, on how the University of Minnesota must adjust and reorganize to meet the needs of its students.

Alfred North Whitehead, a mathematician who, according to Levine (1978, p. 261), became one of the major thinkers in education, was a contemporary of Dewey. Even though his approach to education differed from Dewey’s, both agreed that education was a thing of the present and that the mission of education was life; in fact, it was life now! They believed that education should not be thought of as preparation for some future time. They argued that if the learner’s life is well served by education now, the future will take

care of itself. Dewey (1916, p. 55) elaborated that the future lacks urgency and substance. To get ready for something in the distant future is to throw away any leverage and diminish any enthusiasm to learn now. This assertion has implications for developmental education programs in which the students may well believe that they are preparing for their life sometime in the future. Their resulting thought process and attitude is that there is little relevance or connection, and they will tend to procrastinate, potentially resulting in failure. This disconnect speaks to the benefit of embedding developmental skills and knowledge into existing degree-credit courses so that students realize their usefulness and impact concurrently with studying the course content.

One of the educational concepts that Dewey (1916, p. 65) advanced may be helpful when trying to understand the learning processes involved in developmental education. He said that education can be based upon the idea of development. In this case, development was conceived not as continuous growing, but as an “unfolding” of latent or undeveloped powers or talents from within the learner that lead toward a definite goal. In Dewey’s mind, this ultimate goal was completion or perfection, which he said is unattainable. He said that life at any stage short of this goal is simply unfolding toward it. In this context, a developmental education program could very well be thought of as a program that enables the learner to “unfold from within” and proceed or grow toward greater academic and life accomplishments. Dewey also implied that learning proceeded from the known to the “unfolding into the unknown” (p. 79). The processes of inquiry discussed elsewhere also involve the unfolding toward the solution to a problem or the unfolding toward new knowledge. The science-in-context series of courses that began in the mid-1960s and the more recent inquiry-based courses in science are based on this idea.

The student-centered viewpoint of John Dewey’s philosophy of education has been labeled as “progressive” and “instrumentalist” (Miller, 1988, p. 64). Levine (1978, p. 8) stated that progressivism is based on life experience in which the student’s needs, readiness, abilities, knowledge, and interests determine the direction of the educational enterprise. This view will reemerge later in the discussion concerning the commitment of the founders of General College “to know the student,” which laid the foundation for building a first-of-a-kind counseling program.

According to Miller (1988, pp. 57–61), Dewey’s thinking built upon the earlier contributions of Charles Sanders Peirce, considered the father of pragmatism, and William James, who further interpreted Peirce’s basic concepts of pragmatism in terms of individual behavior and the pursuit of religious and moral beliefs. Dewey gave pragmatism a new dimension by using the instrumentalist approach of inquiry and problem-solving methods to achieve indi-

vidual and social change. He thereby defined pragmatism in operational terms in the instructional process. The instrumentalist principles define the processes of finding out information or learning, which today is often called “hands-on” learning, learning by doing, active learning, critical thinking, the scientific method, or processes of inquiry. According to Levine (1978, p. 258), the process builds on a real experience, in which students are interested for its own sake, and that contains a genuine or real problem that serves as a stimulus to thought. The students proceed to obtain information and make observations needed to define the problem. They then suggest possible solutions and test their validity. Dewey (1916) argued that these are the same processes that one must practice in “real” life, and furthermore, this is how knowledge is acquired and developed. There have been numerous efforts to use such inquiry methods of instruction in General College courses.

The student-centered progressive and instrumentalist views are in contrast with “traditionalism,” which is curriculum-centered or subject-matter centered. As Berger (1975, pp. 126–127) pointed out, that type of learning is focused on the heritage, knowledge and information of the past. Berger continued to clarify Dewey’s role in educational thinking by saying that he was not the originator of progressive thinking in education; rather, he tried to reconcile the apparent split between progressivism and traditionalism by showing that both philosophies were vital and essential to the future development of educational thought. We should be cautioned that even today Dewey is billed as the champion of the progressive movement, but in reality he vigorously argued against an “either-or” philosophy, stressing that one cannot exist without the other.

Student Personnel Movement

So far, this chapter has focused on the ways in which the concept behind developmental education was a vital part of the pre-1932 educational effort aimed at democratizing society. Most of the discussion has centered on the rationale for and development of the student-centered views of progressive, utilitarian, and instrumentalist education and how they focused on serving the practical needs of the individual learner. At the same time, a second educational paradigm emerged before World War I and flourished through the war that caused educators to look at progressive education from a different angle.

While John Dewey looked upon the scientific method of inquiry as a way of approaching life’s problems and enabling the individual to continue learning, Edward Thorndike looked to science to provide “laws” by which to measure educational effectiveness and readiness. He believed that they were based

upon the laws of psychology that were recognized and defined through psychological observations. Miller (1988, pp. 69–74) traced Thorndike's science of education back to its origin in France, where Alfred Benet and Theodore Simon, in 1905 through 1908, conceived the idea of an intelligence scale. This idea was put into use when Robert Yerkes, of the American Psychological Association, provided procedures and resources for aptitude and intelligence testing of new recruits in World War I. This new thrust concerned with measuring intelligence and behavior was greeted with both excitement and trepidation. It fit well into the American university's research environment with its insatiable appetite to measure anything and everything with high precision and accuracy.

One of the outcomes of this newfound research agenda was achievement and intelligence testing of the individual student with the intention of establishing appropriate programs that would suit the specific needs and talents of that student. Cremin (1961, p. 190) cited Dewey's reservations that although such test results might help the student achieve his or her potential, they also might reduce the student to nothing more than a set of statistics. Dewey also warned that IQ and achievement test results could serve as a tool for discrimination and antidemocratic forces. Such antidemocratic activities did, in fact, occur when statistics from the Army tests were used in the post-war selection and rejection of European immigrants, especially discriminating against Blacks. This partly contributed to causing the U.S. to close immigration in 1924.

The academic use of intelligence and achievement testing flourished in the 1920s as what Miller (1988, p. 71) called educational scientism and the child-centered approach of progressive education rapidly advanced. Cremin (1961) heralded William Kilpatrick as the chief advocate of this approach. He was not only a contemporary but also a colleague of Dewey and Thorndike at Columbia University. He was influenced by Dewey's inquiry approach or method and also by Thorndike's laws of learning. Kilpatrick established the "project method" (p. 72) in which he monitored and measured the student's involvement in direct, purposeful experience, which he believed was the best way to stimulate individual growth. He believed that the purposeful nature of the learner-centered approach was more important than the content studied, and he was very much opposed to content-centered instruction in which the learning activity was fixed on specific subject matter. Although Kilpatrick shared Dewey's concern with the relationships between the individual and society and the role of the inquiry method, he viewed it from a social context. He believed that the purpose of democracy was mainly for the growth of the individual with institutions as the means to that growth and that the growth of the whole learner was the only acceptable aim of the democratic school.

Kilpatrick was able to put his learner-centered convictions of education into operation later when he was involved in the planning and then the presidency of Bennington College.

A final note about student assessment and counseling is found in Gray's (1951, p. 348) appraisal of the views and activities of the first two University of Minnesota presidents, Folwell and Northrop. Both were viewed by Gray as paternalistic and student centered. He credited their efforts for laying the foundation for a state-of-the-art counseling system that may have "had its start in the brief period of John Dewey's association with the university in the 1890s" (p. 348). Gray continued by saying that "at least those who guided the evolution of educational ideas at Minnesota were disciples of Dewey and echoers of his belief that education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living" (p. 348).

Post-World War I Impact

Boyer and Levine (1981, p. 11) noted that by the end of WWI many Americans had grown tired of the progressive reform impulse featuring President Theodore Roosevelt's (1901–1909) "Square Deal" and President Woodrow Wilson's (1913–1921) "New Freedom." The disillusioned and war-weary Americans became callous to political idealism and sought a time of quiet and healing. In an effort to restore normalcy in their lives, they turned to President Warren Harding (1921–1923) and a conservative, nonintrusive government. This became a time of personal and national isolation.

Another social impact that affected higher education concerned the sudden and enormous number of soldiers who returned home from the war. Wecter (1944, pp. 265–269) provided many accounts of servicemen wanting to continue their education. Some had their curiosity piqued after seeing the world or observing the lives and plights of others. Some needed to adjust to physical or emotional wounds that prevented them from continuing in the job that they held before the War. Others developed a taste for books and knowledge in the several post-war schools that were established by the U.S. on the European continent. Still others needed to improve their skills and expertise because their earlier jobs were either obsolete or their salaries were inadequate. In essence, according to Wecter (pp. 269, 401), a significant number of returning servicemen had the will to remake their lives and saw higher education as a way to meet this need.

Boyer and Levine (1981, p. 11) stated that the effects of the WWI upheaval actually caused a revival of general education, which was looked to as a solution to many of the problems the nation faced. They enumerated the problems that general education could solve, such as responding to overspecialization

and vocationalism, machine politics and corruption in government, social intolerance, and cynicism and disillusionment of the younger generation.

Miller (1988, p. 73) highlighted the influence of the conditions and politics of the times as affecting how learner-centered education was viewed after the war. The new general education movement grew along two lines during the 1920s and 1930s: the humanist approach that emphasizes the classical approach, and the instrumentalist or more practical approach. The instrumentalist approach will be pursued here because it encompasses the processes of developmental education and because Miller presented three case histories of this approach, of which General College was one.

Case Histories in General Education

In an effort to define the instrumentalist student-centered philosophy of education and illustrate how it worked in practice, Miller (1988, pp. 79–105) highlighted three case histories of general education programs in an effort to show how this philosophy could be interpreted. Two of the programs were in private women's colleges, namely Bennington College (founded in 1932) in Vermont and Sarah Lawrence College (founded in 1928) in the state of New York. The third example is explained in more detail below. This program, built upon an instrumentalist philosophy in a state-supported public university, was in the General College at the University of Minnesota.

The General College

This chapter has outlined some of the major ideas and events that eventually led to the creation of the General College Idea. The origin of the Idea can be traced directly to the earlier efforts of political and educational leaders to build a democratic society by designing and offering effective general education programs in American colleges and universities. There were a number of significant events in this effort to democratize society that ultimately had a direct impact on making the General College a reality. Among these events were early attempts, politically and educationally, to give all citizens the opportunity to improve their lives and realize better and more responsible lives, such as the efforts of leaders like Jefferson and Jackson and the creation of the land-grant legislation. A second major event was the impact of the great minds of Dewey, Thorndike, Kilpatrick, and other progressive thinkers toward understanding how individuals learn and how learners grow and contribute to improving society. A third event was the existence of political and educational leaders who were able to gather the ideas and wisdom from the first two events and translate them into operational entities or units that effectively resulted in improving democracy.

The Genius of Lotus Delta Coffman

The third event happened at many colleges and universities in the post-World War I period. The University of Minnesota was one of those institutions. It was especially fortunate because of the commitment of a man who possessed a deep understanding and profound belief in the first two events cited previously. He was Lotus Delta Coffman (1875–1938), who served as the fifth president of the University from 1920 to 1938. As we try to understand why Coffman championed the development of the General College, it is necessary to understand the man himself. What caused the fire in his belly that made him fight for a college that would serve a student body that did not belong at a major research university? The College would never have been created had it not been for the power of his wisdom and leadership at the University.

Coffman's strong democratic ideals were developed and strengthened while growing up in Indiana and during his professional development as an educator. William C. Bagley (1939), former professor of Education at the University of Illinois, recounted in a professional biography of Coffman how the early years of college preparation followed by teaching English in the public schools whetted Coffman's appetite for greater understanding of how one learns and develops as an effective citizen. Bagley cited comments from other teachers and students saying that Coffman had an exceptional ability to communicate and teach.

One of the events that had a remarkable impact on Coffman's understanding of needs in education was the period (1909–1911) during which he worked on and completed his doctorate at the Teachers College of Columbia University. According to Bagley (1939), this was a time when the Teachers College was considered the leading center in the world for the study of educational problems, especially those affecting elementary and secondary levels. Bagley also noted that Coffman's dissertation (1911), *The Social Composition of the Teaching Population*, opened the eyes of many people to the sorry state of teacher preparation in the U.S. (pp. 154–155). His findings and recommendations resulted in promoting significant improvements in the preparation of teachers. As importantly, it convinced him that higher education needed drastic attention, which directly impacted the subsequent development of the General College. During Coffman's brief stay at Columbia, he was introduced to, interacted with, and learned from such notables as John Dewey in the Philosophy Department, Edward Thorndike in educational psychology, William Kilpatrick, and other leading thinkers (Bagley, pp. 155–156). The progressive and instrumentalist philosophies were strong at Columbia at that time, and it can be assumed that they sharpened and deepened Coffman's conviction to provide educational leadership in the strengthening of democracy.

In 1913, L. D. Coffman, as Bagley (1939) accounted, became a professor of education at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. The University of Illinois did not yet have a college of education with its own dean; instead it was a department in the College of Liberal Arts. The University was definitely trying to build a college of education, so in an effort to build a stronger program, it offered a job to John Dewey at an unheard of salary of \$10,000. This offer was twice as high as what the highest-paid professor received in any state university in the country. Illinois relied on Coffman and others who knew Dewey to try and convince him to come, but Dewey turned it down.

Meanwhile, a certain history professor at Illinois was offered a position of dean of the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota. The man was Guy Stanton Ford, later to become the sixth president of the University, who had a high respect for Coffman. When a position opened for the deanship of the College of Education at the University of Minnesota, Ford recommended Coffman. After five years as education dean, Coffman became president in 1920.

Malcolm Willey (1939), a colleague of Coffman, a professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota, and university administrator, in a tribute to the late-president Coffman, asserted that his strength and wisdom could be gleaned from his many writings and speeches. Coffman's energy, Willey said, came from deep faith that education is the only means of achieving the democratic way of life. Willey said that "men do live by faith, and through faith achieve great works" (p. 11). He continued that:

the life of Lotus Delta Coffman is a shining example of this truth. It was characterized by a singleness of purpose, founded on his faith in democracy, and all that he thought and did had reference to his profound conviction that a good life was possible for all people if they would but achieve it. The school at all its levels was merely society's agent for helping them achieve it. (p. 11)

Willey quoted an encounter between Coffman and an attorney who said to him: "Mr. Coffman, civilization has been ruined by education. Do you suppose you can make people competent to vote on public questions by giving them an education?" Coffman's answer was: "I know of no other way" (p. 12).

Bagley (1939) concluded his biography of Coffman by stressing that, unlike other prominent leaders in education, he came from the rank and file of the "teaching population." His firsthand experience with the problems of teaching and learning prepared him, better than most people, to adjust the instruction and curriculum at the University of Minnesota, through the organization of the General College, to serve an increasingly heterogeneous student body. To quote Bagley, Coffman "was apparently the first to see realistically

the intricate problems involved in unselective mass-education as it affects the higher institutions” (p. 158).

Gray (1951) discussed Coffman’s concerns, early in his presidency, to remake the university to better serve all students. He stressed the need to “reorganize the materials of education” (p. 309), à la Dewey, in an effort to serve both the students who showed the capacity for leadership and those who must be trained for “followership” (p. 309). Miller (1988, p. 98) argued that the University of Minnesota was committed to the land-grant ideal of a university in service to society and stressed that the developers of the General College Idea shared many of the assumptions about general education that had been drawn from Dewey and others. Coffman, an advocate of educational equality, applied and began to blend these assumptions with the unique situation of a land-grant institution, the research ethos of a large state university, and the diverse characteristics of the students who the university was expected to serve.

Miller (1988, pp. 98–99) explained that in an effort to mediate the problem of filling the need of a nonvocational general education within a utilitarian university, Coffman formed the Committee on Administrative Reorganization, commonly referred to as “The Committee of Seven.” It was composed of six deans and the assistant to the president, and it was responsible for reviewing and recommending changes in the undergraduate program for the whole university. A part of the committee’s responsibility was to make recommendations on how to best, in Coffman’s words, “adjust the institution to the individual” (Gray, 1951, p. 313), especially for that population that had been traditionally unserved, which eventually resulted in the establishment of the University College and the General College. As implied by Gray (pp. 309–311), the establishment of the two colleges was seen as a way of mediating the different views between President Coffman and his very good friend John Black Johnston, then Dean of Science, Literature, and the Arts (SLA). Johnston was viewed by some as elitist and argued with Coffman about bringing underprepared and uninterested students to the University.

One outcome of the Committee’s work, as Gray (1951) cited, was to provide the student with an “honorable exit” (p. 313) after 2 years of general education, which became the Associate in Arts degree. It should be clarified that the Committee of Seven first proposed that a new unit be called the “Institute of Social Intelligence” (p. 315), but that title was never accepted. In 1932 the Board of Regents approved the new unit, calling it the “Junior College of the University of Minnesota.” With this action, the General College Idea became a reality.

The Vision of Malcolm Shaw MacLean

As this new academic unit began to materialize, President Coffman brought in a young energetic educator to be its first director. He was Malcolm S. MacLean, and he strongly believed in the instrumentalist's role in providing meaningful education for all. In the spring of 1933 the Regents changed the name to the "General College" because its most important product was, after all, general education. MacLean (1934) argued for the name change explaining that it was important to reduce possible confusion because those unfamiliar with what junior colleges do would think the "new unit was a 'prep school,' a hybrid, or an illegitimate rival of the long-established University High School" (p. 442). Others might see it as "duplicating the first two years of the lower division of the College of Science, Literature, and Arts and want to know why this should be" (p. 442). MacLean concluded that "some equinimity had now been achieved by renaming the new unit General College of the University and reassigning Junior College to the Lower Division of the Arts College" (p. 442).

In somewhat colorful language, MacLean (1941) characterized the large unserved group of students as having been previously thrown out the back door and dumped into the "great slag heap of academic discards" (p. ix). This statement reflects the major concerns both he and Coffman shared over the high attrition rates during the 1920s when as many as 60% of the freshmen did not return for the second year (Gray, 1951, p. 282). They both believed that these "discards" had as much right to be served by the state-supported university as any group of students. MacLean (1934) argued that we should not look at these discards "as the waste products of higher education" but more importantly as "the raw materials of valuable by-products" (p. 443).

MacLean (1934) cited that certain changes in society during the past 100 years had resulted in a serious dilemma for the nation, forcing society to reconsider how it addresses academic discards. He said that the consequences of advances in birth control along with medical sciences' successful assault on disease had resulted in increased longevity and a population shift of three times as many adults as children and youth (p. 441). With the combination of these changes along with the impact of technological advances and automation in cutting jobs, it was MacLean's (p. 441) worry that there would soon result an adult-youth conflict. He feared that this conflict would become so great that adults would have to refuse all employment to those younger than 25 years of age and that the adults would "have to retire at 40 years to make room" (p. 441).

MacLean (1934) believed that there could only be three consequences to this conflict. One solution was that another world war could eliminate a quarter of the population. The economy would be stimulated for a short time

but soon be followed “with the surety of deeper depression and disaster in the end” (p. 441–442). A second grim effect could be the development of sinister youth movements such as those that were leading to “intolerable phases of Nazism in Germany and the more recent rioting in Paris” (p. 442). The third alternative would be to greatly expand education at higher levels for a much larger portion of youth than had ever been believed possible. This would be coupled with programs that provided those youth who had insufficient interest, ability, or training with jobs in government-sponsored conservation corps and civil and public works projects (p. 442).

MacLean (1934) realized the opportunities that lay before him to mold an academic unit from scratch could address the third alternative stated in the previous paragraph. The General College provided a basis for addressing the university’s high student graduation mortality rate by providing an educational experience that was tailored “in most cases to the individual student” (p. 445). MacLean realized that students are not “all ready for the same things at the same time as, I fear, we have too often assumed them to be.” Instead, he continued, they vary from each other and “within themselves from one time to another” (p. 444).

A further reason for organizing the college was to develop a curriculum that overcame the impact of specialization, which drew resources away from the lower division general education experience. MacLean (1934), in an effort to counter the criticisms of the specialists, cited a statement made by Professor Munro of the California Institute of Technology that “there is or should be only one standard for all courses, general and special, of primary, secondary, or college grade” (p. 444). The one test is that a course must “awaken interest and stimulate the students.” Furthermore, if a course does this, “there is no limit to its boundaries for the best of students and there is rich value in it for the humblest” (p. 444).

MacLean immediately set out to develop a curriculum for this college in which he advocated realistic and current overview courses that were designed, as Gray (1951) quoted Coffman saying, “to get at the heart of those problems upon which students must exercise judgment later on” (pp. 315–316). Faculty from all over the University were involved in the planning of the College and its curriculum. MacLean (1933) said that “taking an entirely fresh viewpoint, we were given *carte blanche* to pick out any teacher from any department or college on either campus and set up the kind of courses that seemed best” (p. 304). Gray listed some of the courses, including human biology, overview of physics and chemistry, basic wealth, conservation, mathematics as applied to business and consumerism, developmental psychology, formation of public opinion, background of modern world, and fine arts. Some of these course titles can be found in today’s class schedule.

All the courses were to be taught from the standpoint of the students' needs, direct interests, and from the students' skill and knowledge level, thereby giving them a developmental component. To achieve this outcome, MacLean (1934) urged faculty to depart from the traditional approach to course planning where a chronological, classical approach was followed in which the students begin with the roots of the past and then work their way to the present. Instead, he stated that "ours reverses this process. We are experimenting to see if opening each course on the present will not so increase desire, strengthen motivation to learn, that a student will, in his self-propulsion, work his way back to the past" (p. 445). At the beginning almost all of the courses were taught by borrowed faculty, but in subsequent years the College developed its own faculty.

Conclusion

The story of the evolution of the General College paralleled, in many ways, the building of the nation. The nation's founding fathers had the strong desire and opportunity to build a democracy from scratch by employing the best ideas and ideals. Likewise, the founders of General College had an equally strong desire and opportunity to build a collegiate unit from scratch whose primary function was to democratize society by drawing from many of the same ideas and ideals. From the beginning, the evolution of the General College Idea centered on the democratic ideal of providing all people an opportunity to improve their lives and their abilities to carry out their civic responsibilities.

It might be said that the General College was a product of the times. During the earlier years of the republic, the leaders established the basis and rationale for building a democratic society. They looked to education to make this possible. During the 19th and early 20th centuries great advances were made in the understanding of how learning happens. Immediately after WWI the nation had to adjust to rapidly changing social and post-war employment conditions which, by the late 1920s, led to mass unemployment and a disastrous Depression. During these troubling times a national movement that defined higher education's role in democratizing society grew out of the ashes.

With two events that focused on the establishment of a democracy and the increased research and understanding of human behavior and learning, a third event was needed to pull the two together into a real, physical collegiate entity. That third event was the emergence of an individual who understood and believed in the first two events and who had the ability, conviction, power, and energy to bring together and fuse all the parts into a single physical unit. At the University of Minnesota that person was Lotus Delta

Coffman. He engaged the best minds in the University to plan and organize the administrative structure to create the physical unit. Coffman enlisted a like-minded man, Malcolm S. MacLean, to spearhead the operational planning and serve as the unit's first director. The General College became the University of Minnesota's answer to its role in democratizing society.

In a final note, it is necessary to bring attention to MacLean's concerns about academic discards and his worries about what problems society might be facing as their numbers increased. His effort to lead and provide rationale for curricular planning for the new college was greatly influenced by these worries and fears of what seemed to be emerging nationally. In this sense, the earliest curriculum was a product of the times. As one reviews the General College curriculum over the past 73 years, the emphasis and, in most cases, the kinds of courses have departed little from the earliest plan. The ideas and concerns have remained appropriate throughout the history of the college. What is important is that, because there continue to be discards, the college should continually take a deep and serious look at issues and problems in society and ask the following: what are the issues that continue to prevent people from participating in and benefiting fully in a democratic society, and what should higher education do about it? More importantly, what can General College do about it?

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Counseling Psychology and the General College: An Implementation of the Minnesota Point of View

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ABSTRACT

The Minnesota Point of View is a theory of counseling developed in the 1920s by University of Minnesota psychologists who used information from counseling practice and research on students to improve student retention. This chapter describes how General College administrators, counselors, researchers, and teachers used the Minnesota Point of View to design a college for students who were not considered to be good candidates for bachelor degrees. Research on GC students identified important characteristics that had implications for the college curriculum and student personnel services including the need for vocational counseling and the morale problem created by participating in a college identified with less well-qualified students.

In the 1930s, the University of Minnesota Psychology Department emerged as a leader in the field of counseling psychology. Led by Donald G. Paterson and Edmund G. Williamson, Minnesota psychologists developed a counseling perspective that became known as the Minnesota Point of View (cf., Paterson, 1966). The Minnesota Point of View was based on the assumption that characteristics of people could be measured through psychological tests and that counseling that made use of test scores could guide people to success in education and work. Research at Minnesota led to the development of important tests such as the General Aptitude Test Battery (Dvorak, 1947), the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Hathaway & McKinley, 1942), and a variety of measures of specific vocational aptitudes, interests, and personality traits. Less well known is the story of how the Minnesota Point of View was implemented in an educational experiment, the General College (GC) of the University of Minnesota (UMN). This chapter will describe the Minnesota Point of View, how it guided the development of GC, and how it remained influential in the work of the college.

The Minnesota Point of View: A Counseling Theory

The Minnesota Point of View is associated with several psychologists who were on the faculty of the University or who did their doctoral work in the department. They were inspired by the leadership of Donald Paterson, who came to Minnesota in 1921. Paterson served in the army during World War I and was involved in the development of the army's intelligence testing program. After the war, he worked for the Scott Company, the nation's first industrial psychology consulting firm. Paterson established the Minnesota tradition of research in individual differences, industrial psychology, and vocational and career counseling. An incredibly productive scholar, he advised 88 Ph.D.s, over 200 M.A.s, and published, on average, one article per month for over 30 years. His courses in individual differences influenced the careers of numerous Minnesota students who made important contributions to the field of psychology including Edmund Williamson, John Darley, Thomas Magoon, Harold Pepinsky, James Jenkins, Lloyd Lofquist, René Dawis, Marvin Dunnette, John Holland, Leona Tyler, Harrison Gough, Paul Meehl, Jane Loevinger, and Starke Hathaway (Keyes, n.d.).

The Minnesota Point of View is closely tied to the Student Personnel Point of View, a movement within higher education that began in the 1920s (Higbee, 2001). The American Council on Education (ACE) promoted the movement by sponsoring conferences and publishing papers advocating for the student personnel perspective. According to Cowley (1932) the colleges most involved in developing the student personnel movement were Columbia University, the University of Minnesota, Ohio State University, the State University of Iowa, and the University of Chicago. Northwestern University should have been included on Cowley's list. Northwestern's president, Walter Dill Scott, started a student personnel department at Northwestern in 1919 (Lloyd-Jones, 1929), and was the founder of the Scott Company where Paterson was employed before coming to the University. It is likely that Scott influenced the development of Paterson's views about student personnel. In the 1920s, applied psychology was an emerging field and the pioneers had strong connections with each other.

In 1937, ACE published a paper called the *Student Personnel Point of View*. Among the group that contributed to the paper were Paterson and C. Gilbert Wrenn, the Assistant Director of GC from 1936 to 1938 (Higbee, 2001). We searched psycINFO for student personnel publications between 1937 and 1950 and found that 31 of 163 (19%) were by UMN authors, suggesting that the Minnesota Point of View had considerable influence on the student personnel movement.

The most complete early description of the Minnesota Point of View as a

counseling theory was put forth by Edmund G. Williamson and John (Jack) Darley (1937). Williamson had a long and illustrious career at the UMN. He was the first director of the UMN Testing Bureau, later called the Counseling Bureau, and Dean of Students until the mid-1970s. He was the president of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) from 1966 to 1967 (NASPA, 2004). His influence was so important that a UMN building designed to house student affairs functions was named in his honor.

Williamson viewed counseling and education as part of a whole. Both, he believed, should have students at the center. He observed that students differed in their abilities, motivations, and interests and that these attributes could be validly measured. He believed that students should be guided toward the courses and curricula that were consistent with their abilities and needs. In order to achieve this goal, he proposed that courses and pedagogy should reflect the needs of real students, not hypothetical ideals. The only way to find out what real students were like was to gather data; to do research on their abilities, motivations, and needs. The counselor, then, had to be involved in ongoing research in order to remain informed about real students. Williamson also observed that students often lacked insight into their abilities and interests or were not motivated to develop them. The job of the counselor was to assess the student objectively, tell the student the results of the assessment, persuade the student that the assessment was correct, and encourage the student to make plans accordingly (Williamson & Darley, 1937).

Williamson acknowledged that many factors prevented students from correctly appraising their abilities. These factors included the unrealistic aspirations of their parents, faith that attending college provided economic security, loss of self-confidence due to economic adversity, and harsh criticism of their past work. Through objective appraisal, the counselor could help students better understand their aptitudes and direct their efforts toward developing them. One of the problems that Williamson identified in the process of vocational guidance was the lack of information available to counselors about the attributes of people who were successful in various careers. Williamson believed that research in vocational psychology would provide this information, but until the information was available, counselors were encouraged to focus on the role of training as a gatekeeper into occupations. Students were encouraged to consider not “should I become a doctor?” but “can I succeed in medical school?” (Williamson & Darley, 1937, p. 67).

Williamson observed that even when students were enrolled in appropriate courses, distractions could prevent them from learning. The job of the counselor included finding out what prevented the student from learning. Williamson believed that “Optimum learning is possible only when the

desire to learn is fostered by sympathetic relations with teachers, by the alleviation of emotional distractions, and by selection of students capable of profiting from college courses” (Williamson & Darley, 1937, p. 65). The model was holistic in its view that every aspect of students’ lives needed to be considered in understanding how they could most benefit from their education.

Williamson’s perspective has been described as a “rational” approach to counseling (Patterson, 1966). Rational theories take a logical, intellectual approach to the client’s problem and the process of problem solving. They construct the counselor as a teacher who works individually with the client to find solutions to problems. Although the emotional side of counseling is not emphasized in rational theories, it is clear from Williamson’s work that he valued exploration of the student’s emotions when they interfered with the student’s performance or problem-solving process. The rational approach was particularly appropriate for use with students because it could be taught to faculty members who were not psychologists, but were interested in advising students (Williamson, 1935).

In this chapter we will describe how GC administrators, counselors, researchers, and teachers used the Minnesota Point of View to design a college for students we would now describe as “at-risk” or “underprepared.” We will start with the events leading up to the founding of the college. We will then describe how a student personnel perspective was implemented in the college and how research on students, an important component of the Minnesota Point of View, influenced decisions about the college’s curriculum. Finally we will discuss two persistent problems for the college, student morale and transfer within the university to baccalaureate degree programs, which continue to guide research and practice today.

Individual Differences and Success in College

At the turn of the twentieth century, any Minnesota high school graduate could be admitted to the UMN. Faculty were concerned that growing numbers of students were not prepared for college work (Gray, 1958). Pioneering work on the use of tests to select students for admission was begun by John Black Johnston, Dean of the College of Science, Literature, and Arts (SLA) (Johnston, 1930). Johnston collected information about students’ high school ranks, and with Paterson developed a college aptitude test that was found to be a valid predictor of success in SLA. In a 1930 speech, UMN president Lotus Coffman (1934) said that although the university, as a state school, did not have the right to refuse admission to high school graduates, it was a “well recognized fact that students occasionally are graduated from high school who

are not capable of doing satisfactory college work” (p. 137). He reported that the testing of high school students for college ability had resulted in those with low ability having been counseled by their high schools not to attend college, which led to a decrease in the number of low ability students enrolling in UMN colleges. In this speech he also claimed that the UMN had done more than any other school in the nation to understand the individual student. He stated that:

With the physical, intellectual and emotional examination of students, the information obtained from the vocational and educational advisers, the student counselors, the psychiatrist, the personnel committee and the deans . . . we actually know more about our students today than at any other time in the history of the university. (p. 140)

Coffman’s commitment to serving all Minnesota high school graduates led to the proposal that a new college should be developed that would meet the needs of students who were not well served by SLA. Dean Johnston believed that students must be assisted to discover the type of education and work best suited to their aptitudes and interests (Williamson, 1947). MacLean (1949), the first director of GC, suggested that Paterson, Williamson, Darley, and their associates provided the evidence that the UMN elder statesmen used to create flexible structures at the UMN designed to meet students’ needs. The new junior college would be based on research on students, and a curriculum called general education would be designed to be relevant to the characteristics and goals of the student body.

The Implementation of The Minnesota Point of View in General College

By early 1932 the decision had been made to establish a college suited to the needs of students with low college aptitude ratings who were not likely to achieve success in the other UMN colleges. A collegiate counseling unit had been successful in SLA, so there was support for making counseling integral to the new college. During the 1920s, the first director of GC, Malcolm MacLean, had been part of this unit, which he described as Paterson’s first faculty committee on student counseling (MacLean, 1949). Although MacLean’s academic background was in English, he became so inspired by his work in student personnel that when he was invited to direct the college he put student personnel at its center. Williamson helped MacLean plan the unit’s structure and goals. The plan for the college was that two professional counselor-researchers would be permanent staff members. They would guide the development of the college by learning about students through the process of counseling and through research.

Based on his experiences with the students the College would serve, Williamson believed that GC students would need a great deal of help identifying their aptitudes and selecting appropriate educational goals. Faculty and staff were to be trained in student personnel perspectives, and the practice and research of guidance counselors would inform the development of the curriculum (MacLean, Williams, & Darley, 1937). According to MacLean et al., the goal of the college was to adjust the student to the environment, and to place the student on the road to a satisfying life and satisfying work. Because the college was built around understanding the student rather than faculty interests or the demands of professional training, student personnel and guidance were integrated into the curriculum. For example, Williamson (1937a) not only organized the student personnel effort but also, with MacLean, taught a course called Vocations. This course offered students an opportunity to learn more about their aptitudes and interests and the jobs that matched their traits.

Darley and Williams Build the GC Student Personnel Program

From 1932 until 1934, guidance functions were carried out by GC teachers and administrative staff under the leadership of MacLean and Williamson. In 1934 Darley became one of two counselor-researchers in GC. The other counselor-researcher was Kathleen McConnon, who soon became Kathleen McConnon Darley. Shortly after her marriage, Mrs. Darley left university employment, a practice dictated by the anti-nepotism rules of the time. The Darleys' responsibilities were to establish the GC counseling and student personnel program, conduct research on adolescent college students, and teach psychology. In 1936 Jack Darley became the Director of the UMN Testing Bureau, but remained involved in a major study of GC students (General College, 1938).

In 1935 another of Paterson's students, Cornelia Williams, joined the college as a counselor researcher. In 1937 MacLean, Williams, and Darley described the guidance process in GC. The first step was testing. All GC freshmen took a battery of tests including three general ability tests, two specific achievement tests, and 12 attitude or adjustment scales. The second step was to collect other information about the student, including questionnaires describing the student's family, social and economic background, high school records, and the results of the student's physical examination. All UMN students were required to have a physical examination at the health service at entrance. The third step was for a counselor to interview the student at least once, but more typically two to six times during the student's first term. The purpose of the interviews was to gather more information, and more importantly to help the student clarify goals, stay motivated, and vent emotions. The fourth step was to advocate for the student in the com-

munity or refer the student to others for specific help. For example, if the student needed a course in another college, the counselor would call the dean of the college to arrange it. If the student needed more support from home, the counselor would call the parents and encourage it. The counselors made referrals for health problems, emotional problems, speech defects, disability assessment, remediation of skill problems, study problems, extracurricular activities, financial problems, and inadequate housing. The fifth step was evaluating the success of the program based on the extent to which the student achieved an appropriate goal.

In 1940, Royal Embree, a GC counselor-researcher, described the development of the GC counseling service as part of an annual report to the UMN president on the progress of the college. In this report, Embree reiterated the Minnesota Point of View: that guidance is a vital function of education concerned with the total adjustment of the student, that it required the cooperation of the entire college staff, and that it must be sensitive to the results of program evaluation. He claimed that it was impossible to give any individual credit for the GC counseling program because “counseling is and has been from the beginning a planned function of the college as a whole and not of any person or department” (p. 47). Embree identified seven factors that contributed to the development of the counseling program: (a) recognition on the part of college administration and staff of the need for individualized counseling, (b) ongoing administrative support for the work, (c) ongoing substantial financial support, (d) involvement of trained guidance leaders, (e) sound research that provided direction to the program, (f) willingness and ability of the staff to participate in the guidance process, and (g) constant awareness of what the program was and was not accomplishing for students.

According to Embree (1940), GC teachers and administrators played an important role in the guidance process. Each GC student was assigned to a staff advisor who assisted the student with program planning. By the late 1930s, GC had some faculty members who worked exclusively for the College who were identified as available for advising. Advisors had access to the students’ counseling files and made use of the information on test results in the files. Advisors referred students who needed more in-depth help to the counselors. The success of the counselor staff collaboration in the guidance process reflected both the personal characteristics of the staff and the counseling system. Embree described the GC staff as very interested in and accessible to students: “Apparently, the selection of people who are adequately equipped to work on the educational frontier also selects men and women who are keenly conscious of the necessity for individualized work with students” (p. 49). Because the curriculum was supposed to be responsive to the needs of students, staff relied on the counselors to provide the in-depth

understanding of students necessary to make the system work. In the GC system, both the results of formal research and the insights of counselors informed the curriculum.

The University of Minnesota Student Personnel Programs

The General College student personnel program was situated in a context of a broad and diverse UMN program. In the same year that GC was established, Williamson became the director of the newly formed University Testing Bureau. The Bureau was established to collect the data necessary for counseling all UMN students concerning vocational and educational issues. In 1936 Williamson joined the UMN administration, and Darley became director of the Bureau, which was renamed the Counseling Bureau. Under Williamson and Darley, the three divisions of the bureau, counseling, testing, and research, provided important information to colleges about the problems students encountered. This information was used to guide students in making educational and vocational choices and to inform the curricula of the colleges and the pedagogy of the faculty (Williamson & Darley, 1937).

By the 1940s the student personnel perspective was embedded broadly and deeply into the university. Williamson (1947) described the Minnesota student personnel program as a “balanced” student service that included (a) the Counseling Bureau with its measurement experts, reading specialists, occupational specialists, women’s counselors, and “emotional counselors” (p. 153); (b) specialized services including counseling in dormitories and fraternities, speech and hearing therapists, and counseling for veterans and foreign students; and (c) advising and counseling in the colleges. Williamson stated that

counseling is most effective when it is an integral part of a total environmental and institutional personnel program, consisting of many types of services brought to focus on the individual student’s learning-needs to aid him in finding and perfecting methods of working out his own solutions to his own problems. (p. 154)

GC counseling existed as part of a large, coordinated set of student personnel services that shared goals, methods, and in some cases personnel. GC students were not only served by the College’s student personnel unit, but were regularly seen as clients by counselors in the Counseling Bureau and by specialists in reading and speech clinics. This connection among the units allowed sharing of information to ensure that service to students was coordinated and consistent. The coordinated system put a high priority on research to both better understand students and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs.

Research on General College Students

The decision that the college was to be guided by the results of research on students led to three major and many other smaller research projects. Jack Darley and Cornelia Williams (Williams, 1943) led a massive research project designed to describe older adolescents in the college environment. Robert Pace (1941), who went on to a distinguished career in educational research at the University of California-Los Angeles, led an equally complex study of the characteristics of former university students. In the third study, Ruth Eckert (1943), who later became a Professor of Education at the UMN and the first woman faculty member honored with the title of Regent's Professor (Gray, 1951), led an evaluation of GC outcomes. These studies were instrumental in defining the characteristics of GC students, stimulating a discussion of the desired outcomes of general education, and evaluating the success of the fledgling college. These three studies: the Adolescent Study, the Adult Study, and the Outcomes Study, provide examples of the way research was used to inform practice in the early years of GC.

The Adolescent Study

Williams (1943) described the results of the Adolescent Study in the book *These We Teach: A Study of General College Students*. The study was also described by Darley and Williams in annual reports that McLean made to the university president (Williams, 1940). The complex and ambitious study was made possible by a 1935 grant from the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation. The head of the Rockefeller Foundation was John Vincent, former president of the UMN and mentor to Coffman (Gray, 1958, p. 117). Guidance for the study was provided by a prestigious Advisory Board that included Williamson, Paterson, psychologists John Anderson and Florence Goodenough from the University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare, UMN sociologists F. S. Chapin and A. L. Shea, and Ruth Boynton, Director of the UMN Health Service.

The goal of the Adolescent Study (Williams, 1943) was to understand the educational, social, and family characteristics of GC students. The information was to be used to identify issues to be dealt with in counseling and to design a curriculum focused on the needs and characteristics of the students. Data on 1312 students first enrolled between 1935 and 1937 were coded and analyzed. In addition, 100 students were selected for more intense study. This group was interviewed, and interviews were also conducted with their parents. Interviewers also made observations of the parents' homes.

A concise summary of the results of the study was made by Williams (1940) in a report on the discussion of the outcomes by a committee of General College faculty. The major findings of the study were:

1. GC students were primarily from middle and upper-middle class families in the Twin Cities area. They lived at home while attending college.

3. GC students had conservative political and economic attitudes consistent with their middle class origins. They were apathetic about social issues.

4. GC students were generally well adjusted and physically healthy. Their main problems were vocational and educational.

5. The parents of GC students had experienced large economic gains without a college education and expected their children would experience even greater gains with more education. The parents of GC students viewed a college education uncritically and put much pressure on their children to earn degrees.

6. GC students expected to begin their adult working lives at the same economic level their parents had reached after many years of work. GC students expected to gain job training and financial security from their education. Women were more likely to want a broad general education and education for home and family life.

7. Most male GC students, but not females, paid for their own education.

8. GC students' prior education did not prepare them for the large lecture classes at the University.

9. GC students were from the lowest third of their high school classes, scored low on tests of academic ability, and whatever factors led to those outcomes in high school were likely still operating in college.

10. Only about 20% of the students admitted to GC entered voluntarily. The resistance of GC students and their parents to anything unconventional led them to resist the college, its courses, and procedures because they were unconventional.

11. GC students dropped in and out of school, and most did not return for a second year.

12. GC students were more sociable than other students and preferred less organized activities such as dating and discussing to organized clubs and activities.

The most problematic characteristics of GC students were their low academic ability, their resistance to new ideas, their desire for high-status jobs with high incomes, and their lack of interest in personal and intellectual growth. The Williams' study supported Williamson's (1937a) belief that GC students needed vocational guidance to identify appropriate educational and career goals. Also, because both the students and their parents regarded vocational preparation as an important educational goal, Williams proposed that the college add occupational preparation programs.

The Adult Study

While the Adolescent Study (Williams, 1943) was taking place, a second study, which began in 1936, examined the outcomes of UMN graduates and UMN students who did not graduate. Led by C. Robert Pace (1941), the Adult Study as it was called, contacted 1600 students who first attended the University in 1924, 1925, 1928, and 1929, before GC was created. The purpose of the study was to learn more about the needs, interests, and wants of adults who had attended college in hopes of developing a curriculum that was ultimately more useful to students.

The students contacted included both those who fit the profile of students who would later be admitted to GC and students who would continue to be admitted to other colleges. Students were sent long questionnaires that included items on issues ranging from their attitudes toward home decorations to their beliefs about philosophy. In addition, 172 respondents were interviewed to check the validity of the survey responses. The questions were created by a committee of GC faculty members and designed to determine if college graduates seemed to have benefited from their college experience. The study provided an incredibly detailed snapshot of college-educated young adults. Although those who graduated had more prestigious occupations and earned more money than those who did not graduate, both groups were occupationally and financially advantaged compared to the general population. There were no differences between students who graduated and those who did not graduate on lifestyle variables, suggesting that the main impact of college graduation was vocational. Graduation and marital status were related in women, with more graduates among the single women group. The respondents were interested in national issues rather than local community problems and few participated in arts or music activities. The genders differed in their interests, with men expressing more interest in the world of business and sports, and women more in the areas of popular entertainment, church, and school. Pace's book included a very detailed description of the interests, activities, and attitudes of young adults of that time period, information that was used to support the development of the general education curriculum.

According to MacLean (1949), the response of the faculty to the Pace (1941) study was "Thank God! Now that we know what our students are really like, we can plan real courses for them" (p. 25). The curriculum was designed to increase students' self-understanding, to direct them to fulfilling occupations, to help them establish healthy families, and to make them more involved citizens. The process of operationalizing these goals in the curriculum was described by Spafford (1943) and the result has been described as "functional" general education (Koch, 1980).

The Study of GC Outcomes

As the first cohorts of students entered the college, plans were made to follow up on their outcomes. The goal of the study was to determine if GC was successful in meeting its objectives, which included increasing the students' insight and understanding of self and others; developing students' skills in communication, thinking, and social interaction; developing students' traits such as open-mindedness, engagement in civic affairs, and social maturity; and developing a personal philosophy and realistic view of the world. Ruth Eckert, who is described in the 1938–1939 *GC Bulletin* as an Associate Professor and Research Evaluator, took charge of the project. Eckert's (1943) study included students who entered GC between 1932 and 1940. The study concluded that GC students made significant gains in the areas that were important to GC and present in the GC curriculum: however, social attitudes and recreational interests did not change. Over time, GC students' vocational choices became more realistic. In comparing GC students to SLA students, GC students differed primarily in their academic abilities. There were no differences between the GC and SLA students in personality, other than a tendency for more GC students to have conservative social and political attitudes. Like Williams, Eckert found that GC students' career aspirations were not consistent with their academic abilities because half of GC students identified careers that required advanced degrees (e.g., business executive, medicine, law), while most left college before completing bachelor degrees. The most frequently identified vocational goals for men were business, engineering, teaching, accounting, embalming, and law, while women preferred nursing, teaching, business, designing, and social work. Eckert was also struck by the high level of commitment students had to their career choice. She found that only one in five students had doubts about their original choice. Combined with William's (1943) adolescent study, the GC follow-up study lent support to the development of occupational programs in GC. In the 1943 supplemental *GC Bulletin*, occupational programs are listed for the first time. The programs included child care, prenursing and related medical arts, pre-embalming, commercial art, general clerical, and sales and business. The choice of programs was based on information from the Pace (1941) Adult Study and the Eckert Outcomes Study, both of which identified career interests and future careers of GC students, and the exigencies of World War II. From 1943 until the mid-1980s, occupational programs served as an important complement to the GC general education curriculum.

The Ten-Year Follow-up Study of the 1958 Cohort

The commitment to research on the GC student continued for several decades after the founding of the college. An example was a 10-year longitu-

dinal study of a group of freshmen admitted in the fall of 1958 (Kingsley, 1968–1969). The study was led by Gordon Kingsley, a GC counselor and faculty member who was hired in the mid-1950s to lead GC student personnel services. Assisting with the project were Frank Benson, David Giese, Leslie King, George McCutcheon, and Thomas Scheller. King and Scheller were part of the student personnel services unit, while Benson, Giese, and McCutcheon taught in other units of the college.

The purposes of the Kingsley (1968–1969) study were familiar ones: to document the worth of providing postsecondary education to students in the bottom half of the high school class and to continue monitoring the needs of students in relation to the curriculum. A random sample of 300 students was selected from among GC students beginning in the fall of 1958. The students were interviewed during their first term, at the end of their first year, and at the end of their second year. Students who transferred or left college were sent questionnaires surveying their educational and vocational plans. In 1966 almost all of the original participants were contacted to fill out a questionnaire. Of the original 300 students, 194 completed it and also completed the *Strong Vocational Interest Blank* (Strong, 1943).

In 1958, men still outnumbered women in the college by about three to one. The smaller number of women in the study made it harder for Kingsley (1968–1969) to draw strong conclusions about this group. Eighty percent of the students lived in the Twin Cities area with their parents while attending GC, and 43% lived in the city of Minneapolis. It remained the case that most of the parents of GC students had not attended college. Eleven percent of the fathers and 8% of the mothers of GC students were college graduates.

Kingsley (1968–1969) found that 67% of the students said they enrolled in GC because they had failed to gain entrance to any other college. Although 32% expressed disappointment at having been admitted to GC, 40% said their initial response to being admitted to GC was relief at being admitted to the university at all. A report on Junior Colleges in Minnesota prepared by Keller, Lokken, and Meyer (1958) supported the students' perception that GC was the only postsecondary institution in the state serving less qualified students. By the middle of their first terms, 82% of GC students said their feelings about the college were positive. Eighty-four percent of the students said they planned to transfer to a 4-year college, and only 14% intended to earn only an associate degree. By the end of the first year, 75% of the students were still satisfied with their GC experience, and 91% planned to continue their education the next year, either by returning to GC or transferring to a 4-year college.

At the 1966 follow-up, Kingsley (1968–1969) found that 28% of the men and 8% of the women had earned bachelor degrees. An additional 9% of the

men was still enrolled at an educational institution, and 23% completed the requirements for an A.A. degree. Students who completed bachelor degrees had an average grade point average (GPA) of 2.8 while those who did not earn any degree had an average of 1.5.

Kingsley (1968–1969) concluded that there was little evidence that the participants had changed much as a result of their education. There was no evident shift in their political, economic, or aesthetic values. The participants in the 1966 survey indicated that:

their religious convictions remained the same after college as they had been prior to it, that their political ties were divided almost evenly between the two major parties before and after college, that their economic and vocational aspirations (despite some realistic modifications) continued basically unchanged, and that their cultural interests (the kinds of music they listened to, the television programs they watch, the movies and plays they attend, the literature they read) had not changed as a result of attending college. In fact, the evidence makes it clear that the participants in the study did not at any time regard the University or the College as an environment where they might examine and appraise values and perhaps recast some of them in the light of newly discovered information. Most of them saw higher education as a means to an end, an essential step on the way to a vocation. (p. 14)

The men who participated in the study eventually found employment in the occupational area they originally chose, but at a lower level, and 70% were employed in business detail, sales, and technical work. Fifty-seven percent had jobs at the professional, management, or skilled levels; 26% had jobs at the semi-skilled level; and 13% had jobs at the unskilled level. Of the men, 72% expressed satisfaction with their employment, with those who had earned better grades and degrees expressing more satisfaction. In 1966 so few of the women were in career positions that an analysis of their occupations was not included in the study.

In drawing conclusions from the study, Kingsley (1968–1969) reaffirmed the Minnesota Point of View. He pointed out that GC should continue to “individualize its instruction and counseling to an even greater degree” and gear the curriculum “to the realities of the social and economic milieu beyond the campus” (p. 19). Although the institution could not be expected to supply all of the motivation that appears to make a difference in determining student success, “teaching methods which spur students’ active involvement in the processes of learning tend to personalize and motivate the further pursuit of learning” (p. 20).

Kingsley’s (1968–1969) study demonstrated that GC students continued to seek bachelor degrees and did not see their GC experience as terminal. It is another example of how research on students was used to support changes in

the curriculum. The desire expressed by GC students to complete degrees, combined with the continuing poor fit between their interests and the degree programs available at the UMN, provided the justification for the creation of the baccalaureate program in 1970.

Major Challenges for GC Students

Research on GC students provided information about two ongoing problems that were first identified by GC counselors that have implications for the college's future: the stigmatization students experienced by participating in a program for less qualified students, and the need to offer not just general education and occupational programs, but to offer courses that would transfer to other colleges within the UMN. The stigmatization of GC students, described by early writers as the morale problem, has been amply documented and has affected the relationships between students and staff in the college and the attitudes of the staff toward their work. The transfer problem was resolved in 1985 when students' insistence on transfer was officially recognized as the college's mission.

The Morale Problem

From the inception of the college, students who were admitted were identified as being less academically able than other UMN students. The stigma attached to admission to GC was first mentioned by Johnston and Williamson (1934) and continues to the present (Wambach, Hatfield, & Mirabella, 2001). MacLean (1936) reported that "Our students are not, as is popularly rumored, 'dumbbells' and 'morons'" (p. 3). In 1938 MacLean wrote that GC

was looked upon as a sort of internement [*sic*] camp for low-grade non-students, wherein the immature, the non-academic, the socialite could be impounded away from those of true scholarship. Some of our colleagues thought of these youngsters not ruthlessly, but in the same terms as the gentle Southerner thinks of the Negro—as problem children, sometimes pleasant, more often irritating, who had, nevertheless to be taken care of and served as pleasantly and well as they could be so long as they were kept out from under foot. (pp. 1–2)

MacLean saw the attitude of those who advocated that the UMN admit only elite students as comparable to racism, and he decried it on moral grounds and because it made the work of the college less effective. Williams (1943) reported that less than one fifth of GC students entered the college voluntarily. The resentment students felt at being placed in a college they did not choose and did not understand created dissatisfaction with the college and

problems in the classroom. Besides the negative perceptions of many members of the university community, GC students faced active discrimination in some areas of university life. For example, in 1949 UMN sororities would not allow GC women to join. In a letter to Mrs. Alvin Wyatt dated October 10, 1949, GC Dean Horace Morse said that “it would contribute to the betterment of our college situation and also of the state of mind of our girls if some steps were taken by those sororities now discriminating against them to remove such regulations” (p. 1). Shortly after this letter, official discrimination by sororities against GC women ended.

A survey of GC students by Magoon (1950) found that 91% of the students who responded to the survey believed they were looked down upon by students enrolled in other colleges of the university. They reported acquiring negative attitudes toward the college before they entered and also reported that their attitudes had improved as they experienced the college. Most students, 51%, rated themselves as satisfied, 27% were neutral, and 22% were dissatisfied. Males were significantly more likely to express dissatisfaction than were females. The GC stigma affected students’ perceptions of the college curriculum. For example, Magoon’s results suggested that about a third of the respondents believed their GC courses were too easy, and 40% believed there to be too much overlap between the content of GC courses and high school classes. The dissatisfied students were much more likely to rate the courses as too easy or repetitive. Magoon found that 90% of the students agreed that “The more GC courses are like SLA courses the better I like it” (p. 31).

In the conclusion of his report Magoon (1950) stated a need to address “the individual student’s lack of acceptance of himself and his relatively limited academic abilities, (in the sense of what we might term abstract and/or verbal reasoning)” (p. 76). He went on to comment that although GC students aspire to professional occupations, these goals were unrealistic and presented a major challenge to counselors who needed to “readjust” student’s vocational goals.

GC counselors were well aware of the dilemmas they faced in their work. Most of the students admitted to the college did not have the academic ability necessary for college work and had vocational aspirations that were not likely to be achieved. Rather than ignore this fact, the counselors chose to confront it by giving students information about their aptitudes and interests and informing the students about curricula and training programs in which the student was likely to be successful. In the 1940s some psychologists such as Carl Rogers (1948) began to question the value of providing information during counseling. This nondirective approach was criticized by Williamson (1947) as too limiting. Williamson stated that

I know of no counselor at Minnesota who has imposed a vocational choice or any other kind of choice upon a student. . . . Though we avoid compulsion, we at Minnesota don't hesitate to suggest, inform, contribute, participate, help and even advise(!) students. (p. 150)

Minnesota counselors, including those in GC, continued to view the counselor more as an educational resource and only occasionally as a therapist. From Magoon's (1950) report it is clear that counselors occasionally became frustrated when students resisted information and that students sometimes resented being confronted with the need to change. Also, GC counselors were well aware of the fact that the predictions that led students to GC were not always accurate, and that for some students, transfer to a 4-year degree program was an appropriate goal.

The Transfer Mission

One of the earliest problems for GC counselors and administrators was working out ways for students who were successful in GC to transfer to the baccalaureate degree programs of other UMN colleges. This was viewed as a problem because the mission of GC was to provide students a general education leading to an associate degree. Given their high school records and standardized test scores, GC students were not considered good candidates for baccalaureate degrees. The psychologists who practiced student personnel from the Minnesota Point of View viewed test scores as pieces of information that could be used in conjunction with other information to make predictions about the likelihood that a student would be successful in a degree program. However, they were open to the idea that predictions could be wrong and acknowledged that motivation and circumstances played an important role in student success. As Williamson and Darley (1937) explained, tests "vary in reliability or consistency, in validity or meaning, and in applicability, as even a cursory acquaintance with the measurement literature will show" (p. 33). Williamson and Darley argued that using one test score to pigeonhole a person is not a student personnel program. Student personnel work also involves "breaking down habits that prevent the use of existing aptitudes" (p. 35). When students demonstrated through persistent effort that they were capable of earning a college degree, it was the job of the counselor to make sure students had the opportunity to transfer.

From the 1930s until the present, the first step for GC students who are preparing to transfer has been taking courses in other UMN colleges. In the 1930s arrangements were made for students whose goals required that they take non-GC courses to do so. If a counselor thought this was appropriate, he or she contacted the administration of the college offering the course and arranged for the student to register. Students were allowed to transfer if they

were in at least the 75th percentile or higher in class average on the GC comprehensive test (see Chapter 22 for a discussion of the course ranking system and comprehensive examinations). Eckert (1943) reported that despite the fact that preparing students for transfer was not a GC goal, a fourth of all GC students who entered between 1932 and 1940 transferred. Among those who transferred, Eckert reported that slightly less than half either had graduated or were still enrolled.

Transfer was studied again for GC cohorts in the 1950s (Finnberg, 1960). In the 1950s, students admitted to GC had aptitude test scores and high school ranks below the 40th percentile. The percentile rating on the GC comprehensive test required for transfer had moved down to 65%. Finnberg reported that 975 students, 855 males and 120 females, transferred between 1951 and 1956. She estimated the transfer rate to be about one-third of students who matriculated to GC. This transfer rate suggests that nearly all of the students who scored above the 65th percentile on the GC comprehensive chose to transfer. Of the 975 transferred students, 47% earned degrees. Students who transferred to the School of Business Administration were more likely to graduate (65%) than those who transferred to SLA (42%) or the Institute of Technology (14%). Finnberg's study found that precollege admissions test scores did not predict which students would successfully transfer. Performance in GC was a predictor of transfer, leading Finnberg to the following conclusion:

In some students an awakening occurred apparently during their experience in the General College—obviously not in time to be reflected either in aptitude test scores or in high school performance, but after their enrolling in the college, where they seem to have found in themselves what President Morrill has called the “determination and capacity to succeed.” (p. 98)

Besides offering students the opportunity to earn associate degrees, GC was serving as a secondary selection process for students who aimed for baccalaureate degrees but were initially rejected by the baccalaureate degree-granting colleges.

Even after GC added baccalaureate degree programs in the 1970s, part of the student body continued to transfer. In 1985, GC was asked by then President Kenneth Keller to change its mission to preparation for transfer (University of Minnesota, 2000). Keller mistakenly believed the preparation for transfer mission to be the original mission of the college. Senior GC faculty members at the time pointed out that preparation for transfer had never been the college's mission, but was a by-product of the college's willingness to do what was best for the individual student. The preparation for transfer mission was adopted by the Regents in 1986. It required a complete redesign

of the curriculum (Wambach & Brothen, 2002) and of the student personnel functions.

The Legacy of the Minnesota Point of View

During the 1970s and 1980s new advising models replaced older counseling models at the UMN and many other universities. Counseling functions that were located in colleges were centralized. The colleges developed academic advising offices that focused on educational planning. In the process student personnel workers lost faculty status, and in many cases people who were not trained in student personnel methods were hired to advise students. As counseling became a centralized function, counseling professionals were no longer in a strong position to have a direct impact on the curriculum. The tasks of conducting research on students and evaluation of programs were assigned to institutional researchers who have no regular contact with students or faculty. Although these models are efficient, the student personnel models of the 1930s brought different sources of information about students together in a synergy that is difficult to achieve now when faculty, counselors, and researchers have nonoverlapping roles.

The Minnesota Point of View called for colleges to use research on students to create curricula and services that meet students' needs. Research conducted by GC counselor researchers and faculty members provided some of the earliest studies of what we would now describe as underprepared students. Perhaps the most important findings of these studies were that some students who seemed unlikely to succeed in college could succeed, and that participation in college had positive effects on occupational attainment and economic success, even for developmental students who did not complete degrees. These studies and similar ones at other institutions provided justification for the expansion of educational opportunities that are available to students today. The research-based functional general education curriculum developed by GC faculty and staff provided a model for the curricula of the Minnesota community colleges that were founded in the 1960s.

There are also lessons in the history of the GC student personnel program for current developmental educators. We believe that the most important lesson is that curricula and services need to be constantly modified based on information about real students. We need to continually challenge our assumptions about students and the effectiveness of our programs by doing research. The practitioners who teach courses and advise students are in a better position to pose research questions and gather data than are institutional researchers isolated in administrative offices. Collaborations that bring the research design, data management, and statistical expertise of institu-

tional researchers together with the student contact experience of faculty and staff should be encouraged if we are to conduct research that can be used to guide practice. We believe that making resources available for these collaborations has the potential to improve the educational outcomes of students, and should be a priority for college administrators. As we go forward we should continue to ask: What are our students like? How are we doing? How can we improve? Challenging assumptions with data is the ultimate legacy of the Minnesota Point of View. As Williamson stated in 1947, "It has long been the fundamental strength of Minnesota to try out new ideas and techniques, regardless of the source" and to test their validity by asking "what results does it produce and under what conditions?" (p. 144).

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Fulfilling the University's Promise: The Social Mission of Developmental Education

Katy Gray Brown

ABSTRACT

In this chapter I consider the foundation and development of the General College within the broader context of educational reform and expanding societal needs. Since 1932 the General College has created a “community space” essential to the work of the University of Minnesota. The General College’s commitment to developmental education is particularly important to the mission of a land-grant institution. Drawing upon an analogy with multicultural education, I argue that the evolution of postsecondary education in this country makes access programs such as the General College vital to the social mission of institutions committed to serving diverse communities.

Whether or not it was articulated in the language of the “American Dream,” I heard the message in innumerable ways: education is the great equalizer. My family history reflects the changes of the last century. My grandparents, like most people who lived where the Ozarks tumble slowly into the plains of Oklahoma and Kansas, finished their formal schooling somewhere around the eighth grade. They carved out livelihoods and raised children in a society increasingly separated along class lines. My parents considered themselves fortunate to be able to attend college, recognizing the doors that were opened by obtaining a degree. From the small, rural community in which I was raised, advancing my education meant first and foremost one thing: a way out. We began absorbing the implications of this message as early as we were divided into separate reading groups in grade school. We eyed each other, wondering how we measured up, and staked our hopes on the myth of meritocracy.

This is not an uncommon story. For generations, education has embodied the promise of both increased personal freedom and financial security. We were told that with a college degree, job opportunities would lead to comfortable salaries, or at least more satisfying work. By attending college and doing well academically, we simply would have more and better choices.

Higher education holds out this same promise today, even as changing social and economic contexts have raised the stakes for those who do not obtain a postsecondary degree. Dual forces of rising tuition and increasing admission standards work to diminish educational opportunities for two groups who yearn most for this particular American Dream: people who are working class or poor, and those who are academically unprepared for postsecondary study. In these pages, I will consider one movement to address this latter exclusion, as manifested in the developmental education program at the General College of the University of Minnesota. I will offer a brief overview of the historical context into which General College was born, emphasizing in particular the social mission of land-grant institutions. This will lay the groundwork for my understanding of General College as “community space” at the University of Minnesota. Drawing upon an analogy with multicultural education, I will argue that the evolution of postsecondary education in this country makes access programs such as the General College vital to the social mission of institutions committed to serving diverse communities.

Social Mission of Higher Education

The notion that colleges and universities should address the needs of the citizenry can be traced back to the Morrill Act of 1862, establishing “land-grant” schools and expanding African American educational institutions. Until then, higher education was regarded as the domain of the privileged. Schools were generally affiliated with religious organizations, and designed to train clergy and produce a professional class. The vision of the land-grant university reflected the aspirations of a relatively new nation for a meritocracy: a “new class of public universities” (Calhoun, 1999, p. 10) that would enable social mobility independent of one’s origin. Designed to allow working class people access to education that would be meaningful to practical lives, land-grant institutions were to include programs devoted to military training and agricultural studies in addition to courses in classical education. Extension offices would provide students with venues to apply their academic studies while providing important services to communities outside the university. Thus, the social mission of the land-grant schools became clear: “. . . [a] democratic mandate for openness, accessibility, and service to people” (National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges [NASULGC], 2004). For the first time, educational institutions would be uniquely accountable to the citizens of the state.

The educational expansion of land-grant institutions occurred just as the prevalent educational model was changing. After the U.S. Civil War, a new

emphasis on technology and science emerged. In the 1870s, schools began to adopt a German model of education, with a tiered system of increasing specialization (i.e., bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees). The spread of this system spurred a move away from the general study of a so-called "classical" education (Calhoun, 1999).

The specialized nature of postsecondary education served some students well. Other students were disadvantaged by this system. The General College was developed in response to a "mismatch" between students desiring a college education and institutional emphasis on early specialization. In the 1920s and early 1930s, social and economic conditions led to unprecedented enrollment at schools such as the University of Minnesota. People who in other times might have pursued a career that did not require a college degree turned to postsecondary education when employment opportunities were scarce. In the throes of an economic depression, when job prospects were bleak, people invested their hopes and resources in the promise of a college degree (MacLean, 1962). Although the influx of students was welcomed, colleges and universities failed to recognize any need to adapt to the changing character of their students. In fact, during this time period, curricula became if anything more specialized. Increasingly, students were required to enter a specific "track" determining their educational path soon after entering college. This practice posed little difficulty for those students who had flourished in high school and came to college mentally and academically prepared for professional training. But nontraditional students struggled, and in astounding numbers they left college before obtaining a degree. At the University of Minnesota, Malcolm Shaw MacLean (1962) noted that students

of a widening range of abilities and interest clamored for admission, were admitted and early ran head on into the rigid, traditional standards of academia which sooner or later bucked more than half of them back out into a cold and jobless world. (p. 2)

Self-interest alone would motivate a school to address an attrition rate of nearly 50%, but as a land-grant institution, the University of Minnesota was compelled by a mission to serve its communities. The General College, founded in 1932, was created to address these needs. In contrast to the specialized study of the greater university, General College offered a curriculum of general education courses. This provided a safety net of sorts for those students who would not complete a degree. General College advocates argued that if students left the university after a year of general education courses, they would be better served than had they spent their time immersed in the initial phase of a more specialized study (MacLean, 1962).

In addition, the decision to base the curriculum on general education

courses carved out General College's position as a point of access for nontraditional students, or students from communities traditionally underrepresented in institutions of higher education. In the 1930s this group was comprised of military veterans and students from working class and rural families. Such students rarely had expected to continue their studies past high school, and plunging into a specialized field of study upon their university enrollment would do little to improve the likelihood of their academic success. The instructors at General College coupled broad, classical education courses with experimental pedagogies designed to address the economic and social realities of the students who came through General College's doors (MacLean, 1962; Wambach & Brothen, 2002). MacLean wrote, "We assumed that we could not really know what, how or when to teach until we know both whom we were teaching and the emerging world in which they were being taught" (p. 7).

This responsiveness to the needs of students has continued to shape General College's curriculum and support services, as the other chapters in this book clearly attest. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the General College focused significant attention on the recruitment and retention of students from communities of color. The Commanding English Program established support services for students for whom English was a second or third language. Such initiatives furthered General College's position as a point of access—a place where nontraditional students might find opportunity within the university.

General College's move in the late 1980s and 1990s to its focus on developmental education continued a commitment to making the University of Minnesota more accessible to students from Minnesota's diverse communities. Drawing upon the research of developmental psychology, developmental educators seek to combine alternative pedagogies with creative syllabi to accommodate a broad range of learning styles (National Association for Developmental Education, 1995). By incorporating a variety of teaching tools such as learning communities, Supplemental Instruction, cooperative learning, and interdisciplinary analysis, developmental educators seek to create a positive and successful learning experience for students who fail to flourish in traditional academic settings. Developmental education, as exemplified by the General College, offers a variety of ways that students can realize themselves as successful learners.

By admitting students who, for a variety of reasons, fail to meet traditional admission standards, General College has opened educational doors for those who otherwise would have been denied entry to the University of Minnesota. Again, General College provides a point of access to higher education. However, contemporary social and economic contexts have increased the impor-

tance of educational opportunity. Calhoun (1999) commented on the changing demographics of today's university students, noting that

they are not in any similar aggregate sense an elite. Neither is a college degree training them for membership in an elite. A college degree is increasingly *standard*—at least for the middle class—rather than a mark of distinction . . . (p. 13)

The stakes have been raised. Positions that previously required only a high school degree now demand postsecondary work. Employers view a college degree as evidence of general competency and self-discipline, aside from any specific technical training a job may require. With minimum pay rates at poverty-line levels, obtaining a college degree is increasingly necessary for any kind of financial security.

These are the societal conditions that lead to a discussion of the social mission of the university and how access programs grounded in developmental education may fulfill this mission. That land-grant institutions are based upon a social mission is clear, if these schools acknowledge their obligation to serve the needs of their communities, as intended by the Morrill Act (NASULGC, 2004; University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy, 1994). However, as the "community" served by the University of Minnesota has become increasingly diverse, and as the call for higher education has increased, the university has had to evolve to meet the demands of its mission.

General College contributes uniquely to fulfilling the social mission of higher education. The structural function of the college is to provide access for underprepared students: the students admitted to General College fail to meet the entrance criteria for other colleges at the university. However, access alone would do little to ensure the success of such students. After all, these are students who have failed to flourish in traditional secondary-level classrooms. Most of these students require more than the mere opportunity to attend college. This is why the pedagogical approach of developmental education, designed to engage a broad spectrum of learners, becomes a fundamental aspect of the social mission of the University. By combining an access program with a developmental pedagogy, General College has created a distinctive community space at the University of Minnesota, an educational environment that is particularly responsive to the needs of a changing student demographic.

The frequent metaphor for academia is a tower, isolating its inhabitants from the concerns and common sense of ordinary folk. Seldom explicit but nonetheless implied by the metaphor is a moat: a barrier that separates institutions of higher education from the communities that surround them. We have an image of students going to college, leaving their communities behind them. However, there are points of access that allow for exchange in addition

to entry, avenues where a more reciprocal relationship between institution and community is possible. I understand these points of access to be community space, in which the needs and resources of both institution and community may intersect.

General College has functioned as community space at the University of Minnesota in three interrelated ways. First, General College has provided access to higher education for traditionally-excluded communities. Whether it was the former farmers of the 1930s or Somali immigrants today, General College has brought a tremendous diversity to the greater university. Second, General College has served as a conduit for community access to university resources. As nontraditional students have found a place for themselves through General College, they have created positive connections between their communities and the University. Programs based at General College such as Upward Bound, Day Community, and Commanding English have taken university resources off campus and into the schools and neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Finally, General College has provided a guide for the University of Minnesota in fulfilling its social mission. As an institution of higher learning, the University seeks to create an environment that encourages individual academic success; as a land-grant institution, we must also be committed to the needs of the communities of Minnesota.

In debates about the future of the General College, the benefits to individual students are not questioned. Time and time again, success stories are shared that illustrate the crucial role that the General College has played in individual lives. General College graduates include a Pulitzer prize-nominated playwright, distinguished journalists, and a state attorney general. Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1970 for his work in genetics, was granted admission to the University of Minnesota only through the access made available by General College (Collins, 2004). If the point were simply that developmental programs are needed to promote the advancement of underachieving students, one might argue that community and technical colleges should serve this role. After honing basic skills and acquiring the attitudes necessary for academic success, such students may then transfer to a school such as the University of Minnesota to complete their studies.

This argument is often used as a reason to drop any access program from the work of the University. Yet such critics overlook the importance of access to the fulfillment of the land-grant vision of community service. In addition, contributions made by General College's understanding of developmental education are vital to the aims of the University as a whole. To make this point, I will draw a comparison with multicultural education.

Multicultural Education

Once, multicultural education—understood for my purposes here as incorporating noncanonical texts into the curriculum and fostering an appreciation of cultural diversity in students—was the exclusive domain of certain fields of study. A few classes within some departments required students to examine materials beyond the “classics” and reflect upon the roles of race, class, and gender. Confronted with demands that education meaningfully address our life experiences, academia has adapted its scope to reflect the diverse nature of our society (Banks, 1996, 1997). Over the past decades, the role of multicultural education has evolved to occupy a central position in many graduation requirements. Advocates have successfully argued that multicultural education is important for mainstream education for three principle reasons. First, multicultural education betters students as individuals. Upon graduation, students will go forth as citizens in a diverse society; they will benefit from an understanding of how difference—be it of class, race, gender, ability, or so on—is a factor in power dynamics in contemporary society. An appreciation of the history of such differences and language to interpret students’ own social location with respect to difference become fundamental tools for living in a diverse society. For these reasons, universities see the importance of multicultural education (Banks, 1997).

A second manner of justifying multicultural education centers on improving the nature of our institutions, making them more responsive to their communities. If we think of the University of Minnesota as dedicated to the people of Minnesota, we must consider how “the people” have changed. Although never a homogenous group, those with rightful claim to the University of Minnesota are increasingly people of color. The university must respond to a social context that includes not only the sons and daughters of German and Scandinavian immigrants, but also Native Americans, African Americans, and recently arrived Latinos, Southeast Asians, and East Africans. If schools take their responsibility to address the educational concerns of community members seriously, multicultural education becomes a necessity for fulfilling this mission. Multicultural education betters the institutions themselves, fostering classrooms and curricula that provide meaningful and effective instruction to an increasingly diverse student body.

Third, multicultural education improves the quality of theoretical work generated by institutions of higher education. The inclusion of diverse perspectives, a principle at the heart of multicultural education, encourages a more thorough critique, expands the possibilities of illustrations and applications, and ultimately produces better academic research. Feminist theory has been at the forefront of this movement, providing solid theoretical critiques

based not only on gender perspectives, but also broader analyses of power and oppression (Code, 1991; hooks, 1984).

Developmental Education and Access Programs

The justification for multicultural education rests upon its benefits to the individual student, the educational institution, and the research agenda of academia. Similarly, an argument can be made for an institutional commitment to developmental education. Individual students can benefit from courses that incorporate a wide range of pedagogical styles, rely upon a variety of assessment measures, and encourage cooperative learning rather than competitive models alone. Clearly, developmental education programs lay the groundwork for academic success for students who struggled mightily elsewhere. But the more radical influence of developmental education programs is found in their effect upon the broader institution. Developmental education approaches demand creative flexibility in pedagogy, curriculum design, and assessment measures. The fruits of this work benefit not only students ill-served by traditional classrooms, but all students who cross through our classroom doors. Finally, the research generated by developmental educators contributes importantly to practices across many types of institutions. Knowledge gained from developmental education classrooms has powerful applications to improve access for people of various learning styles and abilities. As access increases and more diverse perspectives engage with theoretical work, the better our theoretical work will become.

The promise of education, seen so clearly in the aspirations of the Morrill Act (1862) founding the land-grant universities, requires us constantly to return to questions of access. Like historic movements to expand opportunities for women and people of color, developmental education programs strive to create institutions that are accessible and responsive to diverse needs (NADE, 1995). I am reminded of my childhood impressions of higher education: the naïve conception instilled by public school teachers that if we applied ourselves to our studies, any of us could attend college and attain the success promised by a postsecondary degree. Of course, as we approached the age of SAT exams and college admission forms, more and more of my classmates ran into realities that made continuing their education impossible. College simply was not accessible to everyone who tried hard. Access programs that incorporate the principles of developmental education are a step toward diminishing these disparities. As opposed to the mythical American dream of educational opportunity, access programs provide not a “way out,” extracting selected individuals, but rather a “way forward”: a means for the university to contribute to the well-being of our broader communities.

My grandparents would be astounded by today's colleges and universities. Higher education is no longer the exclusive realm of the elite, as the rise of credentialism necessitates a college degree for more careers than ever. An increasingly diverse society has led to an expansion of the curriculum to include elements of multicultural education, internationalism, and interdisciplinary study. With these curricular changes, pedagogy must adapt as well if we are to maintain the tradition of education as a mechanism for social transformation. The dreams of generations for financial security and work of their choosing depend upon preserving educational opportunities. The dual aspects of access and developmental education situate General College uniquely for the University's charge as a land-grant institution: to offer a way forward for the peoples of Minnesota.

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The Politics of Transformation: Developmental Education in a Postsecondary Research Institution

David V. Taylor

ABSTRACT

The extant curriculum of the University of Minnesota's General College was forged out of a political compromise. What has become known as the General College Model for Developmental Education was conceived under an expressed mandate to restrict enrollment, to recruit better academically prepared students, and to retain a greater percentage of the students through graduation. This required a reconceptualization of the college's mission, its philosophy concerning teaching and learning, the role of academic support programs, and the delivery of student support services. Equally important was the redirecting of the creative energy of the faculty from an exclusive focus on teaching to research that supported innovation in teaching and learning. Developmental education became a disciplinary focus. What follows is an interpretive account of that transformation which took place between 1985 and 2001.

During the economic recession of the mid-1980s the State of Minnesota experienced difficulty in sustaining level funding for public postsecondary institutions. Although support for the University of Minnesota remained a high priority, the governor and members of the legislature noted that requests for increased funding were never matched by intentional consideration of program elimination. Their perception was that the University was continuing to increase in size and complexity without a thoughtful reassessment of its core mission.

The entire state budget for higher education, including the newly developed community college system, was becoming costly. It was reasoned that a portion of the state's budget could be reduced significantly if program redundancies between the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State College and University systems were eliminated. Then Governor Rudy Perpich appointed a commission to explore differentiating the two systems with the intent of identifying and eliminating redundant programs, thus containing escalating costs (Sheldon, 2004).

Commitment to Focus

In 1984, when the commission failed to deliver meaningful recommendations, Governor Perpich took his concerns directly to the University Board of Regents. He requested that they undertake the task of differentiating their mission from the community college system and other institutions of higher education in the state. Of specific concern to the governor and some state legislators was the University's offering of associate in arts degrees, many of which were conferred by the General College, the College of Biological Sciences, and the College of Liberal Arts. These degrees were also offered by area community colleges. If the University would clarify its mission, eliminate programmatic redundancies, and agree to internally reallocate funds, the governor promised the possibility of enhanced state support (Sheldon, 2004). Within the span of a few weeks, in November of 1984, then Vice President Kenneth Keller (1985) created a document that would become the basis for *A Commitment to Focus*, the strategic plan that boldly attempted to reorganize the University. In January of 1985 Kenneth Keller became Interim President of the University. According to Keller,

[T]he University . . . should pursue the realistic goal of being among the top five public institutions of higher education in the country. To achieve that goal, it must maintain the quality of its best programs and improve the quality of those programs which most directly serve to enhance its role as a university. (Keller, 1985)

He proposed that the University improve financial support for graduate students in an effort to increase their numbers and to improve quality, recruit high-ability undergraduate students, and improve the quality of undergraduate programs. More important, he proposed that the University redirect the efforts of its faculty away from programmatic activities that were not central to its mission and commit the faculty to priorities that preserve and enhance quality. With respect to assessing the quality of academic programs, he employed five principles for program continuance: "quality of the program, centrality to the University's core mission, comparative advantage, program demand, and efficiency and effectiveness" (Advisory Task Force on Planning, 1987, p. 2).

Keller's plan, now identified as *A Commitment to Focus: Academic Priorities*, was submitted to the Board of Regents in 1985. In the fall of 1986, each academic unit was required to conduct an assessment of its programs consistent with President Keller's vision of propelling the University of Minnesota into the ranks of the top five research institutions. To assist the provost in reviewing academic unit plans, an Advisory Task Force on Planning was created, better known as the "Campbell Committee." The charge to the task

force was “to provide recommendations for campus-wide priorities; recommendations may include reorganization of the priorities within colleges and service units, as well as the setting of relative priorities across units” (Advisory Task Force on Planning, 1987, p. 2). It was noted in the charge that it was not possible to improve program quality at the University while sustaining existing programs at current levels. Something had to be reduced in scope or eliminated entirely.

Where Did the General College Fit?

The General College was an open-admission academic program for students who had not initially met the University’s preparation standards. Established in 1932, the college admitted traditional and nontraditional (i.e., returning adult and part-time) students. These students required intensive academic support services. As documented in previous chapters of this book, during the early years of its founding, the college pioneered what was to become a nationally known general education curriculum, leading to an associate in arts degree, and was also a national leader in the emerging field of student development. During its evolution the college developed two baccalaureate degree programs, an associate degree, and certificate programs. The projected enrollment for fall quarter 1986 was 2,988 students (The General College, 1987, p. 3).

On March 31, 1987, the General College submitted its planning report, *Strategy for Focus*. The report represented a radical departure from the college’s past by offering to eliminate its degree programs, to reduce enrollment, to admit and transfer students to other degree-granting colleges of the University, to conduct research on effective pedagogies for enhancing the teaching and learning of postsecondary students, and to revitalize its curriculum and students services program (The General College, 1987). The termination of baccalaureate degree programs and the phasing out of associate in arts degrees was recommended in a resolution drafted by President Keller and sent by way of a memorandum to the Board of Regents on January 2, 1986.

In spite of the General College plan to redefine and revitalize itself, the Campbell Committee recommended in June of 1987 that the General College be eliminated and integrated into the College of Liberal Arts as a reorganized preparatory program. Its faculty would be transferred into the academic units of their disciplinary training. The college’s budget would be transferred to the new preparatory program of a reorganized College of Liberal Arts, called the Academy of Literature, Sciences, and Arts (Advisory Task Force on Planning, 1987).

Reaction to the Plan for Focus

The report of the Campbell Committee, *A Plan for Focus*, was received with anger and disbelief by supporters of the General College. In addition to the General College, the School of Veterinary Medicine, the Department of Mortuary Science, the Dental School, programs in vocational and technical education, and the University Art Museum were recommended for elimination. Other academic programs were recommended to be enhanced or reduced in scope. With the exception of the General College, which increased tuition revenue for the University, the programs cited for elimination were small with declining enrollments. Those programs could not be enhanced without considerable resources. The money saved by closure could be redirected to more competitive programs.

In the case of the General College, detractors pointed to the open-admission policy that allowed for a significant portion of the incoming freshman class to be represented by “underprepared students.” The college employed 42 tenured faculty, 12 tenure-track faculty, 28 academic professional personnel, and 70 graduate teaching assistants and civil service employees serving 2,705 students with an all-sources budget of \$5.16 million (Advisory Task Force on Planning, 1987).

Although the General College baccalaureate degree programs were considered rigorous, they were viewed as competing with more established programs in other academic units. The associate in arts and certificate programs offered were similarly viewed as competing with less expensive programs offered by area community colleges. General College faculty, hired primarily for their teaching competency, were not research oriented and not as successful in securing sponsored research funding as their peers in other academic units. More important, the freshman-to-sophomore retention rates were low, and 4-year graduation rates for General College students lagged seriously behind those of other degree-granting units. The most outspoken critics reasoned that fewer state resources should be allocated for “remedial” education and suggested that underprepared students might be better accommodated in community colleges, and not the state’s flagship institution. It was clear that to survive, the college and its relationship to the University would have to be reconceptualized.

Plan for Focus was not well received and was roundly criticized by constituent groups and ardent supporters of programs identified for elimination. The supporters of the General College were vociferous and organized. The administration relented under pressure, and the college was given a reprieve. It could be argued that it was not the intent of President Keller to close or eliminate the General College. However, to placate the governor and legislators, significant concessions had to be made. They were demanding that tough decisions be made in the interest of accountability.

It was eventually negotiated that the unit would retain college status without degree-granting authority. All bachelor's degrees, 2-year associate degrees, and certificate programs would be eliminated. The entering freshman class and overall enrollment would be significantly reduced. The outline for restructuring the General College as presented in the college's *Strategy for Focus* (The General College, 1987) was accepted, and the college retained its allocated resources long enough to accomplish changes in its mission (The General College). It was tacitly understood by those who were politically knowledgeable, but not verbally stated, that failure to meet the stipulated terms would result in another, more vigorous attempt to close the college.

The General College Model Takes Shape

The genesis of the General College model for developmental education came out of the General College's plan for reorganization called *Strategy for Focus* (1987). The new mission statement defined three broad areas for institutional focus: (a) to admit underprepared students and support their transfer to baccalaureate degree-granting programs at the University; (b) to conduct research on effective pedagogies for teaching and learning with this population; and (c) to provide a laboratory for training undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students in the delivery of instructional and student services for underprepared students (Advisory Task Force on Planning, 1987; The General College, 1987).

The college's plan for transformation would require 5 years, under which five goals were articulated. The first goal was a reorganization of the administrative and operational structure of the college to accommodate new mission imperatives (i.e., the new curriculum). The second goal involved establishing new admissions criteria, revising the curriculum and academic and student services support programs, and developing a system for transferring students to other academic units. The third goal required establishing a culture of research and evaluation. Areas of emphasis included institutional research and evaluation; research related to effective strategies for teaching, learning, and advising; and discipline-based scholarship. The fourth goal articulated the need for sustained faculty and staff professional development opportunities, including a comprehensive review of compensation, workload, leaves, and performance review standards. The last goal outlined an orderly transition from the former degree-granting status. No new students would be admitted to degree programs, and all programs would be phased out by summer session 1991 (The General College, 1987).

In spite of central administration's approval of plans to reconceptualize the college, many General College faculty and staff were not convinced of the

administration's sincerity. The *Commitment to Focus* and *Strategy for Focus* processes had been demoralizing for both faculty and staff. The failure of the administration to engage college personnel in discussions about their future and the proposed changes alienated many. Expressing concern that this concession only bought time for a more concerted attack on the college and its programs and students, some faculty who were unwilling to change the course and direction of their professional development to accommodate the new mission opted to transfer their tenure home to other disciplinary departments. Others simply chose to retire. Many of the remaining faculty expressed skepticism about the new emphasis upon "developmental education," but reluctantly embraced new teaching strategies. Some academic counselors and civil service employees also bolted for higher ground. The net effect resulted in a reduction in staff and faculty, consistent with a planned reduction in student enrollment.

In an effort to reassure the General College's faculty, staff, students, friends, and alumni of the administration's support for the new mission, a national search was undertaken in 1988 for a new dean. My task as the new dean, when hired in February 1989, was to reenergize the faculty and reduce admissions while improving the quality of the applicant pool. More important, the college was under a specific mandate to improve retention and graduation rates for these academically at-risk students. Students were advised that the last degrees and certificates would be awarded in summer session 1991. The remaining core of faculty and staff were challenged by the dean to recommit themselves to the future of the college and engage in another planning process to implement the new mission statement and goals and to contemplate a possible administrative restructuring of the college.

A new strategic planning steering committee was established during spring quarter 1989. It worked over the summer months. Its task was to plan and organize a college retreat for the beginning of fall quarter 1989 that would engage the entire college in putting the new mission into operation. Almost simultaneously, the faculty was implementing a new and more structured curriculum based upon the most recent research and literature on effective pedagogies for enhancing learning (Curriculum Committee, 1990). Counselors were encouraged to explore new ways to deliver "intrusive" advising based upon emerging literature on student retention. Administrative and program support personnel were asked to identify new ways to provide services that were more cost effective to ostensibly free up and redirect financial resources to new initiatives. The retreat program was structured in such a way that it involved participants in small-group discussions by academic divisions and by employment categories. These groups were charged with creating a list of goals and outcomes that could be implemented over

a 3-year period. We believed that any plan longer than 3 years without measurable outcomes would invite further scrutiny and possible intervention by the administration.

Changes to Curriculum and Advising in the General College

The most important outcome of the college-wide planning process in 1989 was the General College Curriculum Committee's recommendation for adoption of *A Guiding Document for Continuing the Revision and Development of the General College Curriculum*. An operational definition of curriculum was presented within a context that described the mission, philosophy, and goals of the college. The guiding document presented a structural model for the curriculum: four areas that comprised the curriculum (i.e., academic skills, content knowledge, multicultural perspectives, and academic acculturation) and four characteristics of courses that would be offered (general courses, base curriculum courses, transition curriculum courses, and skills courses.)

Central to the success of this model was the concept of the "base curriculum" first introduced in a document called *A Base Curriculum for Students Entering General College* approved by the General College Assembly in May 1988 (General College Assembly Meeting minutes, personal communication, May 9, 1988). The concept behind the base curriculum was an attempt to improve "the retention of students by developing a supportive but intensive learning environment during their first two quarters in the college" (Curriculum Committee, 1990, p. 13). This was accomplished by restricting course selection, implementing an intrusive advising system, and imbedding in each course academic skills development (e.g., reading, writing, oral communication, and computer literacy) as well as Supplemental Instruction with active learning and critical-thinking pedagogy.

A second set of courses, the transition curriculum, was intended to meet the needs of students engaged in the college beyond two quarters. These courses placed greater emphasis upon content objectives rather than skill building, and a higher degree of student autonomy was expected (Curriculum Committee, 1990). These two focal points of the new curriculum were designed to take students from the point of admission through to the point of transfer to a degree-granting college of the University. According to the curriculum planners,

As students move through the curriculum they will go from an environment characterized by intensive, content-related skills development, a high level of institutional support and low student autonomy, to one characterized by more traditional coursework, lower institutional support and expectation of greater student autonomy. (Curriculum Committee, 1990, p. 14)

The proposed revision of the curriculum identified three other areas of probable concern. The first suggested that the General College recruit students who were better prepared to meet the rigors of the new curriculum. Second, the curriculum should be formally reviewed every 5 years, and third, an assessment of student learning outcomes should be undertaken periodically (Curriculum Committee, 1990).

Administrative Restructuring

With the last elements of the revised curriculum in place, I was able to report in a presentation to the Board of Regents in January 1991 that the college had achieved all of its goals articulated in the *Strategy for Focus* document. However, implementing the new curriculum proved to be a challenge. Between 1991 and 1993 the college was projected to lose approximately \$1 million in recurring allocations. It became apparent that a reallocation within the college budget was necessary if planning objectives were to be realized. Although not identified as a planning goal under *Strategy for Focus*, a reorganization of the college's administration was necessary for two reasons: the organizational structure needed to be brought into line with the new curriculum, and the old structure appeared to be antithetical to achieving new mission-related student outcomes. A new administrative plan was proposed in April 1992 and completed by September of that year. During the academic years 1992–1993 and 1993–1994, the General College continued to refine goals and objectives consistent with student outcomes anticipated by the changes in curriculum (F. Amram, personal communication, January 31, 1992). Preliminary studies conducted by the General College Office of Research and Evaluation detected perceptible and positive changes in retention rates.

University 2000

In January of 1989 Nils Hasselmo became the 11th President of the University of Minnesota. Two years into his administration he proposed another strategic planning process. In a manner consistent with *Commitment to Focus*, the previous planning initiative, the intent was to articulate a clear vision for the University and to redirect resource allocation based upon goals and priorities. In January 1993, a "Plan for Planning" was presented to the Regents, and 1 year later on January 14, 1994, the Regents gave their approval to 5 out of 18 critical measures and benchmarks for measuring institutional, campus, and unit performance. The plan became known as *University 2000* (University of Minnesota, 1993).

Critical Measures

The first five critical measures related to students: (a) Characteristics of Entering Students by Campus, (b) Graduation Rate by Campus, (c) Underrepresented Groups/Diversity, (d) Sponsored Funding by Campus, and (e) Investment per Student by Campus. The Board of Regents' resolution was very specific with respect to the first three critical measures. Under "Characteristics of Entering Students," 80% of the entering class by 2000 would be from the upper 25% of their graduating class, with a mean high school rank for entering freshmen at the 77th percentile. Students in the General College were exempted. With respect to "Graduation Rate," the institutional performance goal was for 50% of freshmen who matriculated at the University in 1996 to graduate in 5 years. The General College was not exempted. As the plan related to "Underrepresented Groups/Diversity," 33% of students of color in the 1996 cohort of freshman students would be expected to graduate in 5 years by 1996. The General College students were included. The Regents affirmed a plan that would raise the number of students of color in the incoming freshman class of 2000 to 16% of that class. The General College was not exempted (The Board of Regents, 1994). It was plain to see that without the General College, the University could not reach its diversity goal. It was also obvious that all academic units, including the General College, were being challenged to improve graduation rates.

It was not lost upon the leadership of the General College that the well-intended resolution of the Board of Regents was an explicit challenge to the concept of "developmental education" at a premier research institution. Conventional wisdom and data supported the fact that better academically prepared students persisted longer, generally had better grades, and graduated in larger numbers. In other words, it was assumed that better input yielded better output. In an effort to boost the University's ranking with regard to the caliber of students who attended, the weak link was students admitted to the General College, and students of color in particular. The stage was set for another confrontation over the General College mission within the context of a research university, under the guise of controlled access.

The General College's Response

On February 15, 1994, the General College submitted its response to the University 2000 Strategic Plan. In that plan it described itself as an academic unit whose instructional model was predicated upon proven teaching methods to enhance learning mastery (i.e., developmental education) and academic advising based upon principles articulated by Vincent Tinto (1993) and popularized by Lee Noel and Randi Levitz (1995; Noel, Levitz, & Saluri, 1985). The

document reminded administrators that approximately 25% of the University's students of color entered through the General College and that

The General College is one of a few resources that the University has to address the growing disparity between this class of underprivileged citizens and an educational elite in Minnesota. It is one of the few colleges that has genuinely embraced multi-cultural education and cultural diversity as integral parts of its pedagogy. It is one of the few places on campus where a wider array of student services is available for disadvantaged students. (General College, 1994, pp. 1, 5)

The document offered a definition of developmental education as an "intervention strategy designed to increase the likelihood of retention and graduation of students defined to be at risk." (p. 1) The document concluded by stating:

For purposes of planning, it is assumed that for the foreseeable future the General College will remain a college within the University, with the responsibility of providing a "developmental education" experience for a student population yet to be defined. However, the size, shape, function, and outcome of the program are subject to negotiation and adaptation consistent with the vision and strategic direction that the University wishes to take The college remains open to discussion about implementation of alternative interventions and pedagogies if they are based upon accepted research models. (The General College, 1994, p. 9)

The remainder of the document responded to other University 2000 strategic directions.

The General College plan was well received by Vice President Anne H. Hopkins and President Hasselmo. In his private correspondence with Dr. Hopkins, President Hasselmo, initially a strong supporter of the General College, expressed concerns about appropriate access for disadvantaged students, the quality of the General College experience, issues surrounding student transfer into the College of Liberal Arts, and whether the College could meet Regents' expectations constrained by current resources and perhaps diminished resources in the future (D. V. Taylor, personal communication, May 5, 1994; A. H. Hopkins, personal communication, May 9, 1994; N. Hasselmo, personal communication, May 16, 1994).

Another Threat to the General College's Existence

One of the most visible changes occasioned by University 2000 was the reorganization of central administration in the fall of 1994. A provost system was adopted as a more efficient means to manage deans who formerly reported to a number of vice presidents. Former vice presidents were told that their con-

tracts were not being renewed, but they could compete for three provost positions. Vice President for Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, Anne Hopkins, chose not to compete and vacated her position. After a lengthy search W. Phillip Shively, a former chair of the Political Science Department, was appointed Provost for Arts, Sciences, and Engineering in April 1995. According to Tim Sheldon (2004), who interviewed Shively for his dissertation,

Shively was active and visible on campus as well as at the State Capitol. A political scientist by discipline, Shively had served as lobbyist, department chair and committee member on the Campbell Committee—the committee that created the report, *Plan for Focus*. Shively, along with Ellen Berscheid, also co-chaired the committee that produced *Commitment to Focus: Academic Priorities*. He was a consummate University insider familiar with both *Commitment to Focus* and the politics of the University. (p. 149)

Early in his administration, Provost Shively had determined that the continued existence of the General College was antithetical to the success of University 2000 as expressed in the January 14, 1994, resolution of the Board of Regents. Although ostensibly praising the General College for the symbolic role that it played in fostering student diversity at the University and its success in reorganizing its curriculum under *Commitment to Focus*, the provost, with the approval of President Hasselmo, began to plan the college's demise almost immediately after assuming office. He and President Hasselmo were determined to achieve what former President Keller had failed to do—close the college.

The pretext for closure was the presentation of data suggesting that the cost of instruction in the General College (i.e., “remedial education”) was prohibitively expensive, student retention and graduation rates were uncharacteristically low, and underprepared students were better served by the state community college system. Additionally he contended that students of color were not being well served, contrary to the perspective of the General College (Sheldon, 2004). Without proper consultation with the Board of Regents, the leadership of the General College, or internal and external constituencies of the University, the provost and president called a press conference on March 26, 1996, to announce their intention to seek approval from the Regents to phase out the General College by 1999.

In the 3 weeks that followed, the manner in which this decision was reached created great division among University faculty, staff, and students. It was the subject of newspaper editorials and TV news commentaries. The entire metropolitan Twin Cities area was divided over the proposal. Sensing a public relations debacle and not wishing to further jeopardize the image of the University, the Board of Regents on April 12, 1996, by a vote of 11 to 1, instructed the

president not to pursue a plan to close the college (Board of Regents, 1996).

They requested that a study be engaged that reviewed the status of “at-risk” students at the University and that, on an annual basis for the foreseeable future, the General College submit to the Regents an update of its strategic plan and measurable outcomes (Sheldon, 2004). Within 15 months after the Regents’ decision, the president retired, and the provost returned to the ranks of the faculty when the new president, Mark Yudof, was appointed. In a twist of irony, during his interview with the presidential search committee, candidate Yudof expressed his interest in the General College and stated that one of the enticements for seeking the position of president was the student diversity at the University of Minnesota and a nationally recognized program like the General College, a fact that he also alluded to in his inaugural speech.

A Turning Point

The struggle to maintain the college was an important turning point in its long history. The college’s carefully crafted curriculum and academic support and advising programs were beginning to yield improved results. The data that the administration used to justify closure reflected problems with the old mission, not the new. At the close of the 20th century, all indicators of program impact upon students were markedly improving: freshman-to-sophomore retention, transfer rates, and persistence to graduation.

Increased national recognition for the General College program occurred in the year 2000, when the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) and the Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) presented the college with its award for Innovative Performance in the area of Best Practice in Developmental Education. A team of several persons spent two days on campus reviewing the college and its programs. In March 2001, the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) presented the college with the John Champaign Memorial Award for the Outstanding Developmental Education Program. Dean David V. Taylor received from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) a Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Leadership in May 2001. In July 2001 Noel-Levitz presented the college with its annual Retention Excellence Award.

The Current Challenge to the Future of the General College

During the summer of 2005 Robert Bruininks, the 14th President of the University of Minnesota, launched a “strategic positioning” initiative. The intent was to position the University of Minnesota as one of the three best public research institutions in the world. To accomplish this, a structural reorgani-

zation of the University to enhance institutional effectiveness and efficiency was deemed necessary. Two task forces composed of administrators and faculty were created—one to explore reorganization of administrative services and the other to reorganize academic units. The task forces met during fall semester of 2004 and delivered their reports to the President in April of 2005.

The Academic Task Force proposed 31 changes. The most contentious of the proposed changes was the transformation of the General College from a free-standing college to departmental status under a new College of Education and Human Development. The new Department of General Developmental Education would not admit students. Although praising the college for nationally recognized research in the discipline of developmental education, the administration resurrected past arguments concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of the college's academic program and added a new concern about General College students being segregated from the mainstream of campus life. As in the past, the General College's administrative team was never invited to discuss these concerns during the task force deliberations, and the dean was apprised of the recommendations just 24 hours before a scheduled press release to announce the release of the Strategic Positioning Proposal.

The debate that ensued went to the heart of long-standing and troubling issues for the University community—access or excellence, diversity or elitism. It has been the position of the General College that issues of access, excellence, and diversity are compatible within the framework of a world-class research institution. An excellent academic institution should be accessible to first-generation, low-income, underprepared students. Often these students come from families of underrepresented groups, people of color, immigrant groups, and students from rural school districts. However, underprepared students can also come from families with incomes exceeding \$100,000 per year. These students have and continue to be successful at the University of Minnesota.

The University of Minnesota administration contended that in order to appear competitive in the *U.S. News and World Report* listing of top research institutions, the profile of the University's student body as measured by SAT and ACT scores of incoming classes needed a boost. The administration would require that students normally admitted through the General College would instead be denied admission and encouraged to attend community colleges first and transfer to the University later. Annually the General College has admitted 825 to 875 students of an incoming freshman class that exceeds 5,000.

On June 10, 2005, the Board of Regents voted on the administration's proposal to close the college and make it a department. The outcome reflected

a significant change to the college's future, one that would take the college into its next phase and lead the college's students, faculty, and staff into another, more uncertain period of transition. Dean David Taylor, who led the college's fight to remain open, also announced his acceptance of a new position as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Morehouse College.

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