

2020

Open Doors and Closed Communities: Creating Community Colleges in White Flight towns

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ABSTRACT

OPEN DOORS AND CLOSED COMMUNITIES: CREATING COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN WHITE-FLIGHT TOWNS

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Northern Illinois University, 2020
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The College of DuPage (CoD), in suburban DuPage County, Illinois, and Johnson County Community College (JCCC), in suburban Johnson County, Kansas, offer an interesting lens through which to examine topics of institutional history and culture, community relationships, and the leadership decisions of first presidents and their boards. The histories of CoD and JCCC, founded in restricted-residency, affluent, and rapidly expanding suburbs in the 1960s, also provide telling examples of campus/community interactions around the question of who could be a part of the community – and therefore the campus. Finally, comparing these two campuses affords readers a useful glimpse at 1960s-era protests in the community colleges, describes how campus unrest occurred, and examines its management on nonresidential campuses.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
DEKALB, ILLINOIS

MAY 2020

OPEN DOORS AND CLOSED COMMUNITIES:
CREATING COMMUNITY COLLEGES
IN WHITE-FLIGHT TOWNS

BY

KRISTY WITTMAN HOWELL
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Doctoral Director:
Bradley G. Bond

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scores of individuals and several institutions made possible the work following; I am honored to have the opportunity here to recognize gratefully their support.

For their expertise and boundless enthusiasm concerning resources in their care, I thank archivists and librarians Anita Gordon-Gilmore, John Russell, Barry Bailey, and Jan Brooks in the Billington Library; Natalie Alleman-Byers in the Institutional Research Office; and Caitlyn Murphy in the President's Office at Johnson County Community College. Also in Kansas, this project would look very different without the local newspapers and oral histories in the collections at the Johnson County Public Library Central Resource Branch and the Johnson County Museum and the support of staff who maintain them. My time at the College of DuPage was made utterly joyful by the expertise, collegiality, and friendship of archivist, artist, and coffee partner Jenny Dunbar. CoD historian Ben Whisenhunt graciously granted access to interview notes for his 2006 institutional history. Joey Feinstein and Kendyl McDougald both came through with surprisingly useful resources at the last minute.

Long before the formal proposal, JCCC colleagues Drs. Tai Edwards, Farrell Hoy Jenab, and Andrea Vieux offered moral support and their considerable knowledge on Johnson County and Kansas politics and history, while colleagues Melisa Jimenez and Brittany Martin kept me focused on why I wanted to tell this story in the first place. Each provided frank and generous feedback on ideas and drafts, all of which were improved by their expertise. Dr. Barbara Larson

could not have known a lunch date and conversation would coincide with my hearing about the Community College Leadership Program at NIU, but her unflagging support in the two years prior to her retirement made coursework far more enjoyable. My colleagues and students in the Center for Sustainability and those I advise on the Student Sustainability Committee tolerated my musings on community and campus history as part of our institutional commitment to sustainability, extended research trips, and a great deal of distraction with grace and good humor. Their support, and the backing of our executive director, Dr. Jay Antle, enabled my completion of coursework and the dissertation, as did JCCC's tuition reimbursement program.

At Northern Illinois University, my cohort have proven themselves invaluable cheerleaders throughout our time together. Thank you for putting up with the historian and sustainability person in your midst and for teaching me so much during the past three years. My College of Education committee members, Drs. Katy Jaekel and Carrie Kortegast, shepherded me through a fascinating, rewarding, and scary step into the void and have, without a doubt, made me a better student, teacher, and mentor. Funding at NIU from the Wesley I. Schmidt Memorial Scholarship lessened considerable financial exigencies.

None of this degree – from application to graduation – would have happened without my friend and mentor Bradley Bond's encouragement. As a 20-year-old undergrad in Brad's historical research methods class at the University of Southern Mississippi, I could never have guessed that two decades and four states later, I would still have the unalloyed joy of learning from and working with him. Brad's willingness to take me on as a student despite his decanal duties speaks volumes to his commitment to his craft and his unfailing generosity. Thank you for recruiting me into the program, for helping me find a way to still be a historian in this new chapter of my life, for talking me off the cliff of despair more times than I can count, and for

being the scholar and administrator on whom I have daily modeled myself for years. I count myself infinitely lucky to know you and to have had the pleasure of both your wise counsel and your bad jokes for all this time.

Personal debts abound. Much of my writing took place at coffee shops and hotels around the Kansas City metro: Crossroads Hotel, Café Corazon, Mud Pie Bakery and Coffeehouse, and Black Dog Coffeehouse all put up with me taking over tables and writing for hours. Fond KC fueled me – probably one of the few Mississippians at their tables – with cheesy grits in addition to caffeine. Trish and the staff at Yarn Social gave me something comforting to do with my hands when I needed to slow down and think, and the staff at Lenexa Public Library were patient every time I misplaced my keys or water bottle in their space.

Kristin Bailey Wilson and Yvette Eastham encouraged me to return to higher education after I was sure I had left it forever. Amanda Sauermann read drafts and offered her wise, witty counsel. Jason Arnett, Kara Armstrong, and Krystal Anton graciously listened to my ramblings as I talked through scores of ideas and archival discoveries and somehow managed to turn any conversation into one about the dissertation.

Finally, my family: Though my father did not live to see this moment, his community college career is woven through my own and through the pages following. My mother, Rebecca Myrick Wittman, supported and encouraged me during many long, frustrated phone calls and kindly tolerated my absence from too many family gatherings. My uncle, Dr. John Myrick, offered the valuable advice of a lifelong educational administrator and always gave me hope that not only would the stress of working full time and writing end *soon* – it would end *well*. My husband, Thomas, has lived with every keystroke of this dissertation and cheerfully managed my three years of deskbound seclusion. I would not have made it without him.

DEDICATION

To the memory of my father, James David Wittman

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INTRODUCTION

As low-tuition, local, open-access institutions, no single educational development of the 1960s better embodies the goals of the American civil rights movement than the community college. During their boom years, community colleges blossomed across the country, following the needs of a rapidly growing and moving population. Initially established under the administration of district school boards, early junior colleges often functioned as the fifth and sixth years of high schools, sharing campuses and faculty.¹ Campuses of the 1960s differentiated themselves from older institutions through the addition of more robust transfer opportunities, expanded business and occupational training informed by regional employers, and expanded community enrichment opportunities. Community colleges as established during and after the 1960s shoulder a vast burden: to prepare virtually any student with a high school credential to realize their professional and academic goals; to provide job training as requested by corporate partners; and to offer lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities to children and retirees. Subsequently, community colleges enroll most United States undergraduates, bringing underprepared students up to standard, offering advanced work for honors students, and providing on-the-job training and tutoring support, all in a variety of modes for students who work while studying. Community colleges, then, by virtue of their names and their work, are tied

¹ Edmund J. Gleazer, "Evolution of Junior Colleges into Community Colleges," in *A Handbook on the Community College in America*, ed. George A. Baker (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 17-26.

to their communities. Operating without student residential spaces, as most do, ties campuses even more closely to the communities they serve.

This dissertation examines the establishment of two 1960s-era midwestern campuses and their relationships to the communities they served. The campuses, each of which still notes the other as a peer institution even five decades after their founding, grew out of the second wave of community college development during the 1960s and followed the era's comprehensive community college model. The first part of the dissertation examines the historiography of community colleges and offers historical context for the case studies following. It illustrates historiographic lacunae where the community college should fit and teases out parts of the institutional histories into a useful narrative for current community college practitioners. JCCC and CoD, despite remarkable similarities both at their founding and today, took very different paths in creating campus cultures. Their differences stem both from institutional decisions – hiring practices of their first trustees – and from their communities' mindsets.

The second part of the dissertation, a case study of the founding of Johnson County Community College, examines the institution's establishment as a safe-haven for area students in the context of nearby riots and campus unrest and the racially exclusionary housing practices in the surrounding community. Johnson County grew at a remarkable rate during the 1960s, but its commitment to creating a closed society began long before. The JCCC case study, then, offers a brief overview of the mechanisms of racial exclusion in Johnson County and describes at length the community drivers that produced a campus-in-a-bubble enclosed in a tightly controlled suburban bubble of its own.

Finally, the third chapter examines the establishment of the College of DuPage, with an investigation of the area's open housing protests and the employer-based actions that began to

unravel mechanisms keeping area housing closed. Taxpayer demands for an institution to accommodate rapidly growing enrollment trends left an adventurous college president feeling constrained by the prevailing opinions of his campus and community. CoD exemplified the comprehensive community college model and became one of the best respected institutions of its kind in the country, all while taking advantage of its community supports for more diverse student, faculty, and staff populations.

Taken together, the paired case studies and their supporting historical literature attempt to answer two questions about the methods by which 1960s-era community colleges were established. First, how did community college promoters seek to create open-access institutions in communities that explicitly excluded people of color? At Johnson County Community College, promoters simply ignored their community's legacy of racial exclusion as they developed their campus feasibility studies and foundational documents. The Overland Park community explicitly sought a campus to keep their children close to home and separate from the protests in Kansas City and Lawrence, and institutional promoters did little to challenge their community members' intentions. Despite the formal support of an expert witness in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case, who participated in early committee work and was elected to the first board of trustees, JCCC missed many opportunities to play a role in dismantling racist policies that formed their community and instead chose to embrace a protectionist mindset. The College of DuPage benefitted from federal and corporate development that – to some degree – defused local agitation around housing concerns, even with the Chicago Movement and civil rights protests at neighboring campuses. Although the largest federally backed employer in the area, Fermilab in Weston, secured its funding without a statewide open housing policy in place, several towns in the College of DuPage service area passed their own open housing ordinances

and created local committees focused on housing equity even as they failed to develop human rights commissions. CoD's attempts at progressive programming, both successful and unsuccessful, were mirrored by developments in the surrounding community.

Second, how did institutional promoters in Johnson and DuPage counties describe their motivations to create campuses? The threat of radicalization, ever present in the Chicago and Kansas City regions, loomed ominously over parents and institutional promoters alike. Protectionist rhetoric, though, was less prevalent in Illinois than Kansas. CoD advocates based their campus promotion in the difficulties faced by students as they tried to enroll in universities and the rapidly increasing costs of enrollment. A local campus, capable of keeping students at home for their first two years, would solve the challenges of demand and cost far more effectively than increasing enrollment capacity at institutions. The protectionist narrative truly came into its own at JCCC, where community members and advocates alike pressed for a campus safe from urban radicals in Kansas City and campus radicals at the University of Kansas. Both institutions showed their motivations in campus-produced promotional materials and coverage by the community press, though their goals are clearest in internal communications. Whether driven by protection or population, both campuses navigated the disparate demands inherent in establishing a comprehensive community college.

Serving many masters – occupational, transfer, remedial, and community education – all under the administration of a board of trustees and with robust advisory boards, yields an attitude of reinvention and an inclination to, as their detractors might scoff, be all things to all people. Practitioners, however, call the broad mission of contemporary campuses the “comprehensive community college.” Presidents and promoters alike at CoD and JCCC noted, with a touch of asperity, that the campuses they sought to create and ultimately led were junior to none and,

when considering names for their own campuses, jettisoned the “junior” designation included in the legislation creating them. Naming conventions were hardly the last – or the most obvious – way that community colleges established during the boom years set themselves apart from each other and the university structures near which they operated. As it sought community support, both in the form of votes on various referenda and financially in the form of several bond issues, JCCC even described itself in popular advertisements as separate from history. “Yes, we have no traditions,” read promotional materials the campus deployed to recruit new employees, even as some new hires acknowledged a sense that their shared military service backgrounds with the president made them stronger candidates. At the College of DuPage, too, institutional promotions reflected a campus ethos: this time of exploration. “Learning is the greatest adventure,” the tagline at the College of DuPage, became part of campus lore and the campus seal, as the Illinois campus tried, failed, then succeeded at several attempts to reinvent the community college. Throughout both case studies, the efforts campus leaders undertook to remake themselves and their campuses thread as their own sort of tradition. Such efforts are also common across the sector and contribute to its infrequent inclusion in histories of higher education.

For decades, higher education historians have failed to adequately examine community colleges as part of the postsecondary system. Omitting the community college from the historical tradition including universities yields an uneven portrait of the campuses themselves and of the higher education system. It also means historians miss a considerable part of the narrative examining the ways American communities experienced the 1960s. By diversifying the sources used to examine community colleges, we can better understand the ways communities

themselves responded to increasingly diverse populations, anti-war and civil rights protest, jobs training, anti-intellectualism, and concerns about academic rigor.

Community colleges are the most diverse and representative higher education opportunities available to most students. By omitting them from our higher education histories, we miss the majority of United States undergraduates, historically underrepresented minority students, and teaching faculty. We fail to examine these stories for many reasons: poor records maintenance by the campuses themselves, confusion about where the community college fits in the educational continuum, and dismissing the community college as merely a stop on the way to a completed undergraduate credential.² As we examine community college histories, it is essential to do so through a range of sources in order to provide balance for poorly maintained institutional archives. Through examination of broad and varied sources, we can fill in some of the blanks left by lackluster archival holdings while also illuminating community relationships to institutions during their development. Finally, it is important to understand the community college as an entity in its own right. Certainly, campuses have through the years been tied either to primary education administration or university requirements. They have also operated under administration by disciplinary and regional accreditors. No one would argue disciplinary oversight limits community colleges' ability to be seen fully as a member of the higher education world, so perhaps historians should question why their administrative pasts under school board administration means they are dismissed as legitimate members of the higher education community.

² Philo A. Hutcheson, "Reconsidering the Community College," *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no.3 (1999): 309.

Studies such as the ones following serve a compelling disciplinary interest for practitioners. Community colleges of the 1960s grew out of many conflicts familiar to 21st-century readers: civil rights and anti-war protests, disagreements on the value and role of higher education in American society, and concerns about resource availability in the face of population growth. Institutions which successfully navigated their 1960s-era challenges may offer useful lessons to contemporary practitioners, to avoid conflating access with inclusion, to not presume students' lack of successful enrollment stems from lack of interest or ability as much as it does not seeing themselves as welcome and represented in a campus community, and to concern ourselves always with questions of resource management and allocation. These studies focus unapologetically on the experiences of leaders who advocated for and created their community institutions because the historical record contains more of their stories than the students they served. By also examining the ideas and motivations underpinning institutional development, they seek to even out the historical record by affording readers a glimpse of the world beyond the community college's boundaries.

CHAPTER ONE

COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A HISTORY OF REINVENTION

Community colleges are worthy subjects of study for many reasons, not least due to their status as enrolling institutions for a majority of American undergraduates. As a group, in practice as well as by their names, community colleges foster strong relationships with their surrounding neighborhoods. Historically, they have fostered these relationships in a variety of ways: through community-wide offerings in the arts, with curriculum advisory boards staffed by business and industry representatives, via lower than university tuition costs, and as a byproduct of their nonresidential campuses. This last factor brings much to bear in any comparison of Johnson County Community College and the College of DuPage, as each campus developed an institutional culture based at least in part on the ideas of who could be a part of their institutions and the normative functions they played for their broader communities.

The relationship between campus and community has long been the focus of town-and-gown discussions for universities but is less prevalent in historical research on the community college. In a 2003 panel discussing the state of the field, Paul Mattingly moderated a conversation with four historians of education, subsequently published in the *History of Education Quarterly*. Robert Church, author of the “canonical” synthesis *Education in the United States* and a “breakthrough” work on professionalization in the field of economics at Harvard University, contributed much to the conversation regarding historians’ neglect of community colleges and their omission of colleges’ relationships with their communities in the

studies we do have.¹ Church cited community colleges as one of the institutions “whose stories we need to incorporate into the mosaic that is the development of higher education” and went on to encourage evaluation specifically of the ways community college promoters “went about gathering support – from religious or ethnic groups, from civic leaders, from labor or politicians, and from the businesses for which they were preparing graduates.”²

Despite their unique status, community colleges rarely figure into broader histories of American higher education. So-called standard histories of the field point to a variety of reasons, from their shifting status to their wide range of offerings, as contributing to the institution’s complicated nature. Thomas Diener, in his 1986 documentary history of the community college movement, described the conflicts:

One reason the junior college in the United States has been difficult to understand is that it has taken on so many forms of sponsorship and control. Is the junior college a high school and part of secondary education? Is it collegiate and a part of higher education? Is it a unique educational enterprise standing apart from both of these worlds yet, at the same time, able to link them in new and constructive ways? Answers, at times cool and rational, at times rendered with some passion, have been offered in the affirmative to all three of these questions. While debates over definition and organizational form have waxed and waned, ... a core of functions began to emerge, a core which, in the main, helped determine the essence of a junior college.³

Even now, as *Growth of an American Invention: A Documentary History of the Junior and Community College Movement* has passed its thirtieth anniversary, Diener’s questions and Church’s recommendations linger, unfulfilled.

¹ Church’s biography and commentary on his work is in footnote 4, Paul H. Mattingly et al., “Renegotiating the Historical Narrative: The Case of American Higher Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2004):586.

² “Renegotiating the Historical Narrative,” 577.

³ Thomas Diener, *Growth of an American Invention: A Documentary History of the Junior and Community College Movement* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 7.

A handful of articles and dissertations and one book-length treatment in the past thirty years have examined broadly the roles of community colleges within the history of higher education landscape. Historians who attempt to navigate Diener's complexities and contextualize community colleges as Church encourages face further complications. Community colleges' ever-expanding, shifting tasks, adding workforce training, lifelong learning, and other community-focused offerings, complicate their missions and community relationships. Even after clearing a path through institutional missions and relationships, historians must contend with limited archival and primary sources and the vast publication of uncritical promotional literature masked as historical scholarship by the American Association of Junior Colleges (now the American Association of Community Colleges). And yet, community colleges continue to enroll more undergraduates than their university peers, recruit more diverse student populations in an increasingly diverse country, and exert profound effects on higher education policy.⁴

Unsurprisingly, despite the institution's unique position as an "American invention,"⁵ with a half-century's fluctuation of definitions, limited primary source materials, and layers of boosterism masquerading as more reliable documentation, there are few comprehensive, critical histories of higher education including the community college. In many standard historical surveys of American education, authors solve the community college problem through avoidance. When the *Chronicle of Higher Education* published its 2015 biographical essay of

⁴ Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (Washington, DC: US Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1993), 103.

⁵ Charles Dorn, "To Meet the Training and Retraining Needs of Established Business': Community Colleges in the Northeast and Southwest," in *For the Common Good: A New History of Higher Education in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), 200-225.

Lawrence R. Veysey and touted *The Emergence of the American University* as the “greatest book about American higher ed,” the title it celebrated was published in 1969 and relegated community colleges to a single footnote explaining they are not *really* part of higher education at all.⁶ Others make sidelong glances. Thelin’s 2004 *A History of American Higher Education*, another standard text in the field, situates community colleges’ development in an economic context with citations on fewer than 20 pages out of 400.⁷ The author centers university leaders’ voices within the narrative devoted to community colleges, even as he laments other researchers’ omission of community college data from their studies. By including university presidents’ work in the 1930s to encourage community colleges to shift from transfer to terminal vocational training and individual university leaders’ advocacy of the California community college system in the 1960s, even in his inclusion, Thelin focuses on universities.⁸ Even a far newer survey of higher education history, Charles Dorn’s 2017 *For the Common Good: A New History of Higher Education in America*, reduces its entire treatment of community colleges to a single-chapter evaluation of two regional institutions within a broader study of the ways the academy contributes to civic engagement in a democratic republic.

In the past thirty years, four book-length treatments have removed the community college from the university’s shadow and examined the history of two-year institutions on their own:

Brint and Karabel’s 1989 *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of*

⁶ Kevin Carey, “Meet the Man Who Wrote the Greatest Book About American Higher Ed,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 29 October 2015.

⁷ John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 206, 249-51, 299-301, 322, 332-45.

⁸ *History of American Higher Education*, 250, 300. For Thelin’s mention of community colleges’ omission in broader examinations of student success in higher education, see p. 332-34.

Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985; Frye's 1992 *The Vision of the Public Junior College, 1900-1940*; Dougherty's 1994 *The Contradictory College: The Conflicting Origins, Impacts, and Futures of the Community College*; and Beach's 2011 *Gateway to Opportunity: A History of the Community College in the United States*. All four works include a general institutional historiography, and each of the four focus, either through a national or an individual state lens, on the contradictory intentions and conflicting motivations of community college promoters. Each fails to offer much in the way of a synthesis, though all suggest the folly of any attempt to simplify individual community motivations. Instead, all ascribe surprising relevance to national voices calling for community college development, even in their occasional examination of state and local advocates.

Brint and Karabel's socio-historical examination of early community college establishment and their closer focus on the California state system is doubtless the best known. After publication, it earned reviews in the *London Times* and *New York Times* and coverage on national news, feeding a decade of commentary, reflection, and refutation. *The Diverted Dream* is nearly two books in one. After an extended overview of community college establishment focused on national voices from within the American Association of Junior Colleges, the authors describe the AAJC's work to establish colleges in California. Throughout the second half, Brint and Karabel argue during the period they call "The Great Transformation," from 1970-1985, and at the behest of national leaders within the AAJC, community colleges shifted their focus from baccalaureate transfer to terminal, career-focused programming. After community college leaders abandoned their original goals of supporting transfer and began vocational training, they assumed a key role Brint and Karabel describe as managing individual students' ambition. Routing students into vocational training therefore diverted students' dreams of gainful

employment in the upper class while reinforcing socio-economic class divisions. Neither individual campus leaders nor students nor local governments pushed for the change in institutional focus, though. Brint and Karabel finger a “vanguard” of leaders within the American Association of Junior Colleges as taking the lead in vocationalizing community colleges, reinforcing class divisions, and creating a captive market of two-year credentials protected from possible university competition.⁹

John H. Frye’s *The Vision of the Public Junior College, 1900-1940*, an examination of early community colleges, followed closely enough in the wake of *Diverted Dream* to merit widespread comparison. Frye countered Brint and Karabel’s focus on AAJC leaders by concentrating on the work of local boosters to develop their own campuses. Frye’s survey of community college promoters shows individuals throughout the nation who sought from the outset to build miniature universities – not trade schools – as centers of learning for their towns bearing the same cachet and meriting the same respect of state universities. These people, more than a national vanguard, shaped what early community colleges became. National “leadership ideology,” in the end, lost out to local demands, thanks to the nation’s decentralized educational system and ineffective professional groups to share information regarding community colleges’ national development.¹⁰

⁹ Steven Brint and Jerome Karabel, *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 17.

¹⁰ John H. Frye, *The Vision of the Public Junior College, 1900-1940: Professional Goals and Popular Aspirations* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 136.

Kevin Dougherty's 1994 *The Contradictory College: The Conflicting Origins, Impacts, and Futures of the Community College* seeks compromise between Brint and Karabel's national influence and Frye's local boosters and – ambitiously – to “resolve the debate between the critics and defenders of the community college”.¹¹ In searching for consensus, Dougherty begins with a re-evaluation of three theories (functionalist, Marxist, and institutionalist) underpinning both his contemporaries' debates and scores of subsequent studies well into the 21st century and then attempts to resolve those conflicts with a phenomenon he calls the “relative autonomy of the state,”¹² wherein state and local governments support corporate goals in interest of “the social value of aiding business.”¹³

Dougherty's reevaluation of the theories underpinning community colleges' establishment inform so much subsequent scholarship, it may be useful to outline them here. Functionalist theory suggests community colleges serve “the fundamental needs of society as a whole.”¹⁴ A diverse collection of institutional advocates represented an equally diverse collection of potential stakeholders, with widely varied motivations. From the beginning, the functionalist theory goes, community colleges operated under complex and contradictory missions of equity, economic segregation, and employment. Marxist theory, which underpins Dorn's chapter on regional community colleges, centers the needs of corporate promoters. Businesses sought

¹¹ Kevin Dougherty, *The Contradictory College: The Conflicting Origins, Impacts, and Futures of the Community College* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 7.

¹² *Contradictory College*, 17.

¹³ *Contradictory College*, 242.

¹⁴ J.M. Beach, *Gateway to Opportunity?: A History of the Community College in the United States* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2011), 48.

publicly funded training to preserve educational divisions among classes. Institutional theory, which informs Beach's history, describes community college founders unfazed by corporate and student pressures. Rather, their motivations arose from competition "for an exclusive clientele"¹⁵ while university advocates sought to drive down their enrollments and preserve the exclusive nature of their degrees. In his efforts to reconcile all three schools of thought, Dougherty's consensus view centers business goals as the most influential priorities for community colleges' early boosters. Business owners, Dougherty's "relative autonomy" theory goes, influenced local and state governments to support community colleges as training centers yielding informed citizens and better workers.

In his *Gateway to Opportunity? A History of the Community College in the United States*, Josh Beach examines the ways complex, overlapping missions challenged community college promoters through time. In his analysis, Beach employs sociological theories of institutionalization to describe community colleges' management of shifting expectations at the federal, state, local, and institutional levels. Beach's study is the only monograph here, and the only monograph in nearly two decades, to offer any robust examination of racial and ethnic minority students' experiences in community colleges. His work, through a useful distillation of 1960s and 1970s community college critics (Brint and Karabel and Clark foremost among them) and their detractors (Dougherty, Cohen, and Brawer), concludes student and faculty voices are the least heard, both in debates over institutional meaning and in institutional histories.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Gateway to Opportunity*, 38.

¹⁶ *Gateway to Opportunity*, 50.

Three unpublished doctoral dissertations help round out the long-form narrative of community college historiography by contributing narrow-but-deep evaluations. Pedersen's 2000 dissertation on local communities' work – not a national vanguard – to establish community college campuses is perhaps the most instructive for future critical scholarship comparing individual campuses' establishment and, as such, offers a useful foundation for the study following. Kenneth Meier's 2008 study of the ways both campuses and national advocacy groups managed shifting missions and obligations is employed widely in subsequent and contemporary studies related to campus and AACC mission statements. Finally, Kathryn Hornsby's 2008 examination of historical enrollment data illuminates the experiences of women's access to higher education via community college enrollment after World War II. Even as they make rich contributions to the field, each of the three dissertations lament primary source availability and the sparse landscape of historical study on the community college, even going so far as to note specific lacunae or outright errors in historical fact regarding the experiences of Black and Hispanic students, faculty, and staff and institutions' meaning for poor and rural communities.

Robert Pedersen's 2000 dissertation, *The Origins and Development of the Early Public Junior College, 1900-1940*, re-evaluates much of Frye's monograph covering the same period, though with a far more critical eye. Pedersen further challenges the "idealist fallacy" which obscures individual community agency in campus development and omits altogether (in one example of many) the inequalitarian realities faced by students attempting to enroll in *de jure* segregated campuses. Pedersen challenges historians of the community college on their historical *bona fides*, their overemphasis of national voices in campus development, dozens of glaring errors in chronology, cherry-picking primary sources, and *post hoc* fallacies. Historical studies of community colleges, Pedersen writes, with their reliance on secondary sources and their

“antipathy [. . .] to other local sources,” fail to “ascertain even the most basic facts about the vast majority of early junior colleges, much less discern the motives and interests of their sponsors.”¹⁷

After a lengthy and enjoyable refutation of early community college history, Pedersen employs a wider scope of primary sources (beyond AAJC periodicals, including local newspapers and archives) to describe many founders across the country - especially in large, urban school districts - doing similar work almost simultaneously. Rather than creating community colleges whole cloth from William Rainey Harper’s work alone, as early histories might have one believe, Pedersen describes community colleges which arose from deliberative, lengthy evolutions on overcrowded high school and university campuses intended to create spaces for the most capable students who could not leave home for postsecondary education.¹⁸

Kenneth Meier’s 2008 dissertation, *The Community College Mission: History and Theory, 1930-2000*, influences both Beach and Dorn and several articles included herein. Meier’s work examines broadly and thoroughly the ways community colleges’ missions developed over time, beginning with early community college proponents in the 1920s through institutions’ shifting and expanding commitments through seven decades of growth. Meier views community college history through a combination of three theoretical frameworks: organizational, institutional, and social movement theories, and describes the challenges community colleges faced in developing their missions over time.¹⁹

¹⁷ Robert Patrick Pedersen, “The Origins and Development of the Early Public Junior College, 1900-1940” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2000): 41.

¹⁸ “Origins and Development,” 9.

¹⁹ Kenneth Meier, “The Community College Mission: History and Theory, 1930-2000” (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2008).

Kathryn Hornsby's 2008 dissertation, *Women in Two-Year Colleges: A Matter of Access*, uses historical enrollment data reported by individual campuses to the *American Junior Colleges Factbook* and disaggregated by gender, along with the broader literature on women's experiences in higher education, to describe how, when, why, and to what end women enrolled in community colleges during and after World War II. Women's motivations to higher education prior to 1945 clashed spectacularly: they faced the expectation to be homemakers caring for children and to contribute to the stateside war effort. After 1945, as G.I. Bill-backed enrollments for returning servicemen soared, women found themselves forced out of university enrollment, while local community colleges, with their more flexible scheduling and shorter duration programming in attractive fields provided a warmer welcome, even as they "stalled" women's enrollment in university.²⁰

Scores of articles published in the past thirty years and evaluated for the present study examine narrower aspects of community college history. Of those, as in the dissertations noted above, nearly half advocate further research into the experiences of minority students, faculty, staff, and administration on community college campuses. Unsurprisingly, the articles included here fall roughly into the same schools of thought as lengthier scholarship – examining colleges' creation, their change over time, and their promoters' foci, with the additional category of pieces used solely to advocate for additional historical study of the community college. Of the latter, two such calls deserve special mention in addition to the source of Robert Church's quotation above. In March of 2000, a Spencer Foundation event brought together historians of education to

²⁰ Kathryn Renee Hornsby, "Women in Two-Year Colleges: A Matter of Access" (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 2008) 2, 40, 84.

“discuss the condition of their field.”²¹ Rubén Donato and Marvin Lazerson collected and contextualized much of the conversation in an article for *Educational Researcher*. In conversation, the gathered historians encouraged future scholars to avoid the current tendency to “thrash around” in debate of Burton Clark’s “cooling out” thesis. Rather, scholarship focused on underserved populations in local communities and institutional relationships within those communities could contribute to policy development related to educational cost and access.²²

The second article, Philo Hutcheson’s “Reconsidering the Community College,” provides a roadmap to community college historiography in two lengthy footnotes and greatly enriched the present study. Beyond Hutcheson’s notes, however, the article itself neatly circumscribes the root problem faced by educational historians with an interest in community colleges: historians’ belief that “the community college does not exist in historical terms. It is not real in higher education; it exists only in K-12 terms.”²³ Hutcheson examines the dearth of archival sources available and suggests historians employ more community-focused and oral history work where appropriate. Finally, with a nod to Peter Novick’s watershed work on historical objectivity, Hutcheson reminds community college scholars to master secondary literature and to resituate the community college narrative as valid and necessary by itself, rather than something subordinate to (or diverted from) the university experience.²⁴

²¹ Rubén Donato and Marvin Lazerson, “New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects,” *Educational Researcher* 29, no. 8 (2000): 4.

²² “New Directions,” 11.

²³ Philo A. Hutcheson, “Reconsidering the Community College,” *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no.3 (1999): 309.

²⁴ “Reconsidering,” 319. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 581.

Article-length treatments of community colleges' histories likewise examine patterns of control – local vs. state vs. national, founders' motivations, how and when missions expanded to include community and lifelong education, and occasionally board control or funding battles. Matthew Delmont's "Working Toward a Working-Class College: The Long Campaign to Build a Community College in Philadelphia," and Kristin Bailey Wilson and Cristi D. Ford's "Moberly Junior College, The Four-Year Junior College," both describe the experiences of two very different communities – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and rural Moberly, Missouri – in lobbying for, creating, maintaining, (and in Moberly's case) shuttering their local campuses. Delmont's article is of interest in the current study because the Community College of Philadelphia's establishment is nearly contemporary to Johnson County Community College's; while Wilson and Ford's study offers a glimpse at the establishment and disillusion of a nearby, rural institution's establishment founded from a similar motivation—prestige.²⁵

Of special note in the current study are closer examinations of local promoters' motivations. Alongside repeated calls for open access, a thread of paternalistic morality runs through much of the scholarship examining community college history. More recent studies, Meier and Beach among the monographs, Pedersen's dissertation, and Hutcheson and Delmont among the article-length treatments, evaluate boosters' moralizing with a critical eye. Most also make the historical connection to progressive-era mores of the earliest colleges' founders. Though initially popularized among business leaders for use in their day-to-day operations,

²⁵ Matthew Delmont, "Working Toward a Working-Class College: The Long Campaign to Build a Community College in Philadelphia," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2014): 430; Kristin Bailey Wilson and Cristi D. Ford, "Moberly Junior College, the Four-Year Junior College," *History of Education* 45, no. 6 (2016): 755.

allusions to executive responsibility as a moral guide bled over into businessmen's calls for community college establishment and persist throughout campus histories included here.²⁶ The moralizing phenomenon is especially true of Johnson County Community College, where regional boosters advocated for the establishment of a campus that would protect residents' children, in the same ways their restricted suburb had, while also serving as a cultural backstop to radicalism in nearby Kansas City, Missouri, and Lawrence, Kansas. A campus in the safe suburbs, so went the notion, would protect teens by keeping them at home a few years longer. With the appropriate training, perhaps a community college with robust occupational offerings could keep teens safe from ever venturing into the urban or radical.

The "community college as social savior" mindset has proven especially durable and is woven throughout (both critically and uncritically) many years of study. In 1933, during the Depression's especially high unemployment, future AAJC president Walter Eells observed, though he could not prove crime rates would decline among 18-year-olds if they were enrolled in junior colleges, "the presumption is strong that the correlation between junior college attendance and arrests for crime is not high."²⁷ By the 1950s, community college advocate Jesse Bogue situated his promotions in the preservation of small-town ideals. "Thus it may be seen," Bogue

²⁶ For early community college supporters' hopes that institutions would act as a pressure valve on lower class, immigrant, and Black designs on university enrollment and upward class mobility, see Leonard V. Koos, *The Junior-College Movement* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1925); Jesse Bogue, *The Community College* (New York: McGraw Hill: 1950); and Edmund Gleazer, "Insistent Demands of Social Forces on the Community College," in *The Community College in the South: Progress and Prospects*, ed. James Wattenbarger and William Godwin (Gainesville, FL: Southern States Work Conference, 1962): 23.

²⁷ Walter Crosby Eells, *Why Junior College Education?: Forty Points of View* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1933), 31-33.

wrote, “the community college performs the function that helps to provide the more abundant life for the whole community.”²⁸ Promoters’ messianic zeal persisted into the 1970s. Edmund Gleazer, who would serve in various AAJC leadership roles for twenty years, described a symbol familiar to any community college practitioner even now: “We have borrowed from John the Revelator a phrase of almost 20 centuries ago, conceived high on the steep slopes of the Island of Patmos: ‘Behold, I have set before thee an open door.’”²⁹ By the 1990s, allusions to campuses as social panacea dimmed only slightly. In a federal report for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Clifford Adelman compared community colleges to “other normative institutions in our society, such as religion and the arts” that “serve us in practical, utilitarian ways.”³⁰ Community college leaders, whether as local boosters or national policymakers, promoted the normative roles of community colleges in American society and their institutions’ ability to serve as a solution to social ills.

Community college histories as stand-alone works regardless of length generally fit into three camps: the more critical, historically sound study, the so-called court history, and the day-by-day institutional histories focusing on campus minutiae. Court histories, such as Bogue’s *The Community College*, are uncritical, vaguely celebratory, and at least in the case of Gleazer and Bogue, nearly messianic. Both the College of DuPage and Johnson County Community College have locally produced internal histories offering richly detailed discussions of campus

²⁸ Bogue, *The Community College*, 70.

²⁹ Edmund Gleazer, “The Community College Issue of the 1970s,” *Educational Record* 5, no. 1 (1970): 50.

³⁰ Both references to the normative values of community colleges come from Clifford Adelman, “The Way We Are: The American Community College as Thermometer,” *Office of Educational Research and Improvement*, 1992, vi, 22.

organization and growth. Broadly critical works, of which Brint and Karabel, Dougherty, Delmont, and Wilson and Ford are useful examples detailed here, describe community colleges as complex, contradictory institutions which either reinforce societal inequities or create unnecessary hurdles to baccalaureate completion. If critical histories do rely on national boosters' propaganda, it is seasoned with a touch of skepticism. However, even within the best, most detailed, critical and historically sound works, vanishingly few examine institutional equity, integration, and racial exclusion within the community college landscape.

Four broad themes emerge in historical treatments of community colleges: the locus of control and direction, whether local, national, or a mix of the two; the complexity of their changing missions over time; their promoters' motivations for community college establishment; and--occasionally--whether community colleges, once established, manage to live up to their goals. Regardless of focus, extant published studies, even those including a historiography, hew closely to a "great man" consensus view of their institutions' establishment, particularly in discussion of their goals to democratize educational access and enrich their surrounding communities, and in the roles played by institutional, community, state, and national leaders.

As peer institutions in 2020, the College of DuPage (CoD) and Johnson County Community College (JCCC) have similar institutional profiles: their student populations, operating revenue, foundation operations, and community programming are all comparable. Faculty and staff at both institutions each note the other as campuses from which they readily borrow policy and procedures ideas. Similar as they are as 21st-century contemporaries, they could have hardly been more similar at their founding. In the 1960s, both institutions opened their doors as campuses considered comprehensive community colleges, behind a broad coalition of leaders and advocates whose work ran well ahead of community and state support. Both

campuses described themselves as vital additions to the educational offerings in their service areas and mounted advertising campaigns highlighting widely varied benefits to their suburban communities. Johnson and DuPage counties, too, share important similarities. At their namesake colleges' establishment, both counties were among the fastest growing and most affluent in the nation, and both retain the latter designation in their region. The case studies that follow detail the creation of two similar institutions in similar situations. However, as DuPage and Johnson counties diverged in their development, so did their colleges.

Understanding a community's growth and development – community history – is critical to understanding fully the way campus cultures develop. Therefore, the current study also rests on an understanding of the ways suburban communities developed during the 1960s, particularly those surrounding Chicago and Kansas City. Both communities chosen for study share the characteristics of broader suburbanization patterns common to cities across the United States.³¹ In the case of Kansas City, early local practices employed by the J.C. Nichols Company presaged later federal policy. J.C. Nichols built Johnson County by developing its neighborhoods, siting its schools, naming its cities, and writing its neighborhood policies; Nichols's mark on the county remains today, both in infrastructure and convention. Nichols also became the leading voice guiding land use patterns that became popular nationally: the restrictive, self-perpetuating homeowner's association covenant and the role of realtor's associations in directing potential buyers or builders away from (or towards) specific neighborhoods based on race, faith, and

³¹ For an introduction to federal housing policy, see Richard Rothstein, preface to *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America*. (New York: Liveright, 2017), vii-xvii.

class.³² In addition to shaping Kansas City-area housing policy as the primary developer and chair of hundreds of homeowner's associations, Nichols's role in creating the Federal Housing Administration, the Urban Land Institute, and the National Association of Homebuilders also meant he exercised considerable influence over federal policy.³³

DuPage County officials enacted similar restrictions. While Johnson County had the nationally recognized Nichols to guide its work, in contrast, DuPage countians couched terms of their exclusive policies in the preservation of property values. They relied primarily on federal supports for home ownership, restrictive homeowner association policies, and realtor practices in selling homes to keep neighborhoods homogeneous.³⁴ Two forces sharply differentiate DuPage County's demographics and ethos from Johnson County's: the nearby Argonne and Bell Laboratories and their demands for more equitable housing availability and several communities' work to effect open housing ordinances or to develop open housing advocacy groups.³⁵

³² On Nichols's role in developing restrictive, self-perpetuating homeowner's association covenants, see J.C. Nichols, 1939, "Restrictions and Homes Associations," Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Kansas City, MO; Sherry Lamb Schirmer, *A City Divided: The Racial Landscape of Kansas City, 1900-1960* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 110. On directing buyers' behavior, see Nichols Company advertisements in the *Kansas City Star* 30 April 1905, 28 May 1905, 4 July 1907.

³³ On Nichols's founding role in groups overseeing federal housing policy, see William S. Worley, *J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City: Innovation in Planned Residential Communities* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 286.

³⁴ Margalynne Armstrong, "Race and Property Values in Entrenched Segregation," *University of Miami Law Review* 52, no. 1 (1998): 1062.

³⁵ On DuPage County's history and status as "technology corridor," see Margarita Alario and William Freudenburg, "The Paradoxes of Modernity: Scientific Advances, Environmental Problems, and Risks to the Social Fabric," *Sociological Forum* 18, no. 2 (June 2003): 205. On open housing ordinances and attempts to end restrictive covenants in DuPage County, see Douglas W. Kmiec, "Exclusionary Zoning and Purposeful Racial Segregation in Housing: Two

The need for deeper examination of community college promoters' underlying motivations and their relationships to the communities they served, based in community and institutional archives, underpins the current study's focus. As lamented by scholars above, the broader history of community colleges' maintenance of their communities' *de facto* social norms, especially those regarding access for the economically disadvantaged and students of color, figures little into recent monographs. Comparing peer institutions adds to the discussion surrounding community college participants' and promoters' motivations and their community relationships while broadening primary sources to include local archives and student-produced media will avoid the uncritical "court history" stigma of other single-institution histories. Finally, the comparative evaluation and situation in the broader national literature of two institutions will contribute to "the dialog between local and national studies" and the "dialog of micro- and macro-analysis" among institutions and national boosters.³⁶

The pair of case studies here fit into the arc of community college historiography through their focus on institutional development within their communities by examining the ways two institutions founded at similar times and in similar communities diverged in their development and by illuminating the community college experience within broader and far more numerous histories of university protest in the 1960s. Limited institutional archives result in studies –

Wrongs Deserving Separate Remedies," *Urban Lawyer* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 393; Ann Durkin Keating, "'Behind the Suburban Curtain': The Campaign for Open Occupancy in Naperville," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 110, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 60.

³⁶ Carl F. Kaestle, "Standards of Evidence in Historical Research: How Do We Know When We Know?" *History of Education Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (1992): 365.

somewhat regrettably – focused on leaders; trustees, superintendents, and presidents fill these pages only because their voices are loudest.

“Executive leaders make a difference in organizations,” a difference rooted in the “president’s understanding of the nature and complexity of the academic enterprise.”³⁷ In their examination of the ways higher education presidencies end, Trachtenberg, Kauvar, and Bogue note how central failing presidents – “derailing” is their term – are to institutional culture, even when the president in question is examined well after the institution opens its doors. Surely, then, the role and legacy of an institution’s first leader is equally important. Taken together, these early histories of JCCC and CoD suggest the long-term importance of early leadership decisions made by first presidents in their creation of a campus culture.

At Johnson County Community College, Robert Harris’s recruitment of employees with shared military backgrounds created a campus comfortable with authoritarian management styles. Early employees with prior military experience note years later they understood they were hired, at least in part, due to a shared past with the president and likened working at JCCC as “coming to Camp Juco,” thanks to the retired military-heavy administration.³⁸ By hiring a recently credentialed president with no higher education administrative, community college leadership, or community college instructional experience to lead so many young, inexperienced faculty, JCCC created a campus without traditions, certainly. Relative inexperience combined

³⁷ Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, Gerald B. Kauvar, and E. Grady Bogue, *Presidencies Derailed: Why University Leaders Fail and How to Prevent It* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 1.

³⁸ John Hanson, “John Hanson,” in *Slide Rules to Biotechnology: A Mostly Oral History and Personal Memoir of the Science Department at Johnson County Community College, Fall 1969-Spring 2008* (Overland Park, KS: Johnson County Community College, 2008), 42.

with rigid administrative hierarchies to yield a campus with less of a commitment to faculty and student agency, expected to move in lock-step with its president, who was in turn expected to follow the board. (Though outside the scope of this study, Harris's flouting of board primacy proved a contributing factor to his resignation.) Well beyond simply reflecting long-standing community demands for a close-to-home, protected educational institution as indicated in institutional feasibility studies, Harris's successful commitment to leading a campus separate and sheltered from political protest reflected his personality and background as much as it embodied the safe-haven ethos of the suburbs.

The College of DuPage Board actively sought presidential applicants with executive experience. While they did not in their posting shun applicants with more business experience than educational in their backgrounds, contemporaneous notes kept by board members, many of whom were also educators, indicate a clear preference for applicants with qualifications in leading a new campus. As president, Rodney Berg brought both executive and campus development experience along with strong relationships to national community college leadership organizations. Many of CoD's first faculty moved to the institution from Lyons Township Junior College, the campus it absorbed, bringing with them considerable teaching experience in the broader community. Students, too, shifted from the old campus to the new with their expectations of a robust newspaper and student government structure in tow. An experienced faculty and administration led to some long-lasting innovations, such as the Oxonian college structure, the rapid development of a robust student newspaper, and early promotion of student leaders' voices to the board of trustees. It also meant Berg tackled some national issues more familiar to the university experience: protest marches, drug use, and radical student groups. Berg's focus as he developed a new campus culture did not waver from the trustees' early goals

of creating more regional higher education enrollment capacity. Within a short time, though, the president's boredom showed in positive and negative ways--positively, in his work to develop robust training relationships with business and industry partners and, negatively, in his interest to serve as board and faculty member at a far-distant institution.

The studies here offer several useful lessons for the contemporary community college leader. First, and most importantly given the community college's habit of reinvention, is to preserve institutional histories. "Neither K-12 nor university," Philo Hutcheson acknowledges, community colleges do not fit neatly into the historiography of higher education. Goodness of fit, though, does not mean community colleges operate *without* institutional histories. Indeed, even when a campus highlights its lack of traditions as in the case of JCCC, community colleges offer more compelling narratives of cultural development *because* of their stronger commitments to their broader communities. Such relationships demand both preservation and critical study. Second is the democratizing force of community colleges in the face of anti-leftist fears. As institutions committed to low tuition rates and the commuter model, community colleges in the 1960s as a whole and these two campuses specifically embodied to a considerable degree the educational aims of the civil rights movement. With their open-access academic structure, breadth of programming, varied scheduling, and close-to-home locations, community colleges stood in the gap as universities turned away students and raised their tuitions. When the parents of college-aged students expressed fears about sending their children off to college in the 1960s, community colleges provided a safe – or at least a safer – option where parents could send their students while still keeping them near home. Culturally, too, for JCCC especially, community colleges acted as an insulative body protecting students from university behaviors Johnson Countians viewed as unsavory and un-American. Anti-university sentiment, or fear of students'

indoctrination on university campuses, colored both CoD's and JCCC's establishment, and the ways both institutions navigated those concerns may offer guidance for the community college's place in combatting a resurgence in contemporary anti-intellectualism.

Community colleges, then as now, offer the first, best hope of access to higher education for the majority of American students. As community college practitioners, we have done ourselves a disservice by avoiding the messy reality lying behind so many of our institutional platitudes. And therein lies the most useful lesson contained in these two case studies: if our campuses are meant to be open and accessible to all, while our communities are not, how can we address our communities' structures to preserve our campus's intent? In the 21st century, surely, we have both better tools and generations of motivation supporting our efforts to make higher education accessible and effective for our students. The question of who belongs in our institutional stories persists. If as practitioners we fail to learn from the lessons of the 1960s and pretend our online courses are available to all when our communities lack high-speed internet access and our students are priced out of our neighborhoods due to skyrocketing rents, then the "open door" is just as closed to our students today as it was to those who could not live in our neighborhoods through more onerous mechanisms 50 years ago.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BUBBLE INSIDE A BUBBLE: JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

As the 2019 academic year began, two community college presidents – one former, one current – sat in comfortable armchairs on a stage in front of a state-of-the-art theatre filled with Johnson County Community College faculty and staff. The moderator, an effusive British transplant from the region’s biggest public radio affiliate and father of a current student, asked the former president to describe one of his most enduring memories from a six-year term that started at the end of the 1960s. Dr. Robert Harris, a 95-year-old ex-Marine officer, leaned back and described the day some fifty years before when he put on his cover, grabbed a hand grenade he had converted into a desk lighter, and stepped out to the front lawn of JCCC’s temporary campus in order to interrupt a nascent peace protest. “I kept my old Marine cover – my cap – in the office on a hat rack then, and I went outside, put it on, and told them they could protest if they wanted, but they couldn’t *do it here*.”¹ In his six years as JCCC’s first president, Harris doubtless had many fond memories worthy of highlighting, but this one, of a president recalling himself single-handedly keeping his campus free from the radicalism searing through nearby Lawrence and Kansas City, illustrates a curious moment in the campus’s past. JCCC’s earliest

¹ Harris, Robert, “Fall All-Staff Meeting,” 14 August 2019, Carlsen Center, Johnson County Community College, MPEG-4, Johnson County Community College Education Technology Office.

history under Harris's administration offers a compelling glimpse into the creation of a nationally recognized and celebrated open-access institution.

Contradictions in Johnson County Community College's founding offer an interesting case study. Established in a county well-known nationally for affluence, the campus sold itself as a more affordable route to higher education. Surrounded by subdivisions covered by faith- and race-restricted covenants, promoters advocating for an open-door institution grappled with whether – and how – to recruit Jewish and Black voices to their cause. Even campus construction reflected a county in flux: sited first across a dozen strip-mall, high school, and other suburban locations, when completed the campus sat on a former dairy farm, its barn and windmill still functional. Although richly larded with contradictions, the campus' ethos on the eve of its founding in 1969 was simple: to provide a more affordable safe haven for Johnson County teens to begin postsecondary education without the risk of campus “unrest, dissention, and disruption.”² The study following seeks to unwind several foundational contradictions at Johnson County Community College, to examine motivations of campus promoters for an open-access campus in a closed community, to understand their – and their students' – discussions of race, class, and campus unrest, and to discover how their creation of a campus culture played out in early campus literature.

Even though they are under-appreciated in histories of higher education, examining community colleges through a historical lens can enrich historians' understanding of the concerns motivating citizens and national education leaders. For campuses founded during the

² Staff and Citizens' Committee, “Educational Needs Survey of Johnson County, 1969,” May, 1969, JCCC History: Campaign to Establish a Community College in Johnson County 1966-1969, Box 4, Folder 1, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS.

boom years of the 1960s, community college histories enrich our knowledge of campus unrest and protest. Unsurprisingly, though, given wildly fluctuating definitions of community college missions, their limited archival resources, and the successful work of national boosters to obscure local efforts, challenges abound. Johnson County Community College is no different. Its campus archives offer considerable holdings from the first citizens' action committee and board of trustees, but very little contemporaneous, personal material from Robert Harris, the first president. Consequently, the work following fills archival blanks with Harris' public comments as recorded in local and regional newspapers and other periodicals and benefits widely from local and regional press coverage of incredible population growth, concern about school overcrowding and multifamily housing, open housing campaigns, and educational politics in the suburbs.

The historiography of higher education offers limited guidance in the examination following, which seeks to address well-documented gaps in the discipline. A moderated discussion at a History of Education annual meeting later transcribed and augmented by moderator Paul Mattingly offers the most trenchant encouragement. "Community colleges," noted historian Robert Church, are the institutions "whose stories we need to incorporate into the mosaic that is the development of higher education," and we most need to understand how promoters "went about gathering support – from religious or ethnic groups, from civic leaders, from labor or politicians, and from the businesses for which they were preparing graduates."³ Similarly, Philo Hutcheson's "Reconsidering the Community College" calls for historians to acknowledge community colleges as valid historical subjects in their own rights, neither subordinate to nor

³ Paul H. Mattingly et al., "Renegotiating the Historical Narrative: The Case of American Higher Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2004):577.

diverted from the university experience. Hutcheson laments the current state of community college histories, as “the community college does not exist in historical terms. It is not real in higher education; it exists only in K-12 terms.”⁴ Church’s and Mattingly’s encouragement inform my motivations to more fully understand the community and institutional histories underpinning Johnson County Community College.

Johnson County Community College (JCCC) is a campus presently serving some 19,000 credit students, 25,000 continuing education students and over 100,000 community visitors per annum. Its unrestricted operating revenue falls in the \$180-200,000,000 range, and its endowment ranks as fifth largest among community colleges nationally.⁵ JCCC’s programming regularly merits international and national recognition, and the campus is noted as one of the region’s best employers.⁶ Located in Overland Park, Kansas, the campus is a little less than half an hour from downtown Kansas City, and about a quarter hour further from the University of Kansas campus in Lawrence. Both residents and students are among the most affluent in the region. For the class of 2013, median family income for JCCC students, \$83,100, placed them in the top 20% of community college students nationally.⁷

⁴ Philo A. Hutcheson, "Reconsidering the Community College." *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (1999): 309.

⁵ National Community College Benchmarking Project, Members’ List, 2019, email message to author, 28 January 2019.; “Which Colleges Have the Largest Endowments,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 31 January 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Which-Colleges-Have-the/245587>.

⁶ Vicki Valet, ed. “America’s Best Employers by State,” *Forbes Media*, 5 June 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/best-employers-by-state/#4b75d93487a6>.

⁷ Gregor Aisch, Larry Buchanan, Amanda Cox and Kevin Quealy. “Some Colleges Have More Students from the Top 1 Percent Than the Bottom 60. Find Yours,” *New York Times*, 18 January

Student demography for JCCC's first thirty years trended largely White, with non-White enrollment only passing 25% in 2000. Since 1972, the first year JCCC opened its permanent campus and only three years after it began offering classes, JCCC's low tuition, the campus' easy accessibility from the larger metro area, and its programming have produced a campus more racially diverse than the county at-large. In the 1970 decennial census, Johnson County was 99% White, and in 1972, the first year that student demographics are mentioned in the institutional archives, JCCC's student population was 97% White.⁸ While community demographics changed slowly from the 1980s to 2000s, JCCC's non-White student enrollment grew at a faster rate, more than tripling in the late 80s, and doubling again in the early 90s before hitting the 25% mark in 2000 and over 30% in 2010.⁹ By contrast, Johnson County's racial makeup in the 2010 census was nearly 90% White.

The creation of Johnson County Community Junior College – the institution thankfully dropped the Junior early on – was approved by the Kansas legislature in 1965. Coordinated, research-backed advocacy, robust community study, correspondence with national special interest groups, and lobbying in Topeka and at home by a motivated group of boosters all began years before legislative action confirmed it, and the College opened its doors in 1969. Johnson County's proposed community college was neither the first in the state, nor even in the Kansas

2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/johnson-county-community-college>.

⁸ Steven Manson et al., IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System, V14.0 (2019), distributed by the University of Minnesota, <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V14.0>.

⁹ Johnson County Community College Office of Institutional Research, Historical enrollment data with student racial demographics, 1969-2000, raw data, provided via email, 23 September 2019; Manson, Schroder, Van Riper, and Ruggles.

City area. Some 16 miles northeast, across the state line in Missouri, Metropolitan Junior College – Kansas City opened its doors in 1919, and just across the county line, Kansas City Kansas Junior College, began operations in 1923. Further afield, a handful of campuses operated across central and western Kansas. As suburban Johnson County’s population grew after World War II, and as community colleges expanded across the nation, some Johnson Countians saw an immediate need for their own campus. A state-backed commission, a regional conference, and a motivated economist and educator all converged within two years’ time to begin the spadework creating a campus.

In 1962, before the state legislature passed legislation allowing new community college creation, and before Johnson countians expressed an interest in creating a campus, the Kansas Board of Regents commissioned a blue-ribbon panel of experts to study higher education and make recommendations on its improvement. Alvin C. Eurich, then director of the Fund for the Advancement of Education and a former president of the State University of New York, led the Commission and gave it his name. Other notable participants included: the College Entrance Examination Board president, Frank H. Bowles; Samuel Gould, president of the Educational Broadcasting Corporation; dean of Harvard’s Graduate School of Education and future federal education commissioner Francis Keppel; the President Emeritus of Barnard College, Millicent McIntosh; Sidney Tickton, an associate in the Fund for the Advancement of Education; and Douglas Whitaker, former provost at Stanford University. In addition to other findings on higher education across the state, the Eurich Commission recommended a broad overhaul of the state’s junior colleges, “most of which are equivalent only to the thirteenth and fourteenth grades in local high schools,” and “colleges in name only.” The Commission provided some guidance on how the reorganization should proceed, and what its focus should be. Many of the current

campuses, it noted, were “too small; some are in the wrong places; all are tied for financing and personnel to boards of education and local governments which are concerned primarily with educating school children rather than college students.” The panel suggested junior colleges be managed by independent, elected, local boards and “operated under the general supervision of the Board of Regents.”¹⁰ Soon after the Eurich Commission disbanded, a regional higher education conference began to address several points in the Commission’s recommendations.

Within a year of the Eurich Commission beginning its work, Patricia James Doyle, education reporter for the *Kansas City Times*, covered a watershed event in the metro. The Midwest Junior College Conference met over three days in June 1963, featuring higher education leaders from across the nation with sessions and keynotes offered for political, educational, and business leaders as well as the general public.¹¹ Voters on the Missouri side of the Kansas City line knew that within the year they would likely find ballot measures on junior college expansion and new taxes to fund expansion on the University of Kansas City campus. Conference organizer Dr. Hugh Speer, faculty member in the College of Education at the University of Kansas City and eventual trustee at Johnson County Community College, provided one of the most important connections between conference attendees and interested parties focused on creating a new community college on the Kansas side of the state line. Speer saw the event as a public training and engagement opportunity in advance of both the hoped-for creation of community college districts in Kansas and subsequent bond measures for development of a new campus in Johnson

¹⁰ “Kansas Plans for the Next Generation,” Box 7, Folder 6, Wichita State University Special Collections, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS.

¹¹ Patricia James Doyle, “Spotlighting Our Schools: Junior College Meeting Here Is Timely,” *Kansas City Times*, 13 June 1963.

County, if approved. Participation from well-regarded experts Joseph Cosand, president of the newly established St. Louis Community College; Francis Keppel, the national education commissioner and former member of the Eurich commission; and Leland Medsker, glowingly introduced by the *Star* as “author of a book considered the bible of junior college education, a leading voice in the study of higher education policy, and the future head of the American Association of Junior Colleges,” meant the conference had no shortage of leading researchers in the community college movement.

Doyle’s article focused, as did many conference presenters, on the need for highly regarded, lower cost, close-to-home educational opportunities in the metropolitan area.¹² A regional feasibility study, begun soon after the Midwest Junior College Conference by a research economist and statewide higher education leader, would expand on anecdotal evidence provided by conference participants, and demonstrate community interest in a college prior to legislative action allowing creation of community college districts. Wilbur Billington, then vice president and senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, past president of the Johnson County School District – District 110 – school board, and president of both the Kansas Junior College Advisory Council and Kansas Association of School Boards, directed the first feasibility study on community college establishment for the county.¹³ In 1963, Johnson County’s Board of Commissioners commissioned the study and Billington, given his background at the Federal

¹² Doyle, “Junior College Meeting.”

¹³ Shawnee Mission League of Women Voters “Voter’s Guide,” September 1967, Early History of JCCC, Box 1, Folder 6, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas. Billington’s biography ran in a Board of Trustees election supplement to area newspapers during the fall of 1967.

Bank and his extensive work for education both in Topeka and in Johnson County, fit their needs for a chairman.¹⁴

Billington conducted the study in his official capacity at the Federal Reserve and carried out much of its work with support from his employees, but its committee included physicians, psychologists, school district leaders and employees, judges, and leaders from local League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women chapters, all Johnson County residents.¹⁵ Members of Billington's staff worked with scores of League and AAUW volunteers to distribute and compile a rich dataset encompassing an impressive 88% of graduates or graduates' families from District 110.¹⁶ Data collection for the study began in 1963, but as it became clear a state bill supporting community college district creation could be in place by 1965, Billington cannily withheld the study's release until 1966 to coincide with the news of state legislative support.¹⁷ Despite Billington's coordination and closely managed time table, his study made no mention of the state-supported Eurich report, though in his leadership capacities in Topeka, he certainly would have been privy to the information. Rather, Billington's "A Community College Study for Johnson County: A Report on the Needs and Feasibility of a

¹⁴ Correspondence from Herman F. Higgins to Dr. Wilbur Billington, 16 July 1963, History Prior to August 1969, Box 1, Folder 4, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

¹⁵ "A Community College Study for Johnson County: A Report on the Need and Feasibility of a County Community College," December 1966, Early History of JCCC, Box 1, Folder 1, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

¹⁶ "Community College Study for Johnson County," p. 25.

¹⁷ "Community College Study for Johnson County," p. ii.

County Community College” reads as an organic reflection of Johnson Countians’ motivations for a college.

Early on, the financial concerns Doyle noted as important to Midwestern community college advocates at the 1963 conference factored least in points raised by Johnson countians.

Institutional promoters, led by economist Billington, focused greatly on them, especially in the context of the fast growing population in the county.¹⁸ The feasibility study committee led its narrative by examining current statewide community college financing structures and how badly they would go wrong if students currently enrolled in middle- and high-school enrolled at community college campuses. Prior to 1965, both Kansas and Missouri community colleges operated under statewide payback arrangements similar to revenue-sharing mandates for K-12 students. Under the arrangement for K-12 and community college enrollees, school districts enrolling students from outside their boundaries received the tax dollars allocated for those students in their home districts. In 1964, Johnson Countians passed their tax dollars for 200 students on to other community colleges in Kansas and Missouri.¹⁹ In the same year, four hundred more freshman and sophomore students attended schools for which Johnson County taxpayers bore no responsibility, but community college advocates saw both the financial costs and student losses as clear indicators of need for a local campus.²⁰ Even more troubling, when local boosters considered the rapidly growing future student pipeline, the inconvenience of a few hundred students lost to neighboring community colleges became a potential cohort of

¹⁸ “Community College Study for Johnson County,” p. 1.

¹⁹ “Community College Study for Johnson County,” p. 30.

²⁰ “Community College Study for Johnson County,” p. 31.

thousands.²¹ Financial concerns made up only a part of community members' motivations: they also saw as important the continuation of their county reputation for educational excellence and protection of their community's exclusive nature.

Attendees at the 1963 conference, residents responding to the feasibility study, and those directing it all noted their interest in broadening educational opportunities available to graduates. Many based support for JCCC in the county school district's record of excellence and saw the college as an extension of the district's prestige.²² That any institution so affiliated would be among the best in the region seemed a foregone conclusion given the area's exceptional public grade schools.²³ District 110's superiority topped reasons new Johnson County residents identified for moving to the area, and developing a college campus within the county provided a way for parents to keep their children close to home in a familiar, well-resourced, and sheltered environment.²⁴ Respondents to the junior college feasibility study echoed concerns from the Midwestern Community College Conference in their focus on keeping their children close to home.

The 1963 feasibility study reported considerable interest in a campus for Johnson County and expanded on three concerns expressed by most participants: population growth, parental

²¹ "Community College Study for Johnson County," p. 34.

²² Robert F. Bennett, "Forced Unification is not Imminent," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 16 February 1967.

²³ "Community College Study for Johnson County," p. 52; "Junior College Green Light Ahead," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 12 November 1965.

²⁴ "Newcomers Tell Why They Chose O.P.," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 16 November 1967; "What College? Class of '65 Looks Like it will Stay Close to Home," *The Country Squire* (Shawnee Mission, KS), 4 February 1965; "Educator Sees Challenge for Teachers in Tensions," *Kansas City Star*, 28 August 1961.

intentions to ensure their children completed an undergraduate degree at a reasonable cost close to home, and the financing of a campus to do so. The study included a historical introduction of the community college concept, an overview of Johnson Countians' projected tax obligations, data on student persistence through high school, business and industry training demands, and residents' opinions on higher education. National and regional leaders in community college development supported Billington's project by advising on the measure, including Joseph Cosand, President of the St. Louis Community College District, and the presidents of both community college campuses closest to Johnson County – Kansas City Kansas Community College and Metropolitan Junior College-Kansas City. School leaders in District 110 also participated, including the past and current superintendents of education and the assistant superintendent for instruction.²⁵

Following presentation of the feasibility study, many volunteers continued their commitment by joining the Citizens' Committee led by Leawood banker Robert Lytle. The carryover allowed for prolonged community conversations and maintained momentum, so supporters would not lose time rebuilding relationships when the time came for additional community organizing. Establishing the Citizens' Committee and a group of promoters for the college pressed on Billington's mind as reflected in the minutes from late-night planning meetings often held in his home. As members began to lobby regional arts supporters and personalities for participation in a speakers' bureau, members discussed how to make their proposal palatable to a wide range of community members. A confidential addendum to minutes from a March 1966 meeting lists ideal candidates for the Citizens' Committee group, including well-known industry and business

²⁵ "Community College Study for Johnson County," p. vi.

owners, school board members, lawyers, Kansas City philanthropists, clergy members, and regional celebrities. These last two gave participants pause, as they were unsure if “Catholic and Jewish faiths participate in Ministerial Alliance.” On consideration of Kansas City Chiefs’ football star Bobby Bell, who faced widespread protest from angry White neighbors after moving to Johnson County, the Committee wondered if there would “be reaction against a Negro selling our college” as a “JOCO celebrity.” “I think not,” community action group leaders noted, emphatically, and subsequent minutes indicate Citizens’ Committee leadership approached Black, Catholic, and Jewish leaders in Kansas and Missouri, though their names do not appear in any minutes following.²⁶ For Committee members, the region was growing so quickly, they had an impressive new population from which to recruit supporters for their cause. Ultimately, the speakers on whom they relied were White and prosperous – just like them.

The 1960s in Johnson County proved to be a decade of rapid change and growth for its residents, but for Johnson County Community College advocates, the years must have flown by as they worked – incredibly quickly – bringing their project to fruition. Positive responses to the Midwest Junior College Conference in June 1963 resulted in Johnson County Commissioners appointing a study committee to begin community research that summer. The committee finished data collection soon after, and delayed presenting results to the county until after the 1965 legislative action supporting a new statewide community college system. A successful local ballot initiative in the summer of 1966 and subsequent campaign for supporters preceded a

²⁶ Minutes of Citizen’s Committee, 12 March 1966 “Confidential - Additional Names for Community Action Group and Corrected Info - Lou Segrebrecht & Rick Harman.” JCCC History – Board of Trustees Records of the Clerk Ellen Laner 1968-1969 (Box 1, Folder 4) Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas; “Bobby Bell Recalls Struggle at UMKC Hate Crimes Session,” *Midtown Post* (Kansas City, MO) 13 January 2013. Protests against Bell’s move to Johnson County marred his memories of playing for the Chiefs.

crowded primary and subsequent general election of candidates competing for seats on the board of trustees in 1967. Once elected, the new trustees continued their rapid clip, developing an institutional philosophy and mission statement to accompany their posting for the presidency, distributed in January 1968. Only 14 months passed between President Harris' hire in July 1968 and the first classes beginning for students enrolled at Johnson County Community College in September 1969. The undercurrents pushing such rapid development – population growth, fear of regional protests, financial support, and parental demands for a safe educational opportunity for their children – permeated the institutional timeline as discussed above and continued clearly as driving themes for the new campus' cultural development in the discussion following.

“Explosive” is a term overused to describe the postwar suburban boom, but for Johnson County, the word fits well. From 1960-1967, Johnson County, Kansas was the fastest growing county in the country. In the seven-year period, the county grew by 129%, a concerning growth rate for many residents.²⁷ In January 1960, *Kansas City Star* readers who ventured past the front-page stories of a saber-rattling Khrushchev, an Overland Park couple expecting twins but delivering triplets, and a record budget increase request from the city's police department, would find a lengthy discussion of record-setting home sales and construction. As presented in the article, the final report from Johnson County's registrar of deeds showed the count of new housing starts and existing home sales equaling fees half again as much as they had been in the previous record-breaking year 1955.²⁸ A month later, the *Star* reported on efforts by county

²⁷ “Johnson County Community Junior College Report,” July 1969, JCCC History – Board of Trustees Records of the Clerk Ellen Laner 1968-1969 (Box 1, Folder 4) Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

²⁸ “Record Marks in JoCo Real Estate Sales,” *Kansas City Star*, 14 January 1960.

leaders to recruit industries in order to lessen residential tax burden. Especially in northeast Johnson County, members of the Johnson County Civic Planning Council noted “the ‘population explosion’ is becoming increasingly more evident and residents are becoming more aware of the difficulty of supporting schools without the support of industry.”²⁹ With almost comedic irony, *Star* writers covering the region’s growth penned editorials lamenting newcomers’ limited religious education and the dire need for reliable population control in Southeast Asia, interspersed with articles rooted in the booming population concerns in their own region: increasing public safety budgets, overcrowded roadways, and dangerous – or nonexistent – sidewalks.³⁰ *Star* observations circled around one idea, though never said it explicitly: outsiders and their tax dollars were welcome, as long as they did not change the prevailing culture too much.

Families relocating to Johnson County increasingly did so at the behest of a corporate employer. Industrial, service, and research enterprises expanded corporate headquarters and regional offices in the area, supporting employee transfers with dedicated real estate agents and strong relationships with area real estate boards.³¹ Upon arriving, employees found themselves in some of the fastest growing and most affluent communities in the nation: the Kansas City suburbs were, then as now, highly regarded destinations, with well-educated, politically conservative people. Overland Park, especially, even with the era’s explosive suburban growth, set itself apart as having one of the region’s strongest school districts, in addition to newly

²⁹ “Need Industry to Ease Tax Burden,” *Kansas City Star*, 10 February 1960.

³⁰ “Key Role with Gospel,” *Kansas City Star*, 18 August 1960.

³¹ “Industry Spells Progress in Johnson County,” *Kansas City Star*, 10 February 1966.

constructed homes and shopping centers, all of which combined to make the largest city in Johnson County also the fastest growing during the 1960s. "New to town" columns in local weekly papers commonly ran to five and six inches, as newcomers relayed their arrivals from all over the U.S.³²

Even as it began in the 1960s, Johnson County's building boom was guided by foundations established decades prior. Beginning in the 1920s, J.C. Nichols shaped the rapidly developing Kansas City region as owner of an eponymous land development company and appointee to the Federal Housing Authority. He burnished Kansas City's reputation as the "Paris of the Plains," with his Beaux Arts architectural principles and tightly controlled suburban communities. Early on, the Nichols' Company had the backing of the Federal Housing Act of 1934, which produced hierarchical grading of neighborhoods for federal lending practices.³³ Would-be residents in "favorable," neighborhoods free from "dissimilar," "unstable," and "disharmonious" groups found it easier to get a mortgage, while those buying in areas graded "undesirable" found it harder to secure funding for purchase or upkeep.³⁴ As neighborhoods were graded, lending maps demarcated "undesirable" locations with a red line, yielding the contemporary term "redlining."³⁵

³² "Record Marks," *Kansas City Star*; "Views Differ on City's Growing Pains," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 26 August 1965; "Newcomers Tell Why They Chose O.P.," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 16 November 1967.

³³ William Worley, *J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City: Innovation in Planned Residential Communities* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 287.

³⁴ Federal Housing Authority, *Underwriting Manual*, (1958), 1320.

³⁵ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of how Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017), 108.

The J.C. Nichols Company began its most recognizable work on Country Club Plaza in the 1920s with construction of the Spanish Revival-influenced shopping district dotted with dozens of City Beautiful hallmarks: wide, curving tree-line boulevards, parks, and sculptural fountains all contributed to what would eventually become Kansas City's nickname, "City of Fountains."³⁶ After providing the foundation for Kansas City's high-dollar retail establishments, Nichols turned his attention to local residential development and the establishment of federal lending and housing policy.³⁷ By the late 1930s, in addition to his work as an advisor to Roosevelt's Federal Housing Authority, Nichols controlled more than 4,000 acres in Johnson County primarily for single family home construction, entirely under proactive, racially restricted covenants.³⁸ Between 1906 and 1953, the company constructed over 6,000 homes and 150 apartment complexes housing nearly 40,000 residents and encompassing the Johnson County communities of Prairie Village, Roeland Park, and Fairway.³⁹ Nichols required each purchaser to join the community's home owners' association, and sale or rental to Black or Jewish families required the majority of homeowners in the relevant association to approve.⁴⁰ Nichols' early control of Johnson County housing markets meant proactive, racially restrictive covenants enforced by

³⁶ William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1964), p. 130.

³⁷ Worley, 180.

³⁸ Worley, 148; Jesse Clyde Nichols, "When You Buy a Home Site, You Make an Investment: Try to Make it a Safe One," *Good Housekeeping*, February 1923, 35.

³⁹ Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2000* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 44.

⁴⁰ Judy L. Thomas, "'Curse of Covenant' Persists – Restrictive Rules, while Unenforceable, have Lingering Legacy," *Kansas City Star*, 27 July 2016.

mandatory homeowner's associations became the standard for Kansas City area home construction and sale. Both residents and prospective buyers then, including those who would eventually advocate for a college in the county or buy homes near the proposed campus, navigated the closed Johnson County housing market.

In the 1960s, as Johnson Countians canvassed, met, and planned for a new community college, rigidly enforced housing segregation for would-be student or employee residents in the county persisted. Only after JCCC's classes began was there any real movement on the housing question. That fall, the Village United Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas, offered a well-attended seminar presented by two Black realtors. Donald Sewing and Howard Haskin, both operating out of Kansas City offices, spoke on "The Problems of Black Home Ownership in Johnson County" to kick off the first of many open housing events organized by Village United. At the event, Sewing noted "the prevailing attitudes of residents here can be attributed to the fact that their reason for moving here was to escape being bothered by Blacks in other areas."⁴¹ His assertion was true, as illustrated by residency statistics for northeast Johnson County, where only 30 Black families lived in a population of nearly 200,000.⁴² Whites' housing purchase decisions as Sewing described them were perhaps even better illustrated by the community where he spoke. As late as 1962, even the Village United's own neighborhood counted only two Black families among more than 50,000 residents.⁴³

⁴¹ "Johnson County: Realtors Say Area Still Closed," *Kansas City Times*, 1 October 1969.

⁴² "Area Still Closed," *Kansas City Times*, 1 October 1969.

⁴³ Kevin Fox Gotham, "Urban Space, Restrictive Covenants and the Origins of Racial Residential Segregation in a US City, 1900-50," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24, no. 3 (2000): 625.

In the course of the Village United seminar, Sewing used his own experiences as a home buyer in Fairway and as a realtor who aimed to “scatter Black families” throughout Johnson County to explain the subtleties of restricted housing in practice.⁴⁴ In January 1966, Sewing’s purchase of a home in previously all-White Fairway made front page news in the *Kansas City Star* and provoked several weeks of White-led picketing. “Johnson County schools are among the best in the nation,” Sewing noted in the interview, and his two school-aged children motivated the family to leave neighboring Wyandotte County, where “schools [were] only second-rate.”⁴⁵ Three years later as Sewing related his path-breaking status in Johnson County, he explained some of the tactics he experienced as a homebuyer and offered insight on the possible motivations of realtors. “Legally, a home cannot be withheld from the open market,” and although “some realtors will make a sale when pressed, [...] when they are not pressed [they] will simply say a prior contract is pending or fail to keep appointments with the prospective Black purchaser.” Sewing and Haskin both acknowledged the attitudes of realtors about selling homes to Black buyers may not have been rooted in personal prejudice, but “real or imagined professional ethics.” Haskin relayed another common concern, related to him by a White broker, “that if the firm he represented sold to Blacks, they might as well close up shop.” The professional licensing body for realtors in Johnson County avoided the conversation altogether; the Johnson County Realtors’ Association declined formally to send a representative to the Village United seminar as “there was no purpose for discussing past problems.”

⁴⁴ Donald Sewing, oral history interview by Melissa Fisher-Isaacs, 29 June 2007, transcript, Johnson County Museum, Overland Park, Kansas.

⁴⁵ Jim Trotter, “Negro Family Moves Into Fairway,” *Kansas City Star*, 30 January 1966.

With one notable exception, early advocates for Johnson County's community college similarly remained silent on the integration topic. Although any resident member of the Citizen's Committee and all of the first Board of Trustees' candidates would have lived either in or very near a neighborhood subject to racially restrictive covenants, despite their exposure to regular reports on open housing fora around Johnson County and in Kansas City, and even though many actually attended and spoke on the community college project in congregations which also hosted open housing meetings, only one early leader spoke out frankly about the problem of restricted housing and its legacy in educational access: Board Vice-Chair Hugh Speer. Speer, as chair of the Education department at UMKC, had served as an expert witness in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, testifying on the capacities of and challenges for under-funded and trained Black school teachers, and on the state of segregated schools in Topeka.⁴⁶ A lifelong, second-generation educator, Speer grew up in a Tennessee home as the oldest child of teachers employed in segregated, Black schools before moving to Johnson County as a teenager.⁴⁷ Speer's professional expertise shaped his educational mindset as fully as his childhood experiences with segregation. In May 1968, with funding support from a grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Speer produced a history of *Brown* with special focus on the role of education in bridging class and racial divides. His comments in the study's summary exhorted educators to "become more flexible and individualized," and to create "heterogenous group

⁴⁶ Hugh Wilson Speer, oral history interview by Amanda Rees, August 1994, transcript, Johnson County Museum, Overland Park, Kansas, 5.

⁴⁷ Speer oral history, 1.

experiences” to the benefit of all children. Speer’s focus on educational equity during his experiences with the *Brown* case clearly inform his time as board vice-chair at JCCC.⁴⁸

Speer could, as vice-chair, exercise a measure of control over policy and hiring at the college, and he tried. As recalled by President Harris years later, Speer often championed both terminal degree holders and minority applicants in faculty hiring decisions, much to Harris’ frustration. The two clashed regularly, as Speer “was the gadfly” and in Harris’ memory, voted against “everything – even paying the bills!”⁴⁹ A review of board minutes indicates Harris’ memory to be incorrect, as Speer voted in favor of many items through the years, especially those related to keeping the budget balanced. Nevertheless, Harris continued in the same correspondence, “Speer became a champion of *Black causes*... regardless of the merit, ... and desperately wanted to have JCCC hire a Black faculty member” [emphasis in original].⁵⁰ One of Harris’ proudest moments, as related in the late 1990s, was the hiring of a Black applicant over Speer’s “no” vote. Prior to the meeting, Harris recalled, he reviewed the resumes of applicants up for board consideration. One applicant, named Theodore Roosevelt, was Black, and when his hire came before the board, Harris altered the applicant’s resume to obscure his race. Harris changed Theodore Roosevelt to “R.T.,” and waited for the vote. Speer voted against the hire, “sure as hell,” Harris reminisced.

⁴⁸ Hugh W. Speer, “A Historical and Social Perspective on *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* with Present and Future Implications,” Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Bureau of Research, 1968. p. 268 Archives, Trustee Hugh W. Speer Box 1, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas; “Candidates for Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees,” *Overland Park Sun*, 8 September 1967.

⁴⁹ Robert Harris to Charles Bishop, 17 August 1998, Chuck Bishop – JCCC History Notes (Box 4) Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

⁵⁰ Robert Harris to Charles Bishop, 18 August 1998, Chuck Bishop – JCCC History Notes (Box 4) Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

After the meeting adjourned, Harris gloated as he gave Speer the original resume. Three decades later, in correspondence with a college historian, Harris still savored the moment “the hypocrite” Speer realized he had voted against a Black applicant.⁵¹ Although he did hire minority applicants, in this case Harris demonstrated, both in the resume-changing action and in his proud memory of it years later, how his administration of JCCC as a conservative, protected space for middle to upper class White students and employees functioned as a reflection of entrenched community practices.

Curiously, given the affluence of Johnson County residents, student costs frequently emerged as a theme in the narratives of both campus advocates and other supporters. Without doubt, costs increased rapidly for students beginning collegiate work in the 1960s. In April 1966, State Senator Robert Bennett, a Prairie Village resident and law partner of JCCC advocate Robert Lytle, wrote a column for the Overland Park *Sun* detailing his concerns about rising college costs.⁵² Although increasing rapidly, Bennett noted, the cost of a college degree could not reduce the demand for more college graduates in the workforce. Bennett praised the Higher Education Act of 1965, enumerating its aid program for talented students without the means to continue their education, its expansion of the college work-study program, and new fellowships for elementary and secondary school teachers, before returning to his theme of college costs to students and taxpayers as addressed in the National Defense Educational Act of 1968.⁵³

⁵¹ Harris to Bishop, 18 August 1998.

⁵² Robert F. Bennett, “Report from the Hill,” *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 14 April 1966.

⁵³ Bennett, “Report.”

Johnson County's prospective students enrolling at JCCC would have no need of loan support – or at least far less need – than those attending university directly from high school or those enrolling at other metro-area community colleges. Members of the Citizens Committee and Board travelling throughout 1968 and 1969 giving speeches in support of the college and its subsequent bond issues carried an easy-to-find flagged card containing comprehensive cost to student price breakdown for attendees at the University of Kansas, University of Missouri Kansas City, Kansas State, and University of Missouri. Ellen Laner, former feasibility study secretary who was eventually elected to the board as secretary, noted the card's importance in her reminders for the members of the speaker's bureau. Advocates needed data on costs at their fingertips during post-speech question and answer periods.⁵⁴

Johnson Countians already paid considerably for the privilege of their residents to attend other community colleges in the state, a concern first enumerated in the 1966 feasibility study's findings. After the college became more of a reality following the passage of state law, local editorial columns periodically updated readers on their tax dollars' support for other campuses via the statewide policy of out-district tuition. Under provisions of the 1956 bill, Johnson County taxpayers payed out-district tuition “of each student from the County attending Kansas City Kansas Community College” in neighboring Wyandotte County.⁵⁵ According to the *Johnson*

⁵⁴ JCCC History – Board of Trustees Records of the Clerk Ellen Laner 1968-1969 (Box 1) Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

⁵⁵ “Community College Study for Johnson County,” 31; The Community Action Committee for a Johnson County Junior College to Johnson County voters, promotional mailer, “A Johnson County Community Junior College: What? Why? How? When? Where? How Much?” n.d. Early History of JCCC, Box 1, Folder 9, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

County Scout, in 1966, the outlay was \$29,000 (over \$230,000 in 2019 dollars) to Wyandotte County, with an additional \$26,000 going to other counties. Given Johnson County's size and its lack of public facilities for higher education prior to JCCC's establishment, taxpayers' payments to other institutions stood only to increase.⁵⁶ In 1967, a positive editorial in the *Star* following the 3:1 vote in favor of creating a community college in Johnson County also noted students who sought to attend college while staying at home would as non-residents pay "\$500 a year over the resident tuition at U.M.K.C or Metropolitan Junior College." The *Star*'s editorial staff summed up years of data and advocacy neatly, "that it just didn't make sense for a populous, high-income urban county to have to send all its college students away to state or private universities," a sentiment widely embraced by voters and students alike – for many reasons.⁵⁷

In addition to the focus on finances, community respondents to the 1969 *Educational Needs Study* surveys also placed campus safety at the top of Johnson Countians' motivations for a community college campus. "Current student unrest, dissention, and disruption on major college campuses," was the second highest motivating factor for Johnson County Community College attendance by the class of 1969, a close second to the high cost of college attendance away from home. Harrowing accounts of recent riots in April 1968 in Kansas City and long-running student protests at KU appeared regularly in the *Kansas City Star* and the *Johnson County Squire*. These

⁵⁶ "Variations on Existing Schools," *Johnson County Scout* (Shawnee Mission, KS), n.d., Early History of JCCC, Box 1, Folder 9, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

⁵⁷ "Johnson County College Has Voter Appeal," *Kansas City Times* (Kansas City, MO), 25 May 1967.

reports stood as regular, detailed reminders about campus violence accessible to any Johnson Countian, regardless of whether they ventured to Lawrence or Kansas City proper.⁵⁸

Lawrence's reputation for radicalism and its widespread embrace of the counterculture, particularly, colored many Johnson Countians' impressions of college away from home. Bill Ebert, student body president at the University of Kansas from 1971-1972, laughingly recounted how quickly newcomers were corrupted. "You'd see kids that started at KU coming over from Johnson County as freshmen in 1967 with their chinos and button-down oxford cloth shirts, and within a year they were walking around in bell-bottoms with hair down to their middle of their back and a bunch of beads, smoking dope."⁵⁹ If parents who sent their children to Lawrence ran the risk of having them join pot-smoking anti-war hippies, those who looked to the east fared little better: by 1968, Kansas City had developed its own reputation for occasionally violent civil rights protest.

Kansas City's 1968 riots began when Jackson County (Missouri) schools did not close on 9 April out of respect for the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, and students quickly arranged a march in protest. The Missouri students' march to City Hall began peacefully from the

⁵⁸ Some of the articles and op-ed pieces covering regional student protest include: "County Attorney Sees Stepped-Up Activities in 1967," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 26 January 1967; Stan Rose, "Memo," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 19 October 1967; Stan Rose, "Memo," *The Sun* (Overland Park, KS), 26 October 1967; "The Problem: As People See It," *The Country Squire* (Shawnee Mission, KS), 28 April 1969; "Protest Laws in Missouri Schools," *The Country Squire* (Shawnee Mission, KS), 27 February 1969. Three works also cover Lawrence community response to protests at the University of Kansas and note Johnson County coverage specifically: Robbie Lieberman, *Prairie Power: Voices of 1960s Midwestern Student Protest* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 213; Rusty Monhollon, *This is America?: The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 67; John C. Rury and Kim Cary Warren, eds. *Transforming the University of Kansas: A History, 1965-2015* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015), 235.

⁵⁹ Lieberman, *Prairie Power*. 152.

students' perspective, though area police ranged their march route in riot gear, already wearing gas masks. While marchers moved along the route, a police officer deployed tear gas, and the event quickly disintegrated. Officers deployed more tear gas throughout the high schoolers' route, in an effort to prevent their going downtown. Some of the students managed to run down Interstate 70 in an effort to get around the police cordon. Area clergy eventually managed to guide a majority of the group to the steps of city hall, where many students made speeches, and older Black leaders eventually seem to have imposed both a sense of order and mourning. The continued presence of heavily armed police meant adults – Black and White, clergy and laymen alike – remained concerned that the gathering felt it was balanced on a point and could easily topple into rioting at any time. They hoped to forestall riots like those ongoing in other cities, and in order to get the younger protestors away from the police presence, announced a hastily planned dance in the basement of Holy Name Catholic church, a quarter hour's walk away. After protestors began to disperse, many to the church on busses provided for their safe transport, officers deployed another tear gas canister among the remaining students and detained members of the clergy who were in the process of herding students to the busses. Protestors who managed to get away from City Hall ultimately traveled to Holy Name church with the support of area clergy, effectively escaping the deteriorating situation. Their plans failed when police followed, released tear gas into the basement, and barricaded the doors shut. The police action ignited five days of rioting and unrest, in which five civilians were killed and over 100 were arrested.⁶⁰ In contrast, neighboring Wyandotte county schools in Kansas closed for the funeral and publicized

⁶⁰ David Fly, as featured in *Reflections on the Kansas City Riot of 1968*, (Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Public Television, 2006), transcript, https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/presentations/ap_transcripts/kcriot; "Rioting in City Takes Five Lives," *Kansas City Star*, 9 April 1968.

locations students could join for telecasts and prayer, successfully diffusing their students' inclination to protest and keeping protest actions on the Missouri side of the state line.⁶¹

Wyandotte County's successful limitation of protests meant actions – at least those as discernible from contemporary press coverage – did not extend into the Kansas suburbs. An issue of *The Country Squire* dedicated to covering the protests regionally interspersed photographs of armed National Guardsmen on the Plaza with “man on the street” reactions, mostly from Johnson Countians, to the violence. Shawnee Mission East students offered observations that correspond with those of area high school seniors surveyed in 1968 about their interest in a community college: both express broadly their appreciation for the protection of Johnson County. Senior Maud Hecker observed, “The Negroes are getting out of hand. They are citizens and should be treated as citizens, but they should not be allowed to break laws and riot. Half of them are just rioting to riot and they should be stopped just like other lawbreakers.” Sophomore Buck Firth contended police were too lenient in their response to the marching students, saying “I don't really think the Negro is being treated the way he says he is,” and that Blacks have “to start acting like citizens.” Others were mildly conciliatory: Senior Tom Barnett noted there needed to be more jobs available to Black teenagers, and he excused the officers' “panicky” reaction with tear gas. Junior Lon McCroskey connected students' protesting with the larger regional problem of restricted housing, and observed, “If a person has the money to buy a home, then he should be given the opportunity to do so.”⁶² Ted McGrath, a senior at Shawnee Mission

⁶¹ Rev. Robert Meneilly, oral history interview by Kathy Stump, 5 October 1995, transcript, Johnson County Museum, Overland Park, Kansas.

⁶² Carrie Lundell “The Kids at S-M East Speak Out,” *The Country Squire* (Shawnee Mission, KS), 18 April 1968, p. 9.

South, put an even finer point on the problem in his featured letter, “A Student Hopes Both Negroes and Whites Can Break Their Ghettos.” In his closing, McGrath suggested that “it is time for Americans to break out of their ghettos. Not only the Black ghetto on the East Side, but our White ghetto in Johnson County.”⁶³

Another, similar, feature was even more blunt about suburban protection. In a column surveying a dozen respondents, Johnson County leaders answered the *Squire*'s question, “The attitude toward the Negro: is it changing?” Several contributors talked around Johnson Countians' lack of concern, as re-stated in the article's subhead. John Miller, treasurer of the Shawnee Mission Fair Housing Council, clarified the foundation of their calm. Publicity around “the trouble downtown,” made people were more aware of unrest, Miller said. “But in Johnson County, people aren't really concerned – they feel isolated from it all. It's amazing how many out here don't have any [contact] with Negroes, except what they see on TV.”⁶⁴

Nine months after the Kansas City riots, JCCC leadership also had the chance to offer thoughts on the topic of campus unrest. New president Dr. Robert Harris sat down to an interview with editor Nancy Wolfe, which ran in *The Squire* on 27 February 1969. Wolfe asked a question on many Johnson Countians' minds: if the community college could avoid the riots that had so disrupted area campuses' operations in Lawrence and Kansas City, Missouri. In the interview, Harris punted the question in a way that seems surprising given his recollection fifty years later, by noting the legitimacy of many student complaints and that JCCC would develop a

⁶³ Ted McGrath, “A Student Hopes Both Negroes and Whites can Break Their Ghettos,” *The Country Squire* (Shawnee Mission, KS), 18 April 1968, p.14

⁶⁴ “The Attitude Toward the Negro: Is it Changing?: Johnson County People Aren't Concerned,” *The Country Squire* (Shawnee Mission, KS), 18 April 1968, p. 3-4.

feedback mechanism for managing student concerns. Also surprisingly, Harris did not mention JCCC's recent endorsement, on 15 January, by the Johnson County Police Chief's Association, which framed the institution as a safety valve for student protest. Chief Martin Kelly of Leawood "advised against delay of recognizing the need for a Johnson Co. Community College," and the group voted unanimously to recommend the Educational Needs Survey and its findings to the Governor, urging him "that funds necessary for the campus be expedited." Pending bond approval and completion of their permanent site, the campus welcomed its first students eight months after Harris sat for the *Squire* interview, in September 1969.

Once classes started, students had a nomadic existence across a half dozen locations in nearby Merriam, including a condemned elementary school, a church basement, and a handful of storefronts. "The Miracle on 57th Street," proclaimed one early open house brochure covered in hand-drawn daisies, and the 1,400 students who thrived in such a peripatetic existence seemed to agree. On a Sunday afternoon in November, the public visited the largest of the Merriam spaces, to "see a relevant, groovy, happy, industrialized college made out of an abandoned, old-fashioned, grade school."⁶⁵ Guests at the open house had a chance to use some material and

⁶⁵ Undated promotional flyer, "See the Miracle on 57th Street," JCCC History – JCCC Students Policies and Information – 1969-1970 Box 7, Folder 5, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas. The focus on campus audio-visual capabilities as a recruiting tool for students and community involvement was extensive in early promotional materials and media coverage. See: Mary Martin, "More on the Junior College: Recommended Curriculum Would Train for Transfer, Business, Recreation," *The Johnson County Scout*, 21 January 1965; Ilah Gray, "Jr. College Could Provide Technicians for Industry," *The Johnson County Scout*, 24 August 1967; Nancy Wolfe, "The Plot to Attract Area Students," 27 February 1969.

equipment of which the institution was proudest: “electronic-age equipment and tailor-made instructional material,” all available on “a tighten-the-buckle educational budget.”⁶⁶

Students who enrolled before JCCC opened a permanent campus demonstrated their pride and excitement by participating in their first student government election. A quarter of students – impressive for an electorate completing classes at five far-flung locations – participated in the first election and named one of the few Black students enrolled as their first student body president. Bob McFarlin, a student body leader and graduate of Shawnee Mission North whose parents and older siblings had been active in efforts to integrate the district, won in a landslide.⁶⁷

If, as he noted prior to opening enrollment, creation of a student body government was first among President Harris’ tools against campus unrest, creation of a student newspaper was not. A semi-official newspaper, *The Sunflower Press*, ran as a tool for journalism students from 1970-1971, and kept readers abreast of the details of campus life. It also occasionally served as a vehicle for students’ political speech. The longest running example, coverage of the Creation of Change Program, began in September 1970 as a credit-bearing interdisciplinary learning opportunity that was also open to the public. Creation of Change programming, in line with JCCC’s “public label of being unconventional,”⁶⁸ awarded credit in composition and other disciplines depending on the topic chosen by each student participant. Program coordinator James Jackson, director of the social sciences division, advised all students enrolled in the program on their topics, but beyond his guidance, there were few limitations. Such an arrangement, noted President Harris, resulted in a more realistic educational experience for

⁶⁶ “Miracle on 57th Street,” 2.

⁶⁷ Speer oral history, 9.

⁶⁸ O.D. Smith, “Education: Communication,” *Kansas City Star*, 2 September 1970.

participants. “Life is not dished out to us in simple packages, but instead comes to us all mixed up.” Harris continued, making connections between his institutional mission and the Creation of Change offerings: “Since life is this way, why shouldn’t an educational institution abandon the traditional segmented approach and integrate its instructional program so that learning experiences occur in a life-like manner with representatives of the various academic disciplines working together as a team?”⁶⁹ Students discussed, and *The Sunflower Press* covered, wide-ranging and controversial issues during the program’s duration, including ways to express opposition to the war in Vietnam with recently returned combatants, creative outlets for students dismayed by current events with singer-songwriter duo Mike Brewer and Tom Shipley, successful business development with Ewing Marion Kauffman, and the likelihood of human survival in times of ecological crisis with NASA and Woods Hole scientists.⁷⁰ Despite Harris’ commitment to innovative programming, even programming focused on anti-war sentiment, the institution failed to cool all students’ interest in protest.

When campus unrest finally made an appearance at JCCC, it was in response to the Kent State murders. In May 1970, students planned to fly the American flag upside down outside the Merriam building housing classrooms and administrative offices and threatened a sleep-in in the

⁶⁹ “Community Joins JCCC to Enjoy ‘Creation of Change’ Day,” *The Sunflower Press*, 17 September 1970, JCCC Student Newsletters, Box 1. Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS; College brochure, as quoted in “New Approach to College Here,” *Kansas City Star*, 14 September 1970.

⁷⁰ “Governor will Participate in Second Creation of Change Day,” *The Sunflower Press*, 1 October 1970; “Of Mice and Men and Cheshire Cats,” *The Sunflower Press* (Overland Park, KS) 8 October 1970; “How we can Cope with Problems of Pollution and Depletion is Subject of Monday’s Creation of Change,” *The Sunflower Press* (Overland Park, KS) 22 October 1970, JCCC Student Newsletters, Box 1. Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS.

student lounge space. One wonders if this protest is the one so fondly remembered as being interrupted with a dummy grenade when Harris was asked to reflect on his time at JCCC. Although it seems likely, it is impossible to confirm. The flag-related protest prompted Harris to consult Bob Lytle, the college's lawyer, asking whether he could expel the students. Barring expulsion, Harris wondered how forcefully he could respond and remain within his legal boundaries.⁷¹ After lengthy consultation with his faculty and cabinet, Harris eventually agreed to offer an hour-long speakers' corner each morning in front of the student union space at the Merriam campus, diffusing subsequent plans for campus protest.⁷² The institutional commitment to limiting student protest was explicit, codified in new institutional policies regarding "Emergencies, Campus Disorders, and Public Information Emergencies," which passed unanimously when brought to the board. The new procedure required any "campus disorder or emergency" prompt immediate notification of the president and the chairman of the board of trustees, along with the local authorities.⁷³

Although students developed a culture allowing their feedback only within narrow and rigid boundaries, employees hired long before the first student enrolled in classes found a campus – on paper, at least – imbued with iconoclasm. The campus' earliest hiring advertisements, placed nationally beginning in December 1968, read "Yes We Have No Traditions," with copy touting

⁷¹ Interview notes, Chuck Bishop and Fred Krebs, February 2001, Chuck Bishop – JCCC History Notes (Box 3) Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

⁷² Minutes of the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees, 18 September 1970, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS.

⁷³ Minutes of the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees, 11 November 1970, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS.

applicants’ “chance to chuck the status quo” ironically over an image of a Nichols-era fountain and home in Prairie Village.⁷⁴ Hopefuls were encouraged to apply for administrative posts as well as faculty positions in eight fields, including those the board thought most tempting: aviation and business. Employment with the college offered “the opportunity to grow as fast as you’re able” and “contribute as much as you can,” in the “fastest growing [county] in the six county Kansas City metropolitan area of 1.25 million,” where residents “rank at the very highest in the nation in both educational and economic interests.”⁷⁵ The “No Traditions” story line persisted across five decades of institutional history, making appearances at graduation ceremonies, faculty convocations, and even – ironically – fiftieth anniversary celebrations. More than the original college colors, its mascot, or even its logo, it is a tradition in its own right.

Postings focused so clearly on recruiting innovators notwithstanding, JCCC’s employee demographics were and remain more politically conservative than its student population, reflecting from the beginning, and from the top down, county rather than student demographics. For instance, the college’s first employees began their work in September 1967 as an elected board of trustees consisting of a senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank; a professor of education at the University of Missouri, Kansas City; a partner at Black and Veatch Engineering Firm; the director of Laboratories at Baptist Memorial hospital in Kansas City; a member of the Kansas Board of Education, and the Title III project director for District 110. By December 1967, just three months after the board was elected, its two women and four men drafted copy

⁷⁴ “Yes, We Have No Traditions,” December 1968, Box 1, Folder 29, Early History of JCCC. Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS.

⁷⁵ “No Traditions,” December 1968.

for institution's first position posting, seeking a president like themselves: "an educational statesman," capable of taking "the initiative in developing a high quality comprehensive institution for this community with a look to the future."⁷⁶

The board sought candidates with some expected qualities: a man between 30 and 50 with a "normal family life," and a completed doctorate with some focus on education or junior college administration. Other stated qualifications surprise. The posting included no explicit requirements for experience in higher education administration and acknowledged "teaching and administrative experience in situations approximating the junior college level," including research, military or public administration, and government work as possible equivalencies for educational administration experience. The board circulated its posting widely, sending it with a special edition of the institution's "Blue Book" – which included the philosophy and goals for the new institution, what the Board expected in a President, and a sketch of the County. "He should be adventuresome and open to consideration of any reasonable innovations in purpose, curriculum, learning processes, educational technologies, architecture, and administrative procedures. Special attention will be given to evidence of imagination and creativity, such as writing, development of innovations, research, expression of original ideas, and the ability to combine the theoretical with the practical."⁷⁷

Hugh Speer, in his capacity as vice-chair, led the search efforts. Applications poured in; there were over 200 altogether, mostly from the upper Midwest. Secretary Laner collected and ranked

⁷⁶ Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees, "Philosophy and Goals and Highlights of Johnson County and its New Community College," Early History of JCCC, Box 2, Folder 3, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

⁷⁷ "Philosophy and Goals," 1.2.

applicants with complete files in a cumbersome list, annotated to reflect applicants the board planned to interview for president and those to consider for other positions as they were created.⁷⁸ In an oral history conducted twenty years later, Harris described his impression of the board's frustration at still not finding the ideal candidate. In desperation, search chairman Hugh Speer called the head and creator of Michigan State University's student counseling center, Dr. Paul Dressel. Dressel, who established the counseling center as a support for returning WWII veterans on campus, recommended one of his research assistants who had recently completed his doctoral program, Robert Harris.⁷⁹ Harris was a Kellogg Fellowship recipient, a beneficiary of the Kellogg Foundation's national program to improve the quality and increase the quantity of well-trained community college administrators.⁸⁰ Prior to completing his graduate work, Harris served 25 years in the Marine Corps, first as an artillery officer and subsequently in the development of and training in guided ballistics programs. The posting's focus on non-traditional educational objectives fit Harris' interests, though he had no campus experience outside of his graduate work. "I went in right out of the PhD program," Harris, who graduated from Michigan State in 1967, recalled of his interview. He had no way of knowing the Board was at its' wits

⁷⁸ JCCC History – Board of Trustees Records of the Clerk Ellen Laner 1968-1969 (Box 1, Folder 2).

⁷⁹ Robert O. Harris, "Robert O. Harris," in *Visionary Voices: An Oral History of Johnson County Community College, The Early Years*, eds. Bob Burdick and Mary-Margaret Simpson (Overland Park, KS: Johnson County Community College, 1994), 58.

⁸⁰ The Kellogg Foundation funded fellowships for would-be community college presidents and deans for a generation. See George B. Vaughan, *The Community College in America: A Short History* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1985); Harris' participation in the Kellogg program is noted in "Johnson County Community Junior College Report," July 1969, JCCC History – Board of Trustees Records of the Clerk Ellen Laner 1968-1969 (Box 1, Folder 4) Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas.

end: his application followed hundreds of applicants and dozens of interviews, but as he noted, “I had nothing to lose.” When the Board asked about his likely timetable for offering classes, Harris said he could do it within a year.⁸¹ After his hire, area press acknowledged Harris’ unconventional background: “the new president is a former lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps turned college administrator. Not hampered by a public-school point of view, he believes that the military is the world’s greatest trainer of people.”⁸²

As Harris assembled his cabinet, he favored candidates who shared his military background, with both the dean and associate dean of instruction, the head of college services, and the director of facilities all from Department of Defense employers. Educational administration or instructional experience seemed to matter less: neither Harris, as previously noted, nor his dean of instruction Harold Finch brought higher education instructional backgrounds with them.⁸³ Shortly after beginning to fill his cabinet posts, Harris approved the “No Traditions” advertisement, and continued his community speeches, chipping away at the difficulties Billington’s report had identified among community members unfamiliar with the community college concept. In many of his public remarks, Harris celebrated the institution’s local control of curriculum to “meet Johnson County’s unique needs and desires,” and differentiate between ‘traditional’ university faculty hires and what he sought for the College: “None of the faculty is

⁸¹ Robert Harris to Charles Bishop, 17 August 1998, Chuck Bishop – JCCC History Notes (Box 4), Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS.

⁸² Patricia Jansen Doyle, “And All Stories Should Begin and End with And,” *Kansas City Star* (Kansas City, MO), 14 September 1969.

⁸³ Harold Finch, “Harold Finch,” in *Visionary Voices*, 85.

being hired on the basis of his research. Students come first at our college.”⁸⁴ Nowhere was this student first philosophy more apparent, or more vital given regional unrest, than in the counseling department. All entering students met professional counselors prior to enrollment, though their relationships were broader than the academic. Harris’ column in the first faculty newsletter shared a similar focus to his public comments, “We want all of our students to feel they can come in and talk over any problem – academic or otherwise. That is why we are here.”⁸⁵

Harris’ student-first focus did not extend to seeking a cadre of greatly experienced faculty. As the president, Finch, and associate dean Lozano took their hiring campaign on the road, they often travelled with Jim Jackson, a doctoral student at the University of Arkansas who interned in Harris’ office. Their administrative and faculty hiring junkets, conducted at conferences and on campus visits, ultimately created a surprisingly young and inexperienced faculty corps. When the campus began classes in September 1969, half of the 64 employees were under 35, 29 were between 35 and 50, and only three were over 50 years old.⁸⁶ One example of the administration’s affinity both for unconventional hiring practices and youth was their recruitment of Walt Klarner, who would become a much-respected, long-term member of the English department. Klarner “walked in the wrong door” at Emporia State to find Lozano and Harris, who were on campus conducting scheduled interviews. The JCCC administrators thought Klarner had arrived

⁸⁴ “New Juco Tailor-Made,” *Kansas City Star* 1 July 1969.

⁸⁵ *Pre-Views* 1, no.1 (1969), JCCC Faculty Newsletters, Box 1. Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS.

⁸⁶ Minutes of the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees, 5 June 1969, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, KS. Early board minutes included ages and educational background for all new hires. This meeting included a comprehensive listing of all faculty hires to date.

early for an interview, when he was actually looking for a graduate student meeting, but the three chatted briefly. They asked Klarner if he was looking for a job, and soon after, JCCC's newest composition faculty member was developing coursework for Kansas' newest community college. Klarner recounts asking Harris if the President was sure about hiring him since he lacked experience. Harris' response encapsulates the very model of a rootless institution, free and unmoored by tradition: "You have no history. That's WHY I'm interested."⁸⁷

In the institution's early days, faculty like Klarner actually had the opportunity to experience "no traditions" in a surprisingly broad fashion. A common thread among the reflections of the first faculty was their freedom to develop new materials and interdisciplinary connections with very little oversight. "I would pick the topics and develop the content," chemistry faculty member Gene Jack recalled in 1994, "but I was free to do almost anything I wanted to." Many faculty, Jack included, use the language of filmmakers to describe their first interaction with the celebrated Media Productions Center at JCCC. They storyboarded lecture ideas and recorded lecture voice-overs for hand-drawn and animated slide show lectures.⁸⁸ The science department led use of the campus' audio-visual capabilities, producing television shorts for classroom use,⁸⁹ while humanities faculty became pioneers in team-teaching courses. History faculty member Fred Krebs, whose mother, Virginia, had worked on the 1963 feasibility study and done yeoman's work in producing the final report for publication, was initially a community college skeptic. The prospect of finishing his graduate work at the University of Kansas and getting

⁸⁷ Walt Klarner, "Walt Klarner," in *Visionary Voices*, 126; Travel details in JCCC History – Board of Trustees Records of the Clerk Ellen Laner 1968-1969 (Box 1, Folder 1).

⁸⁸ Gene Jack, "Gene Jack," in *Visionary Voices*, 113.

⁸⁹ Jim Jackson, "Jim Jackson," in *Visionary Voices*, 119.

married without a full-time job shifted his perspective: Krebs applied for a curriculum consultancy at the new college to develop interdisciplinary coursework for faculty in the humanities. When Krebs joined the faculty as a historian, he and Walt Klarner offered cross-listed courses, one of which enabled students to complete Western Civilization and Composition in the same semester.⁹⁰ After his retirement, long-time math faculty member Jack Hennington mused, “if you were going to be in education, in the late 1960s, Johnson County Community College was the place to be.” Faculty reflections, press coverage, and rapidly increasing enrollment trends in the first few years of the college’s existence indicate most in Johnson County agreed with Hennington’s sentiment. Despite the obvious draw of innovation and open-mindedness to new pedagogies, many JCCC employees, then as now, remark on the insularity of both campus and community.

Cultural mores within Johnson County – limiting residency, being positioned between two protest-ridden neighbors – likely contributed to the feeling of insularity within the broader JCCC community. Professionally, though, for faculty working on a rapidly growing campus where innovation and interdisciplinary work was encouraged, where faculty heard from the beginning that their contributions had additional value because of their relative inexperience, should – one would imagine – yield a campus with a free-wheeling attitude. This was not the case. Thanks in part to a strong Board of Trustees structure and even more to President Harris’ controlling nature, faculty contemporaries describe a culture that encouraged curricular innovation, and collegiality but within a rigid hierarchy beneath Harris’ sharp oversight.

⁹⁰ Fred Krebs, “Fred Krebs,” in *Visionary Voices*, 133.

Johnson County residents, and JCCC employees especially, are quick to warn transplants about the “Johnson County Bubble.” Allusions to it become almost like a secret handshake, especially with new hires and students from other parts of the metropolitan area. JCCC’s founding documents, its leaders’ conversations, and its earliest advocates reinforce the notion, demonstrating that from its founding, JCCC was destined to be a bubble within a bubble. Students, too, acknowledged their protected existence. In an opinion piece in their then year-old newspaper, the editorial staff in August 1979 demanded more robust public transportation opportunities for students. One factor, fuel efficiency on an all-commuter campus, played into their demands and clearly stemmed from national conversations around energy efficiency following the Iranian oil crisis of the summer. Students did not frame their argument solely in economic, or even environmental concerns, however. “Burst the Sterile Bubble; JCCC Needs Bus Service,” their headline read, and they called out explicitly JCCC’s earliest leaders. “During the 1950s and 60s, parents looked for that sterile bubble in which to raise their families. For many, Johnson County was the answer facing the city’s population. An attitude prevailed – “Johnson County: Affluent Kansas Citians.” Students continued, skewering Johnson County residents with “three cars in the driveways,” and those who suggested the energy crisis was “in the future,” or “facing the non-affluent,” as well as those who limited public transportation options in order to “protect Johnson County from the city people who are dependent on bus service for mobility.”⁹¹

In the same ways Johnson County homebuyers used restrictive covenants to protect the racial and class makeup of their community, they demanded a low-cost, close-to-home institution

⁹¹ “Burst the Sterile Bubble; JCCC Needs Bus Service,” *The Campus Ledger* (Overland Park, KS) 27 August 1979.

where their children could be protected from antiwar and civil rights protests. As the new president and board hired administrators with strong military backgrounds and limited higher education instructional experience, institution developed a culture seemingly committed to redefining what a community college could be, while – given Robert Harris’ fond memories – also preserving a learning environment protected from area protest. Johnson County Community College, and Johnson County as a whole, to large degree, existed as an island of calm where residents were protected from the protests in Lawrence and Kansas City.

Yet, from almost its first day of classes, Johnson County Community College looked more racially and ethnically diverse than the community surrounding it. The 1970 census described a county over 99% White, while the first class to set foot on the newly completed campus in 1972 was 97% White. Two percentage points, of course, matter little in the broader context of a campus of over 6,000. Johnson County students, though, went a step further. In 1969, the student body elected Bob McFarlin, who would have then been one of about a dozen – or fewer – Black students, to its first representative office.

Institutional promoters at JCCC, from the citizens’ committee members through the board, to President Harris and his cabinet, all made their motivations clear: to create an institution focused on student learning and enrichment, responsive to the community’s needs, and priced for students – and their parents – to begin college without accumulating debt. In hiring a comparatively inexperienced president, cabinet, and faculty, the institution was unlikely to experience the pitfalls of administrative kabuki theatre so common to settled institutions and more seasoned higher education leaders. Perhaps more importantly, though, in its early focus on hiring “strong men” administrators, with little faculty experience and authoritarian miens,

Johnson County Community College was, early on, an institution marked by rigorous top-down control and the suburban inclination to just “go along.”

CHAPTER THREE

A MEASURED ADVENTURESOMENESS: COLLEGE OF DUPAGE

In 1972, after a months-long battle with campus and community members over his interest in new, short-term, limited residency doctoral program in Florida, College of DuPage (CoD) President Dr. Rodney Berg wrote in obvious frustration to a soon-to-be-former colleague, “I was apprised that DuPage County was a conservative location. I am surprised to find out how conservative it is.”¹ Well beyond the extended conflict yielding Berg’s disappointment, his tenure as the first president of what would become the largest community college in Illinois began as a tug-of-war between employees, politicians, board members, the press, and the community. Campus growth continued for the twelve years of Berg’s term, despite persistent struggles between competing stakeholders, even as the experienced president labored to build an innovative educational institution.² Throughout his tenure, Berg built varied and shifting alliances to advance creative, boundary-bending programs and endeavored to redefine, for employees and community members, what a community college could be. Especially during his first five years in Illinois, Berg’s work offers an intriguing case study in administrative leadership that might have happened anywhere but is made all the more interesting by its location. The College of DuPage is in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, about 30 minutes east of Chicago; in

¹ Rodney Berg to Charles L. Palermo, 23 May 1972, College of DuPage Archives, E. 1.1, Box 2, Folder 6, College of DuPage Library.

² “Largest Illinois Community Colleges,” Community College Review, accessed 9 December 2019, <https://www.communitycollegereview.com/college-size-stats/illinois>.

the 1960s, the town was an affluent, restricted-residency suburb entering its second decade of explosive population growth.

The College of DuPage's founding in one of the fastest growing midwestern suburbs offers a useful comparison to Johnson County Community College. Today, the two campuses each consider the other peers, and share similar funding bases and operating revenues. Their surrounding communities are economically similar in 2019, as they were as they began conversations about community college development. Johnson and DuPage counties were among the fastest growing in the nation during the 1950s and 1960s, attracting residents who enjoyed very high standards of living and buying power.³ The communities were also similar in ways beyond economics. They shared comparable travel distances to their metropolitan neighbors (via the East-West tollway to Chicago and 69 Highway to Kansas City.) Each community modeled entrenched residential segregation patterns and strict zoning regulations, which produced primarily high-dollar, single-family housing, and benefited from a mixture of corporate, light industrial, and research employers.⁴ As community interest in a college grew, the campuses developed along similar lines ahead of legislative action, starting with a citizen-led lobbying group, door-to-door canvassing, externally backed feasibility studies, and eventual state legislative support. The institutions enjoyed positive feedback from the broader community at

³ "A Community College Study for Johnson County: A Report on the Need and Feasibility of a County Community College," December 1966, Early History of JCCC, Box 1, Folder 1, Johnson County Community College Archives, Overland Park, Kansas; Booz, Allen & Hamilton Junior College Planning Study, 1964, A 1.1, Box 1, Folder 1, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁴ Brian J. Miller, "Not All Suburbs are the Same: The Role of Character in Shaping Growth and Development in Three Chicago Suburbs," *Urban Affairs Review* 49, no. 5 (September 2013): 657.

the ballot box and surprisingly robust enrollments during their first semester of coursework leading to far-flung rented spaces serving as a disjointed campus until centralized services came together following a successful bond issue.

When the College of DuPage welcomed its first students, they were – even as the campus began – more likely to be non-White than residents in the surrounding community. A 1983 grant application notes 5.7% of students enrolled in 1973 were non-White,⁵ while the 1970 census indicates only 4.02% of DuPage County residents were.⁶ Since 1973, a comparison of historical census figures for DuPage county with data from the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System indicate the total non-White student enrollment has continued to outpace community non-White population, with Hispanic students making up the majority of both non-White enrollment and non-White residents.⁷

DuPage County was and is a Protestant, conservative place with an undercurrent of support for faith-based social justice initiatives.⁸ Its three largest higher education institutions in the 1960s included North Central College, the Evangelical Theological Seminary, affiliated with the

⁵ “Title III Grant Application,” 1983, H.3, Box 1, Binder 4, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁶ Steven Manson et al., IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System, V14.0 (2019), distributed by the University of Minnesota, <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V14.0>.

⁷ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 1980-2019, Enrollment; U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, (2000, 2005-2018).

⁸ Brian J. Miller and David B. Malone. "Race, Town, and Gown: A White Christian College and a White Suburb Address Race." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 112, no. 3 (2019): 298; Jerome M. Clubb, William H. Flanigan, and Nancy H. Zingale, *Electoral Data for Counties in the United States: Presidential and Congressional Races, 1840-1972*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 13 November 2006.

United Methodist Church, and Wheaton College, an evangelical protestant institution founded by abolitionists and home since 1981 to the Billy Graham Center and the Graham archives. In the 1960s, when protests surrounding civil rights and involvement in the Vietnam War came to the region, North Central and Evangelical Theological faculty actively led protests supporting new civil rights-related policies in the county. The faculty coordinated student trips to hear Dr. King speak in Chicago, organized teach-ins and marches in the area, and laboriously developed policy and positive sentiment for a community human rights council. After years of community organizing and fueled by the catalyst of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, the "Naperville Movement" succeeded in its efforts to see pass open housing ordinances in 1968.

DuPage County citizens took on the role of creating the college during a contentious time, both nationally and regionally. As anti-war and civil rights protests expanded from nearby Chicago into the suburbs, and well-off White residents fled west, college supporters canvassed their county, lobbied for state and local taxation support, absorbed a nearby campus and its accreditation status, and established an open-access institution in a community that was, by custom and practice, virtually closed to non-White residents. While the county was, as Berg mused in 1972, a "conservative location," the campus itself, at least in its academic offerings, student press, and institutional culture, became an adventurous place. From 1966 until the mid 1990s, the College experimented with an Oxonian college system, nurtured an occasionally left-leaning student newspaper, proposed regional service organizations, space academies, and robust research partnerships with the Atomic Energy Commission, and developed lasting community enrichment programming. As protest swirled around them, as their cities exploded in size, and as new employers forced considerable changes in community ethos, DuPage residents maintained their focus: to create a great community college campus.

Work for the college began during a time of rapid growth and change for DuPage County and the region. Between 1960 and 1970, DuPage County's population increased by 57%, following a 102% increase in the decade preceding, a near-crippling growth rate for the county's schools, which college boosters regularly highlighted in community talks.⁹ Over 70% of growth during the 1960s resulted from in-migration.¹⁰ Most of the county's new residents worked in Cook County, though newly developed and expanded businesses and industries added jobs in DuPage County, as well.¹¹ Among the groups relocating to or expanding in DuPage County, federally-backed and large-scale corporate employers operated in ways that ultimately shifted many community members' social mores. As DuPage County grew, movement on civil rights issues and program selection for the new College benefitted from external pressures applied by newly-sited potential employers.

The Atomic Energy Commission and Bell Laboratories offer especially vivid examples of the ways CoD supporters worked with area employers and the ways those employers helped change communities. In 1967, a CoD-commissioned educational needs study conducted by the Arthur D. Little Company reported on focus group meetings with representatives from 48 firms conducted to determine their workforce needs. Staff from the Atomic Energy Commission and Bell Laboratories facilities in DuPage County advised college planners on their current and

⁹ Theodore J. Lowi and Benjamin Ginsburg, *Poliscide: Big Government, Big Science, Lilliputian Politics*. (Lanham, PA: University Press of America, 1990), 176-178; "Shop Talk," 23 May 1972, College of DuPage Archives, A.1.7, Folder 4, College of DuPage Library.

¹⁰ *Poliscide*, p. 177.

¹¹ John Hudson, *Chicago: A Geography of the City and its Region*. (Santa Fe, NM: Center for American Places, 2006), 166; Booz, Allen & Hamilton Junior College Planning Study, 1964, A 1.1, Box 1, Folder 1, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

projected labor needs, for employees the College could train in terminal programs, and those it could prepare for transfer and additional education.¹² The AEC's leadership noted their critical needs for employees trained beyond the associates degree, but cited their need for technicians, as well, noting "the type of training being pursued [at community colleges] made students well-suited for success as technicians in the type of research and development activities associated with the atomic energy program."¹³ Likely because they employed many associate-degree holding engineers, Bell Laboratories leadership was more effusive. In addition to noting their corporate tuition repayment program, Bell cited its considerable need for technicians holding the associates degree in engineering.¹⁴ Employers touted their regional expansion plans, a trend also noted in the Little report as an inducement toward articulation agreements for formal training partnerships to be held at the college. Beyond their educational needs for additional employees, conversations about Bell and the AEC's expansion in the area eventually brought their employment policies to the attention of the regional and national press. In the federal government's case, particularly, site selection, housing availability, and racially restrictive selling practices combined to create an explosive situation that would shape DuPage County demographics for generations.

The Atomic Energy Commission began in 1965 a study to develop a new particle accelerator, at the time, the world's largest. After much study and site evaluation, the Joint Committee on the Control of Atomic Energy began hearings in February 1967, with six sites under consideration.

¹² Arthur D. Little, Inc., Developmental Plan for the College of DuPage, Vol. 1, June 1967, A 1.1, Box 1, Folder 3, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL, 72.

¹³ Little report, 82.

¹⁴ Little report, 148.

When it became clear the Weston site led in discussions as compared to the five other sites, leaders of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NCDH) and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) testified in support of delaying the accelerator's development in Weston. Their motivation: DuPage County's "notorious" legacy of denying potential Black homeowners the ability to purchase or rent property there via a combination of racially restrictive covenants and real estate broker practices.¹⁵ As discussed in hearings before the Committee, not only was Illinois one of 29 states without a fair housing law in place, but DuPage County realtors sued to avoid compliance with an executive order prohibiting racial discrimination by real estate brokers in Illinois.¹⁶

Employees' experiences at the AEC's nearby research and development installation at Argonne offered a compelling illustration. Argonne had for years drawn hundreds of Black employees whose ability to live in DuPage county was narrowly conscribed through a combination of racially restrictive covenants and realtor practice. In 1967, 97 percent of the

¹⁵ Representative Erlenborn, speaking on the 1968 authorization for the Atomic Energy Commission. U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, 90th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record 113, pt. 14:H17943; "Fair Housing May Decide Site of New AEC Lab," *NCDH Trends in Housing* 10, no. 6 (September 1966): 4. While later legal action included potential Hispanic homebuyers, both Congressional testimony and NCDH reporting focus on Black homeownership. Hispanic homeowners are the focus of *Hope, Inc. v. County of DuPage*, 738 F.2d 797 (7th Cir. 1984).

¹⁶ Robert Semple, *New York Times*. "Senate Approves Weston Site," 16 July 1967; A month later, fair housing hearings before the Senate further illuminated the complexities of housing policy in DuPage County. In the absence of federal and state guidance, thirteen communities in Illinois and two in DuPage County had fair housing ordinances with varying foci and of varying strength. Enacted between September 1963 and July 1967, the ordinances mentioned in testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Housing by James W. Cook, president of the Chicago-based Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities, served insufficiently as a patchwork solution to a national problem. James W. Cook, speaking on S. 1358, S. 2114, and S. 2280, 90th Cong. 1st sess., Congressional Record 113 (22 August 1967): S382.

Argonne facility's 238 Black workers drove more than 15 miles to get to work, while only a fifth of the 3,880 White employees did so. In a survey of Argonne employees, the Illinois Committee for a Fair Housing Law further determined only one non-White employee lived in DuPage county, while forty-seven percent of White employees lived there. Ninety-two percent of Argonne's non-White employees lived in Cook county, while only twenty-four percent of the White employees did.¹⁷

In contrast, Bell Laboratories' non-discrimination policies received considerable coverage in Chicago's Black press. In 1966, the telecommunications giant opened their DuPage County Indian Hills research facility in Naperville, working primarily on new telephone switching technology. Illinois Bell commissioned noted Illinois historian Paul M. Angle to conduct an interview series with President Raymond Ketchledge, which they published in serial form in newspapers throughout the state. Ketchledge notes the warm welcome of the DuPage area community and more prosaic requirements: transportation access, proximity to the Western Electric facility at Hawthorne and laboratory at Argonne, and the availability of "sheer brainpower... [and]... the excellence of the university climate."¹⁸ By the early 1970s, Bell Laboratories offered pre-engineering enrichment opportunities for college students at historically Black institutions and hosted multi-day celebrations of Black history and culture.¹⁹ Together,

¹⁷ "Negroes Drive to Distant DuPage Jobs," *Chicago Daily Defender* (Chicago, IL), 28 March 1967.

¹⁸ Illinois Bell Telephone Company, "Why Did Bell Laboratories Come to Illinois?" *Naperville Courier* (Naperville, IL), 14 November 1966.

¹⁹ "Bell Labs Promotes Chicagoan," *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), 1 July 1972; "Tuskegee Co-ed Loved Working Here," *Chicago Daily Defender* (Chicago, IL), 9 July 1972; "Black History Goes to Suburb," *Chicago Daily Defender* (Chicago, IL), 16 March 1972.

these two large employers advanced conversations in their communities about who belonged there, whether at the federal level in the case of the Atomic Energy Commission, or at the community level, in the case of Bell Laboratories.

Although the NCDH campaign to delay development of the Weston site ultimately failed, in part because all sites under consideration followed similarly restrictive covenants, NCDH advocacy did advance work toward open housing ordinances in Wheaton, Naperville, and Glen Ellyn.²⁰ Ann Durkin Keating emerges as one of the most useful voices in an effort to understand open housing policy development in the far western suburbs generally, and in DuPage County specifically. Her *Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis* offers an historical view of Chicago-area suburban growth, while her work on open occupancy campaigns in Naperville continues the narrative into the 1960s and narrows the earlier focus to DuPage County. Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, Keating indicates that the race- and class-homogenous suburban development typical of DuPage County during the 20th century was little more than a continuation of earlier population patterns from the 1890s. Keating posits that the development of suburban governments, distinct from township and state control, “did not create segregation, they responded to and fostered it.”²¹ With widespread transportation and technological advances and the expansion of infrastructure enabling them, people could easily live in one place and work in another, contributing, in Keating’s estimation,

²⁰ Philip Warden, “AEC Chairman Backs Weston Atomic Site, Answers Critics in Funds Hearing,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 January 1967; “Illinois Gets Huge Atom Plant: Atomic Energy Commission Given Open Housing Pledge,” *NCDH Trends in Housing* 11, no. 1 (January 1967): 1.

²¹ Ann Durkin Keating, *Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988), 124.

to neighborhoods increasingly segregated by race and class. Local administration by new suburban governments, then, directly controlled and contributed to continued and expanded segregation in newly developing suburban neighborhoods, even as some residents worked to counter the trend.²²

Open housing protests in Chicago's near suburbs entered the national discourse in 1965 with the Chicago Freedom Movement, the most ambitious of northern-focused non-violent, direct action protest activities during the civil rights movement.²³ The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Chicago-based Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO) under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., James Bevel, and Al Raby, worked toward two primary aims: the alleviation of slum conditions in the city, and shifting Americans' focus from primarily southern civil rights advocacy to broader, systemic questions of federal policy.²⁴ Although the Chicago Freedom Movement developed a set of broad secondary goals, its loudest voices focused consistently on housing safety, access and policy, broadly defined. By including demands beyond realtors' listings - including nondiscriminatory lending policy; increased sanitary and building safety services in minority neighborhoods; transparency regarding the racial hiring practices of firms doing business with the city; regular reporting of

²² *Building Chicago*, 123.

²³ Leonard S. Rubinowitz and Kathryn Shelton. "Symposium: The Fair Housing Act After 40 Years: Continuing the Mission to Eliminate Housing Discrimination and Segregation: Non-Violent Direct Action and the Legislative Process: The Chicago Freedom Movement and the Federal Fair Housing Act," *Indiana Law Review* 41, (2008).

²⁴ James R. Ralph. *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 130. Bevel quoted in David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Harper Collins, 1986), 452

slum owners; and citizens' review boards for police brutality claims, the Chicago Movement sought to make advocacy for equal rights more relevant to urban residents while influencing action on federal housing policy.

Organizers defended their focus on housing policy as part of Blacks' broader human rights. Subsequent studies of the movement note that despite limited successes of the Chicago Movement as a whole, its leaders were right to focus on residential segregation, which "facilitated *de facto* segregation in schools and facilities where segregation was outlawed."²⁵ As Birmingham and Selma protests influenced federal support for the 1964 Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, King, Bevel, Raby, and their upper-level leaders hoped action in Chicago would result in federal open housing legislation. After one planning meeting for the campaign, Al Raby told an interviewer, "we're going to broaden our interest - not just schools but housing, political emasculation, poverty, welfare, and jobs."²⁶ Veterans of direct action in Selma and Birmingham had many concerns about the northward focus. First among them was the challenge of confronting more subtle and sophisticated bias. SCLC lieutenant Andrew Young put it neatly when he noted in a planning meeting that Chicago residents "wouldn't be Bull Connor,"²⁷ meaning they would be unlikely to offer the kinds of sympathy-inducing television footage generated by the Birmingham and Selma protests.

²⁵ Preston H. Smith, "Class and Racial Democracy," in *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 205.

²⁶ Raby quoted in Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 447.

²⁷ Young quoted in Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 450.

In March 1966, King spoke at the Chicago Freedom Festival, a multi-day gathering of civil rights advocates and performers. King's rhetoric describing Blacks' challenges and Whites' behavior in the region employed images of division: walls, curtains, and "gargantuan structures of injustice."²⁸ The built environment had become activists' target, and destroying the architecture of northern segregation their aim. King's remarks at the festival called out factory owners, slumlords, city leaders, and White liberals in equal measure, though one of the speech's most memorable lines focused explicitly on the latter, and would have fallen on the ears of four busloads of students and faculty from DuPage County.²⁹ "Let me also appeal to our brothers of the White community for support in this monumentally significant movement against the slums. There can be no lasting escape for those of you who have fled behind the suburban curtain, for your Black brother yet languishes in the slums, crying out to you." Taking the appeal for equality into the suburbs challenged a different set of biases. As James Ralph, the Chicago Movement's historian, later noted, "it did spotlight like never before national attention on housing discrimination. This was a tough issue for a lot of White citizens across the country. They feared having a Black neighbor more than they did sitting next to a Black person at a lunch counter."³⁰

DuPage County newspapers covered extensively their local protests against new Black residents, even though they never escalated to the violence of protests in Cook County. The *Arlington Heights Daily Herald* reported on area speeches related to open housing advocacy in

²⁸ Martin Luther King, Jr. "Chicago Freedom Festival," 12 March 1966.

²⁹ Keating, "Behind the Suburban Curtain," 59.

³⁰ James R. Ralph quoted in Don Terry, "Northern Exposure," *Chicago Tribune Magazine* (15 January 2006).

DuPage County, including a November 1965 presentation by noted Chicago Freedom Movement leader Reverend James Bevel, and Erwin Salk, a Chicago real estate broker. The committee behind Bevel and Salk's remarks promoted a mission statement during the event noting their commitment to ensuring "no man is discriminated against when he seeks, especially in our own DuPage County, a place to worship, live, work... and to engage in other human pursuits."³¹

Beginning several weeks later, the *Paddock Publications* conglomerate ran an extended series which serves as an exemplar of the kind of reporting DuPage Countians who could not or would not attend King's speeches would have read. During the first quarter of 1966, the Paddock papers all ran a collection of editorials on open housing penned by Sherwood Ross, public relations director with the Chicago Urban League. Discussing topics including urban legends about home values in racially diverse communities, ways White homeowners could challenge unethical realty practices such as steering, and the difficulties of Black homebuyers who purchased in White suburbs, Ross brought the open housing fight to the suburban reader in his own way, and readers responded. The mostly positive letters to the editor thanked Ross for debunking myths about Black home ownership and for dispelling misconceptions that cause fear for White homeowners.³² "Forthright" editorials like those penned by Ross in his regular "Human Relations Beat" column reflected the shifting community ethos in the Western suburbs in clear contrast to the suburban White counter protests in Cicero. DuPage County's mostly

³¹ Jean Weston, "Warn of 'Fright, Flight' in Changing Neighborhoods," *Arlington Heights Daily Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 25 November 1965.

³² Sherwood Ross, "Human Relations Beat," *Arlington Heights Daily Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 23 January 1966; Ross, "Human Relations Beat," 30 January 1966; Ross, "Human Relations Beat," 13 February 1966; Herbert C. Morse, letter to the editor, *Brookfield Citizen*, 13 February 1964.

peaceful - if occasionally heated - conversations to develop an open community presaged the successful development of an equally open-access community college, and many advocates who wrote, canvassed, and telephoned in support of the Community College for DuPage group served in civic organizations equally active on the open housing front.³³

Ongoing federal interest in local housing policy due to the Weston development and the broader national focus on housing equity meant conversations about community college development regularly comingled with those about who could be a part of the DuPage community. For example, four months after the research firm accepted a contract to survey potential students and their families in the DuPage County area,³⁴ the Glen Ellyn Council on Racial Understanding began its work to “create a climate of understanding” in its neighborhood.³⁵ The group, chartered in February 1964 with 50 Glen Ellyn residents, began with “no definite program aimed at integrating Glen Ellyn,” though its end product, supported in newspapers throughout the county, ensured every property listed by 25 realtors in the West Suburbs via the Multiple Listing Service would default as a “nondiscriminatory listing,” unless the homeowner requested otherwise.³⁶ Religious, political, and civic groups held talks and

³³ Correspondence from Barbara Vogel to DuPage County League of Women Voters chapters, 15 April 1965; Correspondence from Mrs. Adrian E. Ostfield to Dr. William M. Staerkel, Booz, Allen, Hamilton; E-1.1, Box 1, Folder 10, President’s Office: Dr. Rodney Berg, Citizens Advisory Council. College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL; “LWV Topic is Open Housing,” *Arlington Heights Daily Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 14 June 1965.

³⁴ Booz, Allen-Hamilton to Dr. Glenn Pickerel, President, DuPage County Community College Association, 7 October 1963, E-1.1, Box 1, Folder 14, President’s Office: Dr. Rodney Berg, Citizens Advisory Council. College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

³⁵ “Glen Ellyn Group Faces Race Problem,” *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), 2 February 1964.

³⁶ Mary Schlott, “Suburbs Face Tough Issue,” *Arlington Heights Daily Herald*, 4. August 1966.

marches in support of open housing ordinances during the time Booz, Allen, Hamilton canvassed DuPage County residents. College and open housing supporters also crossed paths: the League of Women Voters in Addison and Naperville, and clergy in Itasca all hosted or wrote in favor of both the college's development and open housing efforts.³⁷ As contractors completed the community feasibility study, other local events beyond the question of open housing kept issues of racial equity front-of-mind for DuPage county residents.

Amid the swirling conversations about who could be a part of the DuPage community and the kinds of work residents could do, residents built local support for a new community college with a broad coalition of educators and a robust feasibility study. Since 1929, the area benefitted from Lyons Township Junior College, an institution modeled on Joliet Junior College, founded in 1901, as the state's – and the nation's – first junior college. The Joliet campus and its successes led to hundreds of similar institutions opening nationally during the subsequent 40 years. In Illinois, each of the early colleges shared several features: they were associated with a high school and often shared a name and instructional space; their administrative bodies and faculty were employees of the local school district; and their student enrollment was free or heavily subsidized by the districts. In short, early junior colleges in Illinois functioned as six-year high schools, with only institutional admissions criteria – in many early schools copied explicitly from the University of Illinois – acknowledging their more rigorous coursework after grade 12.³⁸ The newly established junior college campuses operated effectively as auxiliaries to high schools

³⁷ “Civil Rights Talks Planned,” *Arlington Heights Daily Herald*, 13 January 1966; “Touhy Speaks to Dem Club,” *Brookfield Citizen* (Brookfield, IL), 17 October 1963.

³⁸ Thomas L. Hardin, “The University of Illinois and the Community-Junior College Movement, 1901-1965,” *Illinois Historical Journal* 79, no. 2 (1986): 86.

until the 1960s, when the state's population explosion and new industrial and technological developments demanded a more systemic solution to training and university capacity.

By 1960 in DuPage County, Illinois' long-standing record of community college development contributed to local and state advocacy for new campuses. Early promotional materials occasionally mentioned Joliet Junior College as a kind of talisman leading the second generation of campus development and the state's return to higher education primacy. In order to accomplish their goal of creating a campus, however, local advocates needed three components – state bills approving creation of new community college districts and a new governing structure for them, as well as regional accreditation. In CoD's case, where local sentiment and action ran far ahead of state support, securing timely state endorsement proved frustrating, while the accreditation problem was far more easily solved.

Roy DeShane, then DuPage County Superintendent, began the earliest local push for a college in 1960, coordinating meetings among the ten high school districts in DuPage County and providing considerable guiding language for local feasibility studies and hoped-for state legislation. DeShane's local work began contemporaneously with one timely statewide study. When it was released in 1960, the state higher education report suggested junior college growth in Illinois languished because of tepid local and state support for new campuses and the absence of a state governing board for higher education and advised development of both. Importantly, by recommending development of an independent governing board for community colleges, the

1960 report preemptively addressed the status of Illinois community colleges by situating them explicitly within the broader structure of higher education – not primary school administration.³⁹

DeShane’s committee, while made up of school superintendents, ultimately advocated for a similar solution: a discrete institution more allied to the university system than the K-12 districts they represented, under independent state and local administration.⁴⁰ Lyons Township Junior College (LTJC), associated with Lyons Township High School, was then their nearest first-generation junior college and served as a model on which to recommend improvements for the new institution they sought. LTJC, which began operation in 1929 and continued until Lyons Township residents voted their campus’ disillusion and absorption by the College of DuPage district in 1967, enrolled around 700 students and offered robust academic and extracurricular programming in LaGrange, less than 20 miles from Glen Ellyn.

DeShane, like so many early advocates in the college’s history, understood and championed what practitioners today would call a comprehensive community college even as he used the older, “Junior College” term. In describing the institution they sought, DeShane’s committee outlined a multifaceted mission for their model institution familiar to any 21st century community college proponent: liberal arts transfer preparation at a lower price point than demanded by publicly funded universities; technical training informed by regional employer

³⁹ The Illinois Committee on Interinstitutional Cooperation, “Interinstitutional Cooperation Among Colleges and Universities in Illinois: A Report to the Illinois Commission of Higher Education by the Committee on Interinstitutional Cooperation” (Special Report No. 1, Springfield, IL, 1960), 22.

⁴⁰ Roy DeShane, “Superintendent Expresses Ideas on Junior College,” *Naperville Courier* (Naperville, IL), 30 November 1965.

demand; and cultural and artistic pursuits for local citizens' use.⁴¹ Despite DeShane's and the first committee's work to develop an institutional framework, by 1964, when the feasibility study was complete, DuPage County had no statewide support for the campus they sought to develop. Absent clear support from Springfield, area educators – including DeShane's original committee members and the superintendents who eventually followed them – worked to maintain local momentum on the community college initiative. DeShane's work to back improved understanding of regional need was practical and idealistic.⁴² Their most effective step to determine regional need was to commission the firm Booz, Allen, Hamilton to complete a feasibility study in 1963.

Booz, Allen, Hamilton's research noted expense and proximity as foremost in students' motivations for attendance at a community college, while potential employers faced “tremendous” shortages in skilled technical employees. Of special note, the study noted hiring practices at the largest nearby employer, Argonne Laboratories, “imported thousands” of trained technicians and scientists from the east and west coasts, and committee members feared new jobs at Bell Laboratories development would do so as well.⁴³ Further midwestern industrial development hinged on the availability of skilled labor, and DeShane's committee highlighted

⁴¹ DeShane, “Superintendent Expresses Ideas.”

⁴² Roy DeShane memo to DuPage County Superintendents, Principals, and Board Secretaries, 5 February 1963, E-1.1, Box 2, Folder 3, President's Office: Dr. Rodney Berg, Correspondence. College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL; Booz, Allen-Hamilton to Dr. Glenn Pickerel, President, DuPage County Community College Association, 7 October 1963, E-1.1, Box 1, Folder 14, President's Office: Dr. Rodney Berg, Citizens Advisory Council, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁴³ DeShane to DuPage County Superintendents.

the millions of workers who would be needed by the decade's end, while acknowledging no suitable training opportunity existed for those workers in DuPage County.⁴⁴

As DuPage County residents and educational administrators discussed their goals for a local community college and encouraged rapid state action to empower it, regional population growth fueled broader concerns regarding students' admission to in-state schools. The enrollment crisis reached a panicked state by the Fall of 1965 and gave campus advocates a new platform on which to build community support.⁴⁵ In the third, undated issue of the Community College for DuPage Bulletin, a selection of regional headlines formed a compelling, half-page collage: "Rising Costs Outstrip Parents' Ability to Pay College Bills," "College Enrollment Up 13 Pct. In Illinois," "Going to College? You May Face a Turndown," and "Few Four-Year Colleges, Universities, Still Have Room for Late Applicants."⁴⁶ All served to remind readers of the point highlighted in the topmost editorial, "DuPage Must be Sold on College." The capacity problem found print space in nearly every piece of literature distributed by the Citizens' Committee and proved a regular topic of conversation at public events. The College's nearest public transfer partner, Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, announced in spring 1964 that with 1,800 students on the waiting list for dormitory space they could accept no more students, unless they

⁴⁴ DeShane to DuPage County Superintendents.

⁴⁵ "Statistics Tell Story of Need for Junior College," *Arlington Heights Daily Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 30 September 1965.

⁴⁶ Bulletin No. 3, E-1.1, Box 1, Folder 10, President's Office: Dr. Rodney Berg, Citizens Advisory Council. College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

could secure housing of their own off campus. The University of Illinois turned away 2,800 prospective students in the same semester, due to campus overcrowding in Champaign-Urbana.⁴⁷

By fall 1965 University of Illinois rejections rose to 7,500. In letters to the parents of High School District 88 students, citizens' committee members noted that state universities alone soon "would be forced to turn away more than 50,000 students seeking admission."⁴⁸ The widespread distribution of Citizens Committee promotional materials and local newspaper coverage of the enrollment crisis meant parents and prospective College of DuPage students alike would have understood how unlikely immediate admission to a regional public university would be in 1966.⁴⁹ Stories about out-of-state tuition and unavailability of on-campus housing had for years demonstrated even to those lucky enough to secure admission that their university experience would be far less affordable than if they attended a local community college.⁵⁰ College of DuPage supporters went a step farther and translated their regional concerns to a national scale by explicitly linking the College of DuPage's role as an educational pressure valve to voters' patriotism. "The threat to our form of government and the future of our nation," they

⁴⁷ Booz, Allen-Hamilton, pp 28-29.

⁴⁸ Correspondence from District 88 Community College Committee to district residents, Box 1, Folder 10, President's Office: Dr. Rodney Berg, Citizens Advisory Council. College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁴⁹ "Statistics Tell Story."

⁵⁰ "College Needed," *Naperville Courier* (Naperville, IL), 2 December 1965; "Study Shows Need for Junior College in DuPage County," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), 12 September 1963; Guy G. Keller, "Junior College Most Economical Way to Provide Higher Education," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), 5 January 1965; John Culhane, "The Squeeze Tightens in Higher Education," *Chicago Daily News* (Chicago, IL), 29 March 1965.

wrote, “is obvious.”⁵¹ By communicating enrollment concerns in such a way, College of DuPage supporters found their most-used rhetorical device: approval of the community college became a critically important solution for enrollment capacity at universities and the only viable route to higher education – and the preservation of cultural norms – for suburban parents. While highlighting their practical and ethical motivations, Citizens Committee mailers also focused on educating the DuPage County community on what the proposed campus could offer.

As DuPage-area Fenton High School students returned to classes from winter break in 1964-5, their parents received a Citizens Committee educational mailer typical of what went to the broader community: a reminder to participate in the feasibility study and a brief primer on what a “junior college” could offer their children. “There is no reason whatever why [junior college instruction] cannot be of the same quality provided at any recognized college or university,” noted college advocates. “A junior college is ‘junior’ in name only since it covers the usual first two years beyond high school instead of the typical four years of college training.”⁵² In addition to targeted informational publicity encouraging parent participation in the community study, District 502 supporters also gave speeches and penned editorials encouraging participation in area newspapers.⁵³ In the course of Booz, Allen, Hamilton’s research among the DuPage County

⁵¹ District 88 Community College Committee memorandum to district voters, “A Community College for An Advancing Community,” 29 April 1965, Box A 1.7, Folder 7, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁵² “Junior College Need Discussed,” *Our Schools* (Hinsdale, IL), December 1965 13, no. 3. Box U, Folder 8, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁵³ “Jr. College Topic of Several BPW Group Discussions,” *Arlington Heights Daily Herald*; Memo from Austin Fleming to Members of College Citizens Committee, 2 September 1965, Box A 1.7, Folder 7, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

community during late 1963 and early 1964, two focused concerns emerged: college and university overcrowding and “rapidly rising” college costs.⁵⁴ Their report focused on the dire economic implications of not opening a college in DuPage County, detailing surrounding institutions’ limits on new student enrollment, popular out-of-state institutions limiting enrollment to only their in-state applicants, and even describing the amount of disposable income a likely family would gain per year by sending their children to a proposed local community college instead of nearby state or private institutions.⁵⁵ Given the degree and tone of public participation in the feasibility study, by the summer of 1964 the vote for a college seemed imminent and certain to pass, but the area would not hold a referendum until early December 1965. What held things up was an ageing, Byzantine process in dire need of update.

Everything – from local advocacy to momentum behind local referenda – went on hold during the spring of 1965 as DuPage residents waited for state bureaucracy to catch up with their local groundwork. In the interim, regional press celebrated enthusiastic community support for a college and published regular articles to keep the community college question fresh in readers’ minds.⁵⁶ Citizens’ Committee volunteers continued their listening sessions and informational mailings, generating most of the local coverage. Reporters also offered occasional needling. Updates on legislative movement in Springfield focused on the state’s slow pace. *The Junior*

⁵⁴ Booz, Allen, Hamilton report, 132.

⁵⁵ Booz, Allen, Hamilton report, 132

⁵⁶ “Cautious Enthusiasm for Junior College,” *Arlington Heights Daily Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL) 28 January 1965; “Juco Benefits Outweigh Costs,” *DuPage County Register* (Woodale, IL) 2 March 1965; “Juco Most Economical Way to Provide Higher Ed,” *Naperville Courier* (Naperville, IL) 5 March 1965; “Still Hope for November Junior College Election,” *Paddock Publications* (Wheaton, IL).

College Bill of 1965 began its journey through the state house in late spring, and passed in June 1965, affording communities the ability to create Class I or II districts. As a Class I designate, the proposed DuPage district encompassed all of its namesake county and parts of Cook and Will counties. By law, as a Class I district, it also had at least \$75 million in assessed valuation and a population of at least 30,000, easily met criteria in DuPage County. The new statute also set broad guidelines for curriculum: at least 15% of the institution's course offerings, when established, would have to be occupational in nature.

Within days of securing legislative support DuPage-area papers urged quick action from the Governor's office to sign the bill and appoint the state's governing Board.⁵⁷ The Citizens Committee continued public fora and literature advocating for the college and reminded attendees of a tentative referendum date in October which would create the district as allowed. Reporters in attendance at the community meetings noted no public opposition amid continued positive investigative reporting on the proposed College's economic benefit to individual families, the community, and employers. As the hoped-for referendum date approached, reporters continued their reminders of teens' certain disappointment should they seek enrollment in a state university. "There is still a tragic unawareness among the citizens of this state of how unprepared the state system of higher education is for the coming wave of students," the Arlington Heights *Daily Suburban* reported in September 1965.

An editorial cartoon in Paddock Publications' August 19 issue poked at the Governor's pace in making appointments to the state board, showing a dozing man labeled the "DuPage Citizens Committee" next to the closed door of the State Junior College Board office. The board's

⁵⁷ "Hearing on College will be Postponed," *Bensenville Register* (Bensenville, IL), 17 June 1965.

inaccessibility, indicated by a “not admitted yet” sign on its office doorknob, seems all the more worrisome because of a vast and vaguely menacing nearby tropical plant, labeled the “Junior College Population,” looming over the entire scene.⁵⁸ Paddock’s accompanying editorial acknowledged Governor Otto Kerner’s workload, and encouraged “early appointment of the [state community college] board,” as required by the bill creating the new districts, to allow DuPage residents to continue their work.⁵⁹ Paddock congratulated DuPage County residents on their approval of community college funding, acknowledging that they “do not always give a gracious reception to referenda asking for even more of their money,” and suggested an “active sales campaign” waged by residents to convince the state that their local college plan was sound.⁶⁰ DuPage-area impatience also gained broader coverage in articles running in the *Chicago Tribune*, and local college-produced radio, all sympathetic to the community boosters’ urgency and frustration with Kerner’s delay while continuing to question the state board’s slow movement.⁶¹

When the State Board met in September 1965, its first order of business was consideration and approval of the application to form the College of DuPage’s Junior College District. When CoD advocates received word of the state Board’s appointment soon after, they renewed public meetings with hundreds of area residents to rekindle interest ahead of the local referendum. Area

⁵⁸ “All Waiting Except,” *Arlington Heights Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 19 August 1965.

⁵⁹ “DuPage Must be Sold on College,” *Arlington Heights Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 19 August 1965.

⁶⁰ “DuPage Must be Sold on College” and “All Waiting Except” cartoon. p. 47.

⁶¹ “Unless Board acts Pronto,” *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), 17 August 1965; “‘Ideas in Action’ Panelists Discuss Community College,” *Daily Herald* (Chicago, IL), 7 October 1965.

employers actively supported the Committee's work, including public relations and communications employees at Bell and Argonne, who served on the sub-committees tasked with community promotion and organization. Local elected representatives also contributed to the conversation in speeches and opinion pieces in area newspapers, reinforcing the College Committee's focus on the higher education enrollment crisis. "Just one look at our exploding population in the DuPage County area should convince the skeptic of the need for this educational program."⁶² In early December 1965 voters approved the initiative by a "sound," better than 2:1, margin.⁶³ Wesley Johnson, who soon would become one of the first Trustees of the new College, noted his surprise in such robust approval on his copy of the West Chicago Press; underlines, brackets, and a large annotation repeating the vote totals convey his pleasure at the degree of community approval for the College.⁶⁴

The Citizens' group quickly re-focused on electing a board of trustees for the institution. Three days into the monthlong filing period, twenty candidates entered the race, and by election day on 29 January, 41 names filled the open ballot. Johnson, a former superintendent and the only candidate endorsed by two of the community college district's K-12 districts, was easily elected, along with an engineer from Bell Laboratories, recently retired professors of pharmacy and dentistry at the University of Illinois, the heads of Northern Illinois Gas, Inland Steel, and

⁶² "Sen. Fawell Supports County College Plan," *Addison Register* (Addison, IL). 25 November 1965.

⁶³ "Junior College Plan Given Sound Voter Approval," *The West Chicago Press* (West Chicago, IL). 9 December 1965.

⁶⁴ "Sound Voter Approval," Wes Johnson's handwritten notes reflect the vote totals, and several brackets highlight sections throughout.

Elmhurst National Bank. Of the seven, three worked with the Citizens' Committee, and five had either K-12 or higher education teaching experience. Five also had ties to either business and industry or regional government.⁶⁵ At their first meeting a week after the election, the board determined term lengths, elected a president and secretary, and established a timeline for the retention of an accountant, counsel, and presidential consultant.

In April 1966, Board of Trustees president George Seaton issued a press release announcing a consultant's hire to fill the position of President for Junior College District 502. George Hall, then director of the Midwest Community College Leadership Program at the University of Michigan, had joined the Board for lunch a month before to determine what they hoped to find in an executive. During their lunch meeting, Hall warned the board they could expect 75 or more applications, but cautioned they were also seeking applicants during a challenging time: with over 50 new junior college campuses opening in the year prior, and many organizing at the same time as DuPage, securing "high caliber" applicants was "becoming a very difficult problem."⁶⁶ Hall's retention as consultant did not mean he would be the sole point of contact before candidates met the board, however. He worked closely with two other members of the screening committee, Leland Medsker, then Associate Director of the Center for Studies of Higher Education at the University of California, Berkeley, and Frank Endicott, then director of University Placement at Northwestern University.

⁶⁵ "Sketches Given of Junior College Candidates," *Arlington Heights Daily Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 27 January. 1966.

⁶⁶ Hall meeting notes, 16 March 1966, Box H.1, Wes Johnson correspondence, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

Just over a month after their meeting, the board mailed 5-page posting packets to state and national community college leaders, universities with terminal degree programs, and educational consultants' offices. The posting recalls Roy DeShane's interest in a comprehensive community college mission, listing the College's objectives as: transfer curricula; educational experiences for semi-professional training; general educational training; academic and occupational counseling; and a program of community service. In addition to a brief precis of District 502, the board noted their tentative opening date: September 1968. Qualifications included an age range of 35-55, an earned doctorate, and at least five successful years in development and leadership in education or business. The board's final point required applicants to be familiar with and believe in the comprehensive community college. Applications and referrals poured in, though perhaps not at the clip of which Hall warned. Handwritten notes on board secretary Johnson's copy of the candidate roster from the end of April 1966 include particulars for 50 applicants, and indicate – perhaps unsurprisingly, given his decades of experience in education – that he favored those with experience teaching at and establishing community colleges.

As an applicant, Rodney Berg brought more to starting the College of DuPage than the Board requested in their posting. When he applied, Berg was president of Everett Junior College in Everett, Washington. Previously, he had served as president of Highline College in Seattle and brought experience as a faculty member and mid-level administrator with leadership roles in student services and academic affairs. Prior to his shift to educational administration, Berg was a music faculty member at the community college and high school levels, totaling 21 years of experience in education. In 1966, Berg was immediate past president of the Washington Council of Community College Presidents and the Northwest Association of Junior Colleges, served on the steering committee of the Education Commission of the States, and was a member of the

board of directors of the American Association of Junior Colleges. Although handwritten notes indicate Berg's educational experience made him an exceptional candidate, Berg also brought an impressive military service record, having served in the European Theater as a flying artillery observation officer in the Army during WWII.⁶⁷ Trustee Johnson noted on Berg's application his extensive experience in community colleges and his leadership role in regional and national interest groups, the most extensive emendations to any applicants' information.⁶⁸

Berg's hire recommendation went before the Board on the first of July, and he began work on the fifth. Within the week, open housing protests supported by local clergy and attended by around 200 began in nearby Oak Park. The regional press covered protest activities with clear communication of the protestors' goals and poked fun at the counter-protestors as well. (When a car drove by protestors engaged in a call-and-response of "What do we want? / Freedom!" and the driver stuck his head out of his window to unleash a string of profanity in their direction, "the marchers exchanged amused glances; they seemed to have a different idea as to the identity of the 'fools.'")⁶⁹ Despite considerable additional coverage in the local press of local protests, discussion of slums and their solutions, and concerns about Black power rhetoric, no evidence of regional civil rights agitation appeared in college board meetings or in the institution's first newsletter, which ran in Fall 1966. What did appear in the first few newsletters offered readers a

⁶⁷ Treolar Biographical Statement, 29 May 1967, Berg Box E.1, Folder 19.

⁶⁸ Wes Johnson presidential search notes, Box H.1, Folder 5, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁶⁹ Sally Leighton, "Freedom Marchers Find Oak Park Takes them in Stride: Realtor Takes Marchers Calmly," *Arlington Heights Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), 7 July 1966.

glimpse of the campus' internal workings: announcement of the college's formal name; a brief history of the institution; discussion of the Little study that would inform the campus' master plan; funding concerns; and regular "message from the president" columns in which Berg championed "the junior college concept" and CoD's "aims to restore Illinois leadership" as the exemplar of junior college systems in the country.⁷⁰

Early programming benefitted from the feasibility study and large advisory boards convened to support the Little, Company educational needs survey, but the Lyons Township Junior College (LTJC) district's decision to join district 502 and the College of DuPage's absorption of LTJC accreditation, students, and faculty considerably accelerated programming discussions. After considerable discussion and debate, in November 1966, Lyons Township voters petitioned the Illinois Junior College Board for approval to merge with the College's district, and in February approved their decision in an 8:1 vote.⁷¹ The LTJC merger brought in a core of faculty and some administrative staff while greatly reducing DuPage's rush to navigate its first accreditation review. LTJC's students, numbering around 700, benefitted from their institution's nearly forty years in operation, and expressed pride in CoD's retention of the Lyons Township High School building. New College of DuPage students, meanwhile, welcomed a group of their peers from LaGrange who were engaged, active in extracurricular clubs and organizations, and excited about the merger.

⁷⁰ "DuPage Newsletter," 1967, Box E 1.1, Folder 14, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁷¹ "State Board Will Ponder Junior College Merger," *Brookfield Citizen* (Brookfield, IL), 22 December 1966.

Campus Chimes, the LTJC newspaper, published several articles reviewing the merger discussion. As Lyons Township residents circulated the petition in November, students expressed their “eager[ness] for the many advantages the merger would provide.” After the vote, the editor of the *Brookfield Citizen* described it as a “Hobson’s choice,” and newspaper staff chided community supporters for their Esau-like gullibility while comparing the vote’s validity to “one of Hitler’s little plebiscites.”⁷² LTJC students cheered the results. The merger, students noted, would “offer tremendous advantages... in the atmosphere of a university.”⁷³ In the same issue announcing student field trips to Bell Laboratories and upcoming campus mixers and socials, the paper covered the confusion around class locations, a tentative timeline for the new campus’ opening, and the names of 29 faculty members who tentatively had agreed to employment offers from the College of DuPage. LTJC students also discussed their concerns about credit transfer and shifting to the quarter system.⁷⁴ Student and community concerns dissipated over time, while the increased programming and CoD’s retention of LTJC faculty, administration, and classroom space in its temporary arrangements likely dulled some of the Lyons community’s frustration.

⁷² “The Editor Says: Hobson’s Choice” and “Our Citizen Staff Members Write: Esau Gets Euchred Again,” *Brookfield Citizen* (Brookfield, IL), 2 February 1967.

⁷³ “Vote Yes On Merger!: LTJC To Merge with DuPage,” *Lyons Township Junior College Campus Chimes* (LaGrange, IL), 17 February 1967, Box B 2, Folder 7, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁷⁴ “New System,” *Lyons Township Junior College Campus Chimes* (LaGrange, IL), 3 March 1967; “Faculty Makes the Switch: More News on the Merger,” *Lyons Township Junior College Campus Chimes* (LaGrange, IL), 23 March 1967, Box B 2, Folder 7, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

Once hubbub surrounding the LTJC merger died down, and their accreditation transferred to the College of DuPage in July 1967, the campus entered a frenzied rush to finalize its distributed locations, staffing needs, and their students' enrollment. By early September, the Board held leases on 14 locations, and following registration, opened with 2,619 enrolled students. Although Berg wrote to his administrative cabinet just four days before classes encouraging them all to bring "all matters relating to the interpretation of college operation and operational needs" to his desk so Academic Dean Shanberg could focus on "the recruitment of faculty and to the processes involved in curriculum development," the College managed to open its doors as planned with 87 faculty.⁷⁵ Limiting Shanberg's recruiting demands somewhat, nearly a third of the DuPage instructional staff had moved over from LTJC, and their dean of instruction became the new institution's Vice President of Administration. In Harold Bitting, Berg found a seasoned faculty member with local experience, and Bitting's portfolio included liaising with the Illinois Junior College Board in addition to policy and procedure development and articulation agreements.⁷⁶

When classes began in September 1967, President Berg managed a campus distributed across 15 sites, 14 of which housed instruction. Students cheerfully – though perhaps cheekily – adopted the Roadrunner as their mascot, thanks to the over 100-mile circuit traversed by many to get to their courses. Parking and traffic jams, students noted in the first issue of their newspaper, less than a month after classes started, "posed problems" at all of the campus units, but especially

⁷⁵ "College Opens Doors Sept. 25," *Roselle Register* (Roselle, IL), 25 August 1967.

⁷⁶ "DuPage College Referendum Set May 6: Seek Bond Sale to Build New Campus," *Roselle Register* (Roselle, IL), 19 March 1967.

the National Chiropractic College in Lombard and Glen Crest Junior High in Glen Ellyn.⁷⁷

Student journalists regularly covered events at all 14 instructional sites, noting areas for students to relax and congregate, places to eat between classes, and the aforementioned challenge of shifting thousands of students around so many locations several times a day. They also contributed, far more visibly than any other member of the campus community than Berg, to the conversation about what the College of DuPage should be. Editorials and feature articles alike focused on the question of campus culture.

Beginning in earnest from the first semester of classes, the weekly campus newspaper also grappled with the era's common questions concerning politics and protest. Coverage was, usually, tied to events: there were no series running on open housing conflicts, for instance, as in regional dallies. The irregular coverage of community unrest began just weeks after classes started. In the 24 October 1967 issue of the *Courier*, an editorial questioning the tendency of police officers to overreact when faced with peaceful protest closed by questioning if "equality in civil rights supercede[s] equality in enforcement of the law."⁷⁸ The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968 led to another cycle of articles and letters on King's legacy, while a student-coordinated, multi-car caravan delivering necessities to those who had lost homes or possessions to the riots that tore through Chicago after his murder yielded several articles as well.⁷⁹ Student commentary also focused on more conservative topics. Articles and opinion

⁷⁷ "Parking Poses Problems at Major Campuses," *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 10 October 1967.

⁷⁸ "Why Clobber The Students?" *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 24 October 1967.

⁷⁹ "Students Spark Drive to Help Riot Victims," *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 11 April 1968.

pieces related to presidential elections featured heavily in papers from early spring right up until the election, with coverage of campus straw polls, local candidate visits, and the occasional political cartoon or barb. The most enjoyable of these included a series of comedic poems poking fun at both Democrats and Republicans during the spring of 1968, posted as letters to the editor over pseudonyms. The writer's identity is lost, but his jibes, which ran periodically in the weekly paper, skewered both parties – and independents – with a sharp wit.⁸⁰ Poison-pen battles in the editorial section lightened more mundane fare. Although features on state, national, and international politics were common, the bulk of coverage focused on local news – campus news.

Feature articles on the surprising rate of growth, at CoD and in community colleges nationally, centered their new campus as a state and national model, “The junior college is a unique development,” reporter Jill Berger quoted Instructional Resource Center head Richard Ducote a month after classes started. It helps “students to retain their own identity,” in a way that would be impossible on larger, university campuses.⁸¹ In one editorial representative of the tone, students noted a theme echoed by campus leadership and in broader national conversations, “We have been called the restless youth,” the editors wrote, and “there are many schools we could attend,” but in order to offer what it should to students, they asked that the campus “quell students’ restlessness,” by offering them the “chance to think rather than memorize, to listen rather than hear, to see rather than notice, and to understand rather than accept” as they learned

⁸⁰ Letter to the Editor, *College of DuPage Courier*, (Glen Ellyn, IL), 16 November 1967, 28 March 1968, 4 April 1968, 11 April 1968, 25 April 1968, 2 May 1968.

⁸¹ Jill Berger, “Junior College Will Play Major Role in Future Education: Ducote,” *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 16 November 1967.

about the world around them. The college, “still new in its cradle,” provided something universities could not: the flexibility to respond to student needs.⁸² Even as heated discussions about newspaper staff and student leaders’ dissatisfaction with CoD students’ engagement ran through letters to the editor and editorial commentary, students expressed excitement about the scope of opportunities available to them at such a new institution. A new campus, even a commuter campus dispersed across more than a dozen locations, offered students hope that they could shape a more powerful student voice for “reform in curriculum, grading, ... draft board processes, campus demonstrations, all formerly decisions made exclusively by the administration and faculty,” while still committed to “student/administration democracy.”⁸³

Especially in off-campus commentary, President Berg focused on his commitment to the kind of flexible, responsive institution students demanded, even as the college itself became more structurally rigid and began construction on its permanent campus.⁸⁴ Flexibility, even restlessness in leadership, proved a hallmark of Berg’s tenure. One eloquent example of Berg’s restive nature appeared when the Illinois Conference on Higher Education met at Allerton Park in November 1970. As president of a rapidly growing institution, Berg was a likely candidate for a leadership role in the event, and was asked to offer a keynote related to program development at the new college. Despite a note of frustration in his introduction that his recent work had been

⁸² “Learn vs. Taught,” *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 11 January 1968.

⁸³ Jack Kennedy, “New Student Power?” *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 28 March 1968.

⁸⁴ Linda Klein, “DuPage College Seeks Bond O.K.,” *The Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), 5 May 1967.

more focused on “budgets, buildings, and boards,” than the topic requested by conference organizers, Berg delivered remarks on “Trends in Program Development.”⁸⁵ Two points from the address bear scrutiny. Berg noted continued concern regarding the vast numbers of students “pouring” into higher education, and worries that the “rapidly changing” demand for new programs could outstrip the academy’s capacity to accommodate them. Berg’s description of the need for continued program upgrade could have come straight from the *Courier’s* editorial pages: the institution, centered as it was on academic and corporate training demands, must heed “the student’s quest for relevance in the curriculum,” to keep it from becoming “unimaginative [,] listless. . . [and] extraneous to the urgent social issues of the day.”

Concerns about rising costs factored into Berg’s talk, since education lacked the ability to offset increasing costs by price setting, as in business, and had to maintain its role in the social contract. A “repressive public environment” increased pressures on public higher education and program planning. “The effect of violence on campus and student rebellion,” Berg noted, “has had its concomitant results in an increased citizen reaction and legislative concern as to the nature and quality of the educational program.”⁸⁶ Increased attention to campus protest also generated increased focus on the ways public monies funded higher education. Speaking as he did, just six months after the shootings at Kent State and College of DuPage’s vast, peaceful protest in support of their fellow students, Berg’s remarks must have highlighted for many in the

⁸⁵ Rodney Berg, “Trends in Program Development” (Speech, Illinois Conference on Higher Education, Allerton Park, IL, 12-13 November 1970), Box 1, Folder 30, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁸⁶ Berg, “Trends in Program Development.”

audience the value of “freedom of expression within reasonable behavior” the president championed in response to the deadly protests in Ohio.⁸⁷

Although the problems of campus unrest seemed to occupy Berg’s thoughts, his remarks on programming also highlight a focus on developing more progressive and responsive academic offerings, even at the expense of tradition. Berg described educational opportunities at CoD and his faculty members’ focus on programming and curriculum development while noting wryly the challenges of making programmatic offerings more progressive. “The spine at College of DuPage may be expressed as individualization of learning,” Berg explained, and proceeded to tug at the barriers he faced: faculty intransigence to change “when one has lectured to a class of forty three times a day for lo these many years;” and public sentiment favoring “methods that were good enough for me when I was in school.” The individualized learning focus at CoD compared favorably to similar work in the past: Socrates, Walt Whitman, and Jesus all figured into Berg’s historical recitation of the kinds of advances he sought in Glen Ellyn. The concrete examples Berg offered included his Alpha One “experiment in which [they] have literally thrown away the book,” in favor of experiential exploration “of modern social problems and specialized

⁸⁷ Rodney Berg to all faculty and staff, 5 May 1970, E 1.1 Box 2, Folder 5, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL. The memo reads in full: “It is with deepest concern that we view the shocking tragedy at Kent State University. These needless deaths and injuries proceed out of turbulent conditions and rising emotions brought about by political decisions that most of us do not fully comprehend. May I urge all of you to do your utmost to encourage students, first, that they have the freedom to express their personal feelings about current events; but, second, to respond within responsible limits and recognition of the right of all people during these tense moments. It occurs to me that we have a good opportunity to enhance the nature of our students’ educational experience if we can develop an atmosphere of freedom of expression within a rational behaviour. I will personally be most grateful for your efforts along these lines as we carry out our daily tasks.”

research.” Students in Alpha One worked with professionals, including the curator at the Shedd Aquarium, experienced their college as a living laboratory through design and construction of CoD’s campus greenhouse space, and worked in the “Field Station in Urban Living,” studying various disciplines as “these suburbanite young people” lived in an urban setting.⁸⁸ Rather than sheltering College of DuPage students from protest, unrest, and the other, Rodney Berg supported development of curriculum that exposed his students to the conflict-ridden region on their doorsteps.

By late 1971, five years into his term and after navigating the challenge of creating a new institution, widespread campus protests, and state-level demands for more stringent control of campus culture, Berg seemed to grow restive in ways on-campus program development could not satisfy. Ultimately, Berg found a new stimulus in an attempted return to the classroom. Although such a choice would have been reasonable, especially given the state’s continuing need for well-trained administrators, Berg did not opt to teach in the nearby graduate programs at Northern Illinois, North Central, or Northwestern, or even in undergraduate courses at CoD. After several months of correspondence, Berg accepted an uncompensated position on the Board of Trustees at Laurence University in Sarasota, Florida. Two of Berg’s cabinet members enrolled at Laurence in 1970 to complete their terminal degrees, and partially in response to their positive experiences during coursework, Berg served as their thesis advisors during part of 1972.⁸⁹ That same year, Berg accepted the offer of an adjunct position in the Laurence Ed.D. program teaching one course during the summer of 1972 and began preparing for the course during the

⁸⁸ Rodney Berg, “Trends in Program Development.”

⁸⁹ “College Denies Newspaper PhD Charges” and “Taxpayers did not foot my bill: Paris,” *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 18 May 1972.

spring. Berg tackled the course preparation with relish, beginning a national correspondence with his community college peers from Illinois, Washington, and the American Association of Junior Colleges to determine other executives' thoughts on the challenges facing the community colleges of the 1970s.⁹⁰ His excitement was short-lived.

News of Berg's appointment made front-page news in the College of DuPage *Courier* and in DuPage County newspapers, then the *Chicago Tribune*, in February 1972. Letters and visitors to Berg's office challenged his support of a "diploma mill," a sentiment repeated in the regional reporting⁹¹ and discussion of Berg's role at Laurence raged in the *Courier*. Faculty expressed considerable concern that administrators could qualify for partial tuition reimbursement for the one-year hybrid correspondence program, and following completion would be eligible for salary increases. Others challenged as a conflict of interest Berg's role as thesis advisor for his College of DuPage employees. Broader regional reporting tied the explosion of short-term, limited residency programs in higher education administration to the explosive growth of community colleges nationally, a sentiment Berg echoed in correspondence with the press and when he wrote Laurence's president to resign,⁹² hoping the "embarrassment" could be corrected.

⁹⁰ Memorandum, "Change and Junior College Education," Rodney Berg to American Association of Junior Colleges and Northwest Association of Junior Colleges colleagues, 25 April 1972, Box E 1.1, Folder 26, College of DuPage Archives.

⁹¹ Barbara Sutton, "College Defends Faculty Schooling," *The Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), 17 May 1972.

⁹² Karen Hasman, "DuPage Educator Severs 'Diploma Mill' Ties," *Chicago Daily News* (Chicago, IL), 15 May 1972; Rodney Berg to Charles Palermo, 23 May 1972, Box 1, Folder 26, College of DuPage Archives.

In the same pages where discussion of Berg's moonlighting and College employees' enrollment at Laurence University raged, the institution began to make public its commencement speaker for the 1972 graduation ceremony. The commencement committee, a group of faculty and staff from across the institution, had broad latitude in the ceremony's organization and tenor, and notes from the 1972⁹³ committee are the only commencement committee records in Berg's correspondence aside from the inaugural 1967 ceremony. In 1972, the only commencement speaker the committee brought to Berg's attention was Julian Bond, a State representative from Georgia. The institution booked the civil rights leader as its speaker the previous July, but only made his selection public beginning in March. Bond could have been a polarizing figure. Censured by the House in 1966 for his vocal opposition to the Vietnam War, Bond's reputation as a leader of civil rights and anti-war protests generated considerable local coverage in the *Courier* and DuPage County newspapers. Most of the local press reprinted the College's press release noting his anti-war stance, other state representatives' opposition to Bond's installation in the legislature, and celebratory acknowledgement of the "example of the force Bond helped to create" in increasing Black Mississippians' voting participation.⁹⁴ While the release acknowledged briefly the graduation of 1,000 students in the ceremony, the majority of its length was made up of Bond's accomplishments and the coup achieved in securing him. The *Courier's* effusive praise only mirrored Berg's own apparent satisfaction at the civil rights leader's impending speech.

⁹³ Minutes of the Commencement Committee, March 1972, Box E 1.1, Folder 19.

⁹⁴ Julie Armentrout, "College of DuPage to Graduate 1,000," College of DuPage press release, 25 May 1972, Vol. H-8, 8.2.

As the convention center filled well before the ceremony was due to start on June 7, and the air conditioner failed, Bond's booking agent called the college to confirm the Representative's location. Bond had not arrived, explained CoD staff, and as minutes dragged on, Bond's staff eventually confirmed that the Representative was on a plane from Los Angeles and would not make it to Chicago in time to serve. Berg took the podium and apologized to the full convention center and the hundreds of attendees watching via CCTV. He delivered brief remarks of his own, acknowledging the gathered students' achievements and their great promise in serving a country in dire need of their knowledge, and thanked the thousands of assembled family members for their patience and grace in accepting a far less luminous speaker than what had been planned.

While he worked to build a community college worthy of national recognition, many of Rodney Berg's attempts to make the College of DuPage a progressive, forward-thinking, institution where students could experience the world beyond DuPage county's protective shell worked more effectively than the failed plan to host a renowned civil rights leader for commencement, or Berg's interest in teaching and leadership outside of Illinois. A careful read of Berg's correspondence indicates his desire to "find a fight" usually channeled itself into more practical concerns.⁹⁵ In addition to the campus' Oxonian structure, which was revolutionary (if only moderately effective) in its own right, two topics show Berg's continued push for something beyond the traditional community college: his interest in supporting the national atomic energy and space programs and his correspondence on campus protests.

⁹⁵ "Berg: A Realist," *Arlington Heights Daily Herald Suburban Chicago* (Arlington Heights, IL), 28 October 1968.

The College of DuPage began a relationship with the Atomic Energy Commission before the college even formally existed. Public relations staff from Argonne served in advisory capacities for the feasibility studies conducted by Booz, Allen, Hamilton and Little, Company:⁹⁶ once the college sought instructional space for its students, Argonne National Laboratories lent, at no cost to the College, laboratory and classroom space for chemistry, mathematics, and language classes. The long and mutually beneficial relationship seemed to influence President Berg's interest in something more robust. Beginning in the summer of 1974, Berg began correspondence on campus and with the Illinois Junior College Board to determine if the College could offer specialized courses at the facility for CoD students and Argonne employees, but there were concerns that part of the Laboratory was outside district 502's boundaries. The area in dispute, Berg noted, bore no tax revenue, and if CoD agreed to admit students enrolled on the Glen Ellyn campus from that area without chargebacks, it would result in a net savings for the student and the county. The Junior College Board agreed. By July 1974, the College formally annexed the part of the Lemont Township High School district containing the Laboratory, and within weeks, college staff planned course offerings in the sciences and computer programming,⁹⁷ course offerings which continued until the 1990s in Sigma College.⁹⁸ Berg's efforts to expand the College's relationship with Argonne National Laboratory benefitted from a strong foundation,

⁹⁶ Argonne National Laboratory staff participation acknowledged in Bulletin, "Sponsors Dinner for A Community College for DuPage County," 2 September 1965, Box A 2.1, Folder 7, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁹⁷ Rodney Berg to Fred Wellman, Secretary, Illinois Community College Board, June-August 1974, Box A 2.1, Folder 7, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

⁹⁸ "College of DuPage: An Open Door For Education," promotional brochure, Box E 2.4, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

both personally through the Argonne employees who had volunteered their time to support the College's earliest efforts, and professionally, in the facilities sharing relationship they enjoyed during 1967-1968. The interpersonal relationships grew into formal policy, approved by the state Board, and continued for decades, long after his departure.

Berg's hopeful efforts toward supporting the national space program had far less of a working relationship on which to rest, and though it resulted in a stirring speech and a well-researched White paper, the efforts foundered. In February 1969, as he was "in the throes of developing a master plan for... the College," Berg presented to the Foundation Board a lengthy proposal he introduced as being related to his thoughts on science curriculum and related programming.⁹⁹ Berg noted that the College of DuPage could do more to contribute to the "vast explosion of scientific knowledge" by developing a Space Center.¹⁰⁰ The center and its research facilities would be open and available to the faculty and students at neighboring institutions, leading to stronger relationships with transfer partners, who could teach credit classes within the space; community members who could complete adult continuing education courses; and K-12 teachers, who would have access to the space for improving their own classroom instruction. The Space Center offered opportunities in technology and science, obviously, but also could provide those who visited with new places to contemplate broad philosophical questions of human existence. Oceanography and astronomy, as "objects of the most intensive scientific and technologic effort in the history of man," featured broadly in the Board proposal, and the

⁹⁹ Rodney Berg to College of DuPage Board of Trustees, "Space Center Proposal," 17 February 1969, Box E 1.1, Folder 19. College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

¹⁰⁰ "Space Center Proposal."

College's work toward a Space Center would "enable the residents of our area to fully comprehend the scope of these endeavors and realize the impact they have and will have on the individual," in short, a mission "befitting a community college's role."¹⁰¹

By July, Berg repurposed some of the language in the proposal for a speech commemorating the moon landing, and delivered it on campus with a "mission successful" introduction. The crossed-out portion of the speech, prepared in case of a failed mission resulting in all hands lost, noted the moon landing's attempt and his remarks to campus in the context of a nation at war, and equated their loss with battlefield deaths, and the campus' perseverance through conflict with victory: "But in this day of dissention - of turmoil - of degradation of values we all cherish - it is to the living I make my remarks, for if we pass by this moment only in grief, we will have desecrated that for which these died. Come now and consider to what heights we have risen because of those who stood and have fallen. We who have survived the armed conflict have been involved in a mighty conflict of another kind and have prevailed."¹⁰² The more hopeful portion of the speech, prepared for a successful mission, continued the pointed analogy comparing the College's success to the nation's. Berg reminded listeners of that success with a repeating cadence of "we have sent men to walk on the moon." The successful launch should indicate the nation's ability to "meet head-on the racial problems that demean our people," to "vigorously seek a means of providing each person with a satisfactory living that he might have a base of dignity," to hear the "still small voice of God" rather than giving in to "discouragement with our

¹⁰¹ "Space Center Proposal," Berg's handwritten notes.

¹⁰² Rodney Berg, "Moon Landing Speech" (Speech, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL, 24 July 1969), Box 1, Folder 30, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

youth,” and to “triumph over poverty and social inequality, empowering Black man and White to live together as brothers each with the dignity of his own heritage.”¹⁰³ Although the space program as Berg suggested for CoD never reached fruition, Berg’s idea, that a successful national space program offered hope for broader societal advances, points toward a philosophy of education and learning for the benefit of all that colored his entire presidency. “Learning is the Greatest Adventure,” the College put on its seal and letterhead in 1966, and as its first president, Berg did everything he could to preserve all that was adventuresome and curious in his campus community.

In October 1968, President Berg joined in an interview with the area newspaper conglomerate Paddock Publications. The interview, a profile of Berg as leader at the College of DuPage, showed a self-described “educational realist” who relished the tension of creating a new campus in a new system with “state and local boards in the process of learning their roles.”¹⁰⁴ The “dynamic tension,” Berg said, is what drew him. “And the day it ceases, I go to another job. I guess what I’m trying to say,” Berg explained, “is that I don’t mind a fight.” In creating the College of DuPage, Berg picked and won more fights than he lost. Although he eventually showed his frustration and boredom with the College of DuPage, in word and deed, Rodney Berg established a leading community college campus in an exclusive community during great regional and national unrest. Berg balanced reluctant support for required state policies limiting student speech with advocacy for radical voices from the commencement rostrum. He preserved students’ right to anti-war and pro-civil rights speech while keeping Springfield’s gatekeepers

¹⁰³ Berg, “Moon Landing Speech.”

¹⁰⁴ “Berg: A Realist,” *Arlington Heights Daily Herald Suburban Chicago*.

happy, and in so doing fostered a community college campus more progressive than the surrounding community, but without the violence of on-campus protests that dominated public discourse. Demographic changes in the surrounding community and early adoption of local open housing policy built Berg's campus and contributed to an increasingly diverse student population, thanks to the nudge of federal dollars and housing policies, racially inclusive hiring practices, and access to transportation options.

At the beginning, College of DuPage supporters' goals were simple: in the face of crowded, increasingly expensive universities, they advocated for a campus where their children and children in their districts could attend school. When it opened, the college was a pressure valve in the context of regional higher education institutions running out of room for new residents and out-of-state institutions limiting enrollment to in-state applicants alone. DuPage residents' focus on the availability of a college first and foremost meant community concerns about the campus' culture only followed later. On campus, however, the topic filled student newspapers and dominated administrative discussions. CoD's board, presidency, and many early faculty and staff positions benefitted from the experienced educators chosen to fill them, and consequently operated with a lighter hand. The College of DuPage culture could have easily offered students a sheltered existence, preemptively limiting opportunities for protest or counterculture narratives, but leaders shied away from allowing the pendulum to swing too far the other direction, too. *Courier* journalists described a bustling campus rich with contrasting ideals and values: championing a rumored SDS and White Panther chapter,¹⁰⁵ coordinating a massive donation

¹⁰⁵ "SDS Chapter May Form Here," *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 9 May 1968; John Alexa, "Subpoena White Panthers after student complaint," *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 30 April 1970.

drive for riot-charred Chicago neighborhoods,¹⁰⁶ and cheering the campus' straw poll's support for Nixon.¹⁰⁷ Students knew, as Berg explained in his memo following the Kent State shootings, that "they [had] the freedom to express their personal feelings about current events," through a strong student journalism outlet, active student government, and programming that encouraged experiential education outside the suburban curtain.¹⁰⁸ With his focus on student empowerment, experience, and innovative educational opportunities, Berg managed to avoid the pitfalls of student protest and censorship, while channeling radical impulses toward service and education. By hiring an experienced leader with years of faculty and administrative work on which to lean, the College of DuPage started with a foundation that allowed it to be richly progressive - in programming, in community relationships, and in the voices it chose to highlight on its campus.

¹⁰⁶ "Students Spark Drive to Help Riot Victims," *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 11 April 1968.

¹⁰⁷ Jack Kennedy, "Nixon Wins Here: McCarthy Tops U.S. College Poll," *College of DuPage Courier* (Glen Ellyn, IL), 16 May 1968.

¹⁰⁸ Rodney Berg to all faculty and staff, 5 May 1970, E 1.1 Box 2, Folder 5, College of DuPage Archives, Glen Ellyn, IL.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSIONS

Although this study focuses narrowly on the early histories of two Midwestern campuses, its implications offer much to contemporary community college practitioners. In talking with colleagues at both campuses during the course of research, employees at the College of DuPage and Johnson County Community College expressed surprise that current challenges their campuses faced had such clear precursors in early institutional decisions and cultural development. The studies presented here offer observations on several points: historical evaluations of the development of campus culture; the value of campus archives and oral histories to contemporary practitioners outside the library or history classroom; and the centrality of community mores to challenges faced both by early college leaders and those working in the field today.

Campus culture is not a monolith, nor is it permanent. However, the community college, with its close relationship to the surrounding community, must also contend with the failures and successes of its community's culture. In the cases here, though early leaders tried mightily to do so, it is impossible to ignore the role of racially restrictive community practices, even years after those practices are unenforceable by law. These case studies advise frank reflection by institutions founded in racially restricted areas when they attempt to address campus race and equity concerns; they may find deeply held ideas about changes that would yield a more welcoming campus for those who have historically been denied access to the broader

community. Understanding, and working to dismantle, the foundation of White and class privilege of institutions' existence is, thankfully, increasingly common at universities built or funded by the labor of enslaved people. Questioning the equally important – and far more recent – problem of housing inequity and generational wealth for Black families, and examining how housing practices affected the development of community colleges, is less well-studied. This work, in its use of archival and community sources, offers one path to do so.

The importance of communities, and the value of enriching institutional histories with community sources, is one of the many criteria Robert Church notes as vital to future higher education historians' work as they study community colleges.¹ In the cases preceding, neither campus retained clipping files from area newspapers, many of which are long out of print and undigitized, so seeking out local and regional press coverage of the community and its campus as public opinion developed helped to round out the materials needed to gain an instructive picture of the communities during the 1960s. Combining archival and community sources evened out the narrative when the archives proved shallow, while also giving a rich idea of how the community described itself outside of institutional feasibility studies.

The idea of community and campus-as protector is woven throughout the press, governance, administrative, and promotional documents for Johnson County Community College and Johnson County as a whole. Much as residents relied on restrictive covenants to limit who could access their communities, residents wanted a local institution, close to home, to protect their children from campus and urban radicalism. Accepting, and indeed, championing their role as a protective influence for the community's teens allowed JCCC to create itself as an

¹ “Renegotiating the Historical Narrative,” 577.

extension of the community's own protective suburban culture. The college's commitment to creating that protective bubble is clear in the administration's private correspondence and in more subtle public language. Local press gave space in most of their early interviews with President Robert Harris to discussion of the executive's military career rather than his educational bona fides.² New hires who shared Harris' military background were recruited based on shared experiences and subsequently acknowledged the large number of veterans working on campus made it feel "like Camp Juco," playing an important role in their feeling comfortable and welcome within the campus culture.³ Faculty on the whole were young, many with limited higher education instructional experience, which combined with the institution's top-down administrative culture to afford Harris the power to manipulate hiring decisions and counter faculty voices and the board with limited opposition. Harris' mores also influenced the student experience. As President, he explicitly limited student protest and speech as rigorously as he could without running afoul of constitutional protections, even going so far as to personally interrupt an otherwise peaceful student demonstration and to inquire about his power to expel students for such actions. Harris' careful recruitment of employees with shared, authoritarian, values afforded some protection for his reactions, but so did the broader community's repeated demands for a campus that would limit such behavior in the first place. As president, Harris acted as the embodiment of the community's demands.

The idea of college – and campus – as adventure plays an important role in the College of DuPage experience. Community members sought in their institution an educational experience

² "And All Stories Should Begin and End with And," *Kansas City Star*, 14 September 1969.

³ Richard Randolph, "Richard Randolph," in *Visionary Voices*, 150; John Hanson, *From Slide Rules to Biotechnology*, 42.

approximating the university enrollment their children could not secure. Community motivations, once the board sought applicants, were echoed in the affinity showed by board and administration for advanced credentials and considerable higher education experience. Even after students and faculty were in a single, central campus and no longer drove impressive distances to attend classes in far-flung locations, or needed to adapt for those diverse locations, they maintained a focus on developing innovative programming and modalities that feel familiar even today. Their campus leadership absorbed faculty, staff, students, and well-established extra-curricular activities along with the accreditation of Lyons Township Junior College, resulting in a campus culture committed to advanced faculty and staff credentials, innovative reorganizations of academic operations, and a robust student press. Rather than touting the desirability of faculty inexperience, governance and administration placed their faith in well-trained and experienced faculty and staff to develop innovative partnerships and coursework approximating the university experience.

Students at the College of DuPage took advantage of the established student press and used it to confront the social issues of the day in challenging and direct editorials, pithy and administration-challenging letters to the editor, and regular coverage of anti-war, civil rights, and counterculture happenings in the surrounding suburban and urban area. Three examples illustrate administrative commitments to student free speech, even in the wake of reactionary calls for limitation by business and government. In 1968, Rodney Berg received a letter sent to all Illinois college presidents and boards from the Illinois Manufacturers Association calling on recipients to “teach the paramount necessity of respect for the law and to carry out that fundamental principle into practice in dealing with unlawful acts by students and faculty,” while “displaying leadership

and courage in handling student challenges to their authority.”⁴ Berg kept the letter and its accompanying resolution quiet, and it provoked no further discussion in board meetings or the campus press. One year later, when Berg received an information request from the Illinois Crime Investigating Commission seeking details on the existence so-called subversive groups, he responded only to the Bureau’s questions without offering additional information, corresponding with administrators to determine how narrowly he could answer.⁵ Finally, in 1969, when CoD was required by the passage of Illinois Senate Bill 1144 to develop a crisis response plan should violent protest begin in Glen Ellyn, Berg crafted a reasoned process focused on de-escalation. In so doing, Berg followed state rules related to protest, but did not try to reach beyond them. Each of these events point to Berg’s capacity for measured response to student radicalism and to state involvement, offering contemporary practitioners useful context for balancing similar concerns. Leaders’ responses – reasonable or otherwise – to localized unrest offer a glimpse at crisis management, and suggest possible themes for day-to-day management of an institution as well.

As institutions, community colleges regularly grow, shrink, or otherwise reinvent themselves to serve different populations. For example, largely liberal arts and transfer campuses operating before the 1960s and 1970s rapidly added occupational training to their programs,

⁴ Memorandum, “To Presidents and Members of the Boards of Trustees of Illinois Colleges and Universities,” E. Edgerton Hunt, Illinois Manufacturers’ Association to Illinois college and university boards and presidents, 22 May 1968, Box E 1.1, 2, Folder 43, College of DuPage Archives.

⁵ Correspondence, Charles Siragusa, Executive Director, Illinois Crime Investigating Division and Rodney Berg, College of DuPage President, 8 January 1970, 26 January 1970, 29 January 1970; undated, handwritten memo draft from Berg to College counsel Glenn Shehee; Memorandum to Berg and Board of Trustees from Glenn Shehee, 31 October 1969, Box E 1.1, 2, Folder 43, College of DuPage Archives.

pushed by students' demands for wage-earning employment and pulled by the relatively easy money generated by employer-demanded retraining initiatives.⁶ Campuses opening in the same time began their operations with occupational and technical education in mind, and by the 1980s expanded or developed community arts and lifelong learning programming. The continual process of community college reinvention contributes to the sector's impression of rootlessness, but it also benefits from and contributes to institutions' reluctance to maintain histories of their own. The phenomenon of rootlessness is widespread among community colleges, and neither JCCC nor CoD are unique in the way they began without attention to institutional history nor in the way they subsequently curated historical documents. "We have no ivied philosophies or hidebound procedures," bragged the early promoters at Johnson County Community College, as they began operations without any structure to preserve campus historical documents.⁷ The College of DuPage likewise began their own operations with only a vague idea of preserving its own history or the history of Lyons Township Junior College, which had been in operation since 1929. As both campuses approached their decennial anniversaries, they realized the error of their ways and began to seek out employees' personal caches of historically relevant ephemera. At CoD and JCCC, the call yielded donation of personal papers from early board members, among other items, which would become vital to this work. Subsequent anniversaries and local studies generated internally produced oral and court histories on both campuses, and in both cases, library faculty assumed the control of and care for their collections as they grew.

⁶ *The Contradictory College*, 191.

⁷ "No Traditions," December 1968.

Archival holdings *could* empower campus practitioners to see the shifts in institutional focus to their own campuses, but are only occasionally employed to uses higher than the celebratory. If the case studies preceding illustrate anything useful for practitioners, it is this: the 21st century challenges institutions face, of students' right to protest; of diverse students' sense of belonging; and of anti-intellectual or anti-indoctrination concerns from the community at-large, are all old questions and well-worn concerns, even on campuses whose penchant for reinvention makes remembering difficult. Institutional leaders, then have a two-fold mandate. First, leaders must take an interest in their institution's archival holdings, not to micromanage, but to learn. New employees, especially those joining in upper-level administration who have considerable influence to shift campus cultures, arrive on campuses drinking from a fire hose of information, and institutions' messy histories are rarely included in any detail. Second, leaders must find ways to make campus histories more explicit on their campuses. Through signage, similar to university work contextualizing campus buildings and common spaces, campus as living laboratory exercises focused on institutional history rather than operational efficiency, or dozens of other applications, institutional histories that shine a light on contemporary concerns need to become a campus' hidden curriculum. Campuswide offerings with a rich, critical, disciplined foundation both in institutional archives and community history can help new leaders understand the campus cultures they enter more fully and quickly than piecemeal introductions ever will, and yield employees who are empowered to improve campus cultures more effectively.

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