

DIRECTED STUDIES

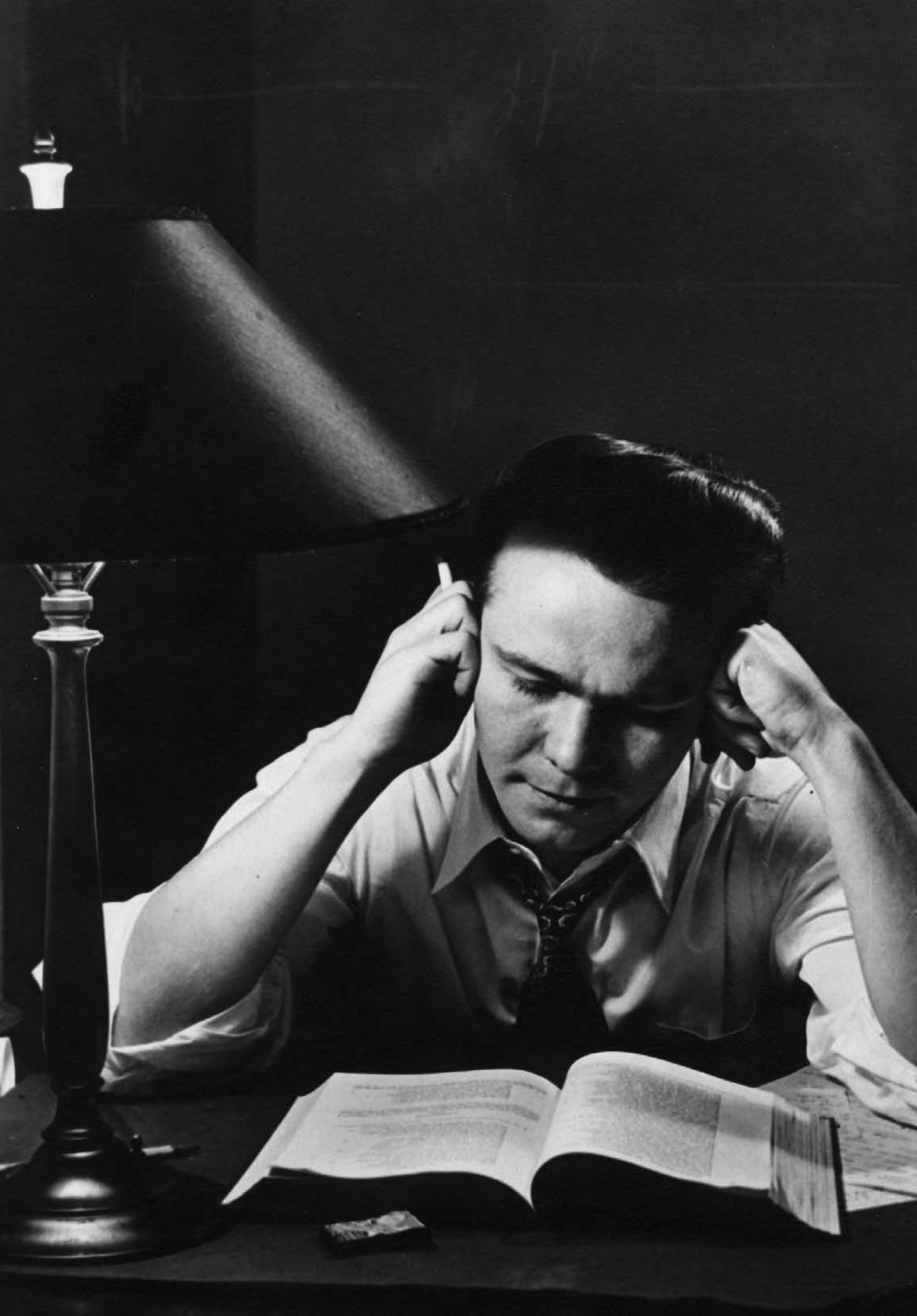
AND THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN GENERAL EDUCATION

Justin Zaremby





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IN MEMORY OF ROBERT WOKLER

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FOREWORD

Students, alumni, faculty, and friends of Directed Studies owe a debt of gratitude to Justin Zaremby '03, now a candidate for a PhD in Political Science, for writing a history of the program.

As Zaremby shows, Directed Studies was established in 1946, as an experimental program to provide freshmen and sophomores with a shared and coherent program of study. Directed Studies was a response to a sense of fragmentation both in the undergraduate curriculum and in the modern world. More specifically, Directed Studies grew out of the debate of the previous century about the right balance between elective and prescribed courses in the undergraduate curriculum. Directed Studies rested on the assumption that two years of a broad curriculum prescribed by the faculty would provide the strongest foundation for the freedom and specialization of the final two years. The name Directed Studies, opaque today, expresses this founding idea, that for the first two years, the faculty would direct the student's course of study. Only 40-50 freshmen were admitted each year to the two-year program. The small size of the program made possible a close relationship between faculty and students. More than that, Directed Studies created for its time a community of students that had all read the same books, just as in the past, all educated people in the west shared a classical education.

Sixty years later, Directed Studies, under the extraordinary leadership of María Rosa Menocal, Sterling Professor of the Humanities, continues to flourish. The structure of the program has changed. Directed Studies is now a one-year program consisting of three courses—literature, historical and political thought, and philosophy—in which students explore the great works of the western tradition. Indeed, Directed Studies now offers a classical education. And the size of the program has changed. Directed Studies now enrolls 125 students, almost 10% of the freshman class. But the goals of the program remain the same. The curriculum of Directed Studies is prescribed by the faculty and the broad courses provide a strong foundation for free choice and specialization in the remaining years in Yale College. The heart of the program remains the small discussion sections, allowing a close relationship between faculty and students. The program continues to create a community of students who have read the same books and can talk about them with each other. Directed Studies has changed in only one significant dimension. If the fox knows many things and the hedgehog knows one big thing, Directed Studies began as a hedgehog and has become a fox. It began seeking to provide students with a way to see unity and commonality within the diversity of human knowledge and experience. Today Directed Studies is far more likely to focus on difference, to emphasize the way that thinkers revise, extend, and contradict their predecessors.

Writing in the Yale Alumni Magazine in 1949, Maynard Mack, one of the founders of Directed Studies and later Sterling Professor of English, wrote that the highest compliment a future historian could pay Directed Studies would be to say that “in the mid-twentieth century when, as always, there were worse and better ways of meeting the eternal perplexities of education, this program was a vigorous instance of the latter class.” As Justin Zaremby's history shows, Mack's hope has been abundantly fulfilled.

Jane Levin

Director of Undergraduate Studies, Directed Studies



INTRODUCTION

As the Navy left the Yale campus at the end of the Second World War, the faculty created an experimental program in liberal education. First proposed in George Pierson's 1943 report on "A Planned Experiment in Liberal Education," Directed Studies accompanied a number of reforms that collectively are known as the Reforms of 1945. These reforms, which included the creation of various interdisciplinary majors and a restructuring of departmental senior essays and exams, sought to reexamine and strengthen the place of liberal education at Yale. As Daniel Catlin writes:

The attempt to achieve intellectual rigor by means of strengthening the discipline of the major was rooted in the departmental organization of the Yale faculty which had been instituted during the reorganization of the University following World War I. Since that time, the Departments had grown in integrity and strength, and [their] growth reflected the national trend toward the professionalization of academic life. It was also true that the established, core disciplines have, over time, proved a most effective way to organize knowledge so that it may be clearly conveyed and built upon. That this systematic procedure should be reflected in the undergraduate curriculum was not unreasonable, given any interest in serious intellectual pursuit. (23)

The reforms after the Second World War built upon those that came before. They reflected changes in the nature of university research, as well as the role of the academy in American life. Pierson's paper defended reform on a number of grounds. First, he noted that a return to peace provided an opportunity to institute much needed changes. Such change related to the public perception of the university; to the lowering of standards in the B.A. curriculum; and to trouble in defining what undergraduates must study to become educated.

Citing the "precarious situation" and "unsatisfactory character" of modern liberal education, Pierson reflected upon discontent emanating both from within the college and from the public. This double-sided complaint coincided with

that moment in our whole history when we are freest to consider, and to put into practice, really substantial reform. The return of faculty and students with the end of hostilities will mean the golden opportunity of the twentieth century for those colleges which are resolved, and prepared, to take advantage of it.

Such opportunities were born not merely from popular "indifference, skepticism, and positive misunderstanding manifested toward the colleges," but from internal struggles over the nature of liberal studies. "This is the crisis and the opportunity that the proposed Experimental Course of Liberal Studies is designed to exploit," Pierson observed (1).

The first failing of the Yale curriculum stemmed from its inflexibility. The B.A. course of study, which historically eschewed freedom of course selection, “is too standardized, too inflexible, and geared too closely to the average and not very serious students.” These courses were catering to the general populace, with little chance for developing “the interests of the best men.” Indeed, “[h]ow little even our best colleges make of the first-class talents passing through their gates is a reproach to the republic” (3). Superficial comprehensive examinations led to indefensibly long reading periods and courses which were far too expensive given the “mediocre” intensity of coursework. The “4-year academic lock-step” had sapped students’ personal drive for knowledge and stopped faculty members from molding students as well as they could.

Moreover, the ideal of the “College Man” had become too focused on

the side of the extra-curricular, social, and athletic affairs. [A] situation [which], like President Taft, just grew. Knowing very well what they wanted—or at least what they enjoyed—the abler students have since 1860 built up a highly competitive, absorbing, and (on the whole) rewarding social mill. Meanwhile the faculty, in part out of an understanding of our young men, in part perhaps also because they were no longer entirely sure of their own purposes, allowed the main business—the development of the young men’s mental capacity—to slip into second place. (3)

This vision of an extracurricular Yale was not new. It was the commonly perceived portrait of the Yale lifestyle. However, Pierson began to reject the idyllic vision of Yale men sitting on the Old Fence as a threat to quality education. In the second half of the twentieth century, Old Yale’s gentlemanly ethic came under harsh attack.

However, while he was not a proponent of the rigid structure of the Yale curriculum, neither was Pierson a strong supporter of its alternative. He noted that while one hundred years earlier, breadth of study could be instilled through a classical education and lectures for seniors by the college president, this was no longer possible following the reforms of Harvard President Charles Eliot, creator of the elective system in higher education. Pierson claimed,

in an effort to get away from the obvious abuses and exaggerations that this system permitted, Yale (like most other colleges) has been working toward a better-balanced variety in course experience by requiring [a] certain distribution between fields of knowledge or types of study. (4)

Distributional requirements had become “the ascendant” in higher education. Yet this was not appealing given that respect for liberal studies had declined. Pierson regretted that the “legend of the ‘uselessness’ of the liberal arts (a legacy from the disciplinary classical curriculum in the days of its paralysis and decline) . . . still persists, both in the public mind” and

also “in the thinking of many parents and sophomores.” If that problem were not grave enough, the outcome of Eliot’s elective system had led to the belief that “all studies were equally broadening and valuable.” With a passionate tone, Pierson asked, “Given the propensity of students to elect easy courses, and of scholars to ride a hobby, is it any wonder that many individual offerings in the B.A. curriculum seem dilettantish, or theatrical, or remote from the realities of life?” (4).

His purpose, and the purpose to which Yale needed to dedicate itself, was clear. “To restore to the words ‘liberal education’ their true meaning would seem to be one of the imperious demands of our time.” Such a task would not be easy, particularly given the academy’s lack of desire to question its purpose. Pierson noted that in times of stability and security, questions about the nature of liberal learning had fallen away. “We are,” he wrote with hope, “at this moment beginning to be less complacent than in generations. But the awakening is still in process. And our old habits exist.” The focus of faculty members would need to change drastically in order to make the necessary changes to improve. To succeed would involve a “shift in emphasis” from “an average performance by the average man, in a curriculum that was in part indiscriminately elective” to a new focus on “the abler men, harder world, and broader planning” (5-7).

A “planned experiment” would allow the university to consider and test its plans for education with an elite group of students and faculty members. Their purpose would be not just to introduce students to the fields of knowledge, but to attempt a far more difficult task. “Given the facts,” Pierson asked, “what should a young man make of them?” It is of central concern that in addition to being presented with a “variety of material, by historical perspective” and a “taste of English literature,” the student must be started on the path to thinking about these ideas. As such,

Are we not going to have to see that he gets some philosophy? Given some historical perspective, and some exercise in philosophy, no small amount of information and of course experience in other fields may be forgiven. (7)

This was the purpose of the first two years of Pierson’s experimental program, a course of study for freshmen and sophomores that was named Directed Studies. The central idea for Directed Studies rested upon its two-year structure and its keystone courses in philosophy. A mandated course of study for freshmen and sophomores would provide students with “explicit recognition of a proper education, despite the fact that the anarchy of the past fifty years has obscured or destroyed it.” Students would discern both order and subordination among the various courses of study available — an ability not gained by the “present method of grouping subjects categorically under roman numerals.” Furthermore, in order to instill appropriate

respect for this program, students would need to be taught to view philosophy as central to their course of study (A1).

Because of a tendency to view all disciplines as equally important, for most people philosophy had been relegated to a list of competing studies. According to Pierson, “[t]his [assumption] is false.” Indeed, philosophy is queen among various sciences for “it is the one study which embraces in some form or other all the rest.” The experimental program would benefit from students being able to understand the basic assumptions of various disciplines – from literature to history. The materials of the many courses could serve philosophy as tools for analysis and interpretation. Directed Studies would

assist the student to understand exactly what it is he is learning via the studies in that group, what larger problems the learning raises, and the main solutions to these problems offered by the great books of the past, how a particular branch of knowledge is related to its associates and those in other groups, etc.

Philosophy would teach students to understand the knowledge being taught in other classes. Moreover, Pierson decried the “shameful reflection on us as teachers, that ninety-nine of every hundred students graduate without having faced a page of Plato ... Aristotle and Augustine, Horace and Longinus, Hooker and Thomas Hobbes.” With philosophy at the core of the program, students in Directed Studies would be thoughtful and well-read (A2).

The experimental program was a “radical experiment – that is to say, an experiment which aims to get back to the roots” (A2). In order to do so, the program would assume a four-part structure. An emphasis on the tools of communication consisted of two terms of mathematics and language; the study of the physical universe consisted of a general introduction to philosophical methods and physical science; a section on man would be dedicated to biological science, literature or art, architecture, or music, and ethics; finally, a focus on society would consist of two terms of history, social science, and political thought. The program remained intact from plan to reality.

The radical quality of the program can only be understood in the context of changes that had affected Yale for the previous century. The influence of national affairs, reforms in the structures of university curricula around the country, and a growing interest in general education all provided the framework in which Directed Studies was given life. The program is significant because it has lasted sixty years, and because its creation signaled Yale’s desire to innovate while remaining dedicated to its historic goals. While the program was a response to growing concerns over the role

of the university in society after the Second World War, it was equally a response to over one hundred years of struggle in the academy.

This struggle related most specifically to Yale's desire to preserve the sanctity of the college against the growing trends described in George Pierson's report. These problems were deeply felt. Concern over the influence of the German university on American higher education lay at the heart of Pierson's critique. Even as the university became increasingly departmentalized and oriented towards the sciences, Directed Studies would maintain the traditional Yale curriculum and foster a unique sense of fraternity through its set of courses.

Ultimately, the program responded to three major issues – the growing influence of the German university in America, changes affecting Yale after the Second World War, and the general education movement. The founders designed Directed Studies to be a means of training leaders as America faced her ideological foes. The existence of fascist and communist governments instilled fear that the barbarians waited at the gates to undermine American civil society. Directed Studies was meant to develop the moral character of its students both through studies of classical texts and through analyses of current political and philosophical problems. Letters from the early alumni of the program proudly herald the leadership skills that they considered fruits of Directed Studies.

This essay describes the history of Directed Studies. A combination of internal and external debate led to the creation of the program. I begin with a discussion of the academic controversies that arose during the nineteenth century. I then turn to Yale's response to the Second World War. This is followed by a narrative history of the program during its first sixty years. A final section explores how questions relating to general education have changed or remained the same, looking primarily at recent reports on the necessities of undergraduate education at Harvard and Yale. Directed Studies should be understood in the end as one of Yale's most important attempts to examine its educational purpose during a time of great controversy over the state of the academy. It is with Yale's original purpose that this study must begin and with Yale's direction in the coming years that it will conclude.



FOR CHURCH AND STATE

The training of leaders was the first goal of Yale College. Its vision of a collegiate education had emphasized the training of gentlemen for society since the founding. The Collegiate School's 1744 Charter revealed a sense of responsibility not merely to Christianity, but to the developing colonies as well. The document describes a school "which has received the favourable benefactions of many liberal and piously disposed persons, and under the blessing of Almighty God has trained up many worthy persons for the service of God in the state as well as in the church" (Hofstadter and Smith I:49). While the Collegiate School may have been founded by ministers who sought to purify Christianity as it was practiced at Harvard, the goal of the college was temporal as well as spiritual. Graduates, informed and motivated by the tenets of Christianity, studied in order to serve God and country.

The early curriculum reflected this combination of Christian and secular thought. "European standards of learning were the accepted standards, and colonial Yale followed them with willingness, if not complete understanding" (Warch 187). This understanding was reinforced by the Yale College Laws, which demanded "[e]very student [to] consider the main end of his study to wit to know God in Jesus Christ and answerably to lead a Godly sober life" (Warch 191). Scripture and daily prayer stood alongside readings of the ancients. A rather harsh existence helped reinforce the religious concept of redemptive suffering while allowing the school to function on a daily basis.

The separation of classical and religious texts was not complete. Indeed, the secular parts of the curriculum supported religious ends. In 1745, the first article of the College Laws stated that

None may expect to be admitted into this College unless upon Examination of the Praesident and tutors, They shall be found able Extempore to Read, Construe and Parse Tully, Virgil and the Greek Testament; and to write True Latin Prose and to understand the Rules of Prosodia, and Common Arithmetick, and shall bring Sufficient Testimony of His Blameless and inoffensive Life. (Hofstadter and Smith I:54)

These intellectual activities reflected the tradition of the medieval university and scholastic education. Yet the protestant Yale also reflected the Reformation ideal that liberal education and the study of scripture should be fostered together (Warch 186). A disciplined study of ancient thought and pious action shaped the character of the early Yale man.

The early American curriculum was “an adaptation of the English college’s version of the medieval course of study.” The education provided by this model consisted of a fixed body of knowledge “that all liberally [educated] gentlemen should know.” The choice of curriculum, according to Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, is not merely interesting as a laundry-list of knowledge, but is “significant . . . [because] it reveals the educated community’s conception of what knowledge is most worth transmitting to the cream of its youth, and it reveals what kind of mind and character an education” should cultivate (9-11).

Although Yale’s orthodoxy pervaded the curriculum and daily life, Richard Warch notes that Yale did attempt to introduce its students to the changing intellectual landscape in Europe. While Europeans had speedy access to the works of Locke and Newton, Yale’s distance from Europe hindered her knowledge of intellectual developments on the Continent. Intellectual battles often did not reach New Haven until much later:

The colonial school was hampered by a cultural lag and innovations in its course of study occurred, on the whole, after similar innovations had been effected abroad. But although the educators of Connecticut’s youth were provincial, they were at least aware of their provinciality and sought to overcome it. (247)

This provincialism motivated Yale’s desire to broaden its intellectual offerings through the purchase of books. Yet, this isolation may have contributed to an academic conservatism which many Yale presidents, particularly Jeremiah Day and Noah Porter, supported. As a number of American colleges changed their curricula and administrative structure during the nineteenth century, Yale remained cautious and was often unwilling to change.

The most definitive statement of Yale’s purpose came in the 1828 Yale Report. One of Yale’s most famous statements on the purpose of liberal education reacted to unrest in the American academy. Yale published its 1828 report during an era when society was harshly critical of its colleges. A new focus on student specialization and faculty research gained interest in the States, particularly at the University of Virginia. As schools began questioning the role of the traditional curriculum and the study of ancient languages, Yale faced its first debate over whether to reform or to refine its studies (Potts Lecture).

The 1828 Report, although published as a defense of the teaching of ancient languages, defined Yale’s pedagogy and affirmed her intention to preserve the classical curriculum. Jeremiah Day used the report to define liberal education as a means of disciplining the mind. Opposing a growing interest in vocational studies, Day wrote:

The two great points to be gained in intellectual culture are the discipline and the *furniture* of the mind; expanding its powers, and storing it with knowledge. The former of these is, perhaps, the more important of the two. A commanding object, therefore, in a collegiate course, should be to call into daily and vigorous exercise the faculties of the student. (Kelley 162)

The ritualistic toil of early Yale reflected this discipline. Conjugations, declensions, and scriptural study emphasized the importance of repetition not to learn facts, but to train the mind to think in an orderly fashion. "The object of education was to exercise a form of *mental discipline* which would train the faculties for their use, much as an athlete trains his muscles" (Hofstadter and Hardy 15).

The human mind was believed to be composed of a number of faculties. Individual courses of study developed the faculties at different rates for different people. Minds matured differently and often did not achieve their potential. Formal education could discipline and refine the activity of the faculties. Princeton President James McCosh expressed this idea of potentiality in stating that "Our creator, no doubt, means all things in our world to be perfect in the end; but he has not made them perfect; he has left room for growth and progress." College education could develop these faculties through "mental and moral discipline" (Veysey 23).

This discipline approach existed in sharp contrast to the growing interest in vocational education at the college level. As practiced in Germany, students would often graduate from college with knowledge of one discipline. Because Day and his supporters believed that only through rigorous study of the arts and sciences would students develop the mental capacity to engage the world, he and his successor, Noah Porter, defended the supremacy of a broadly based, discipline-oriented curriculum. Day noted that "in laying the foundation of a thorough education, it is necessary that all the important mental faculties be brought into exercise" (Hofstadter and Smith 1:279).

The difference between the discipline and furnishing of the mind reveals itself "if a student exercises his reasoning powers only," for "he will be deficient in imagination and taste, in fervid and impressive eloquence." On the other hand, "if he confines his attention to demonstrative evidence, he will be unfitted [*sic*] to decide correctly, in cases of probability." And finally, "if he relies principally on his memory, his powers of invention will be impaired by disuse." To balance these various disciplines, "in the course of instruction in this college, it has been an object to maintain such a proportion between the different branches of literature and science, as to form in the student a proper balance of character." Character was directly

related to coursework at Yale. Specialization failed fully to develop students because only through a broad curriculum could students be equipped to make informed choices in society (Hofstadter and Smith 1:279).

At the same time, though, across the Atlantic, the German university developed a new form of academic rigor and specialization. Biblical and classical studies provided the first disciplines in which faculties would focus more on scholarship than on the character building of the Christian colleges. Indeed, Noah Porter's 1871 inaugural address revealed a new tension between Yale's religious roots and a growing secularism. President Porter was a stalwart defender of the old ways:

We desire more instead of less Christianity in this university. We do not mean that we would have religion take the place of intellectual activity, for this would tend to dishonor Christianity itself by an ignorant and narrow perversion of its claims to supremacy. We do not desire that the sectarian or denominational spirit should be intensified. . . . But we desire that all sciences should be more distinctly connected with that thought and goodness which are everywhere manifested in the universe of matter and of spirit. . . . We desire that the place and influence of Christ and Christianity in reforming the domain of speculation and of action, of letters and of life, should be distinctly, emphatically, and reverentially recognized. (Veysey 46)

Porter's words would not be heeded, though, as Christianity became an afterthought for most colleges. Ultimately, while Yale would not reject her Christian roots for some time, Porter's vision became a casualty of a half-century's conflict. Laurence Veysey notes a sense of isolation that developed around the old collegiate model; although the old model still focused on the production of leaders, it failed to account for the intellectual curiosity of the century (55). Yale needed to increase its emphasis on "mental furnishing" as she faced challenges both from Europe and from her Cantabrigian competitor.

While the American college maintained a precarious relationship with the nation, particularly during the era of Jacksonian populism, rapid change in elite institutions would place Yale's view of liberal education in further disrepute. As schools expanded, they found themselves facing increased financial burdens and social responsibilities. Brown University President Francis Wayland described such pressures in his 1850 report to the Brown Corporation. Wayland's work stood at odds with the 1828 Yale Report, because in addition to expanding the curricular offerings of the college, it relegated the classical studies to a low rank among disciplines. According to Hofstadter and Hardy, Wayland's report "probably deserves to be ranked as the most significant document of the period on the changing relation between higher education and the community," for it summarized "aptly the entire range of grievances among educational reformers

against the old colleges.” In a brief section that served as the harbinger of a new era in education, Wayland questioned the importance of the classical disciplines:

If, by placing Latin and Greek upon their own merits, they are unable to retain their present place in the education of civilized and Christianized man, then let them give place to something better. They have, by right, no preeminence over other studies, and it is absurd to claim it for them. (24)

Such an argument, of course, rejected the premise of the 1828 Report that discipline should be fostered through the study of ancient languages; Yale would not easily concede this point. Indeed, Wayland’s later comments further undermined the place of classical learning in colleges.

In our present system we devote some six or seven years to the compulsory study of the classics. Besides innumerable academies, we have one hundred and twenty colleges, in which, for a large part of the time, classical studies occupy the labors of the student. And what is the fruit? How many of these students read either classical Greek or Latin after they leave college? (24)

Contrary to Day’s view in the 1828 Report, Wayland equated the classics with the very non-vital furnishings that the Yale Report decried. Denying tangible profits from the study of classics, Wayland shifted the emphasis of the academy.

If Wayland’s report called into question the role of the classical curriculum, then Harvard President Charles Eliot further undermined such studies by supporting the creation of a free elective system. By offering students choice in their courses and questioning the merit of a common core of courses, he supported arguably the most revolutionary change to the university during the nineteenth century. In his 1869 inaugural address, Eliot remarked upon the way in which “[r]ecent discussions have added pitifully little to the world’s stock of wisdom about the staple of education.” Blaming an “unintelligent system of instruction from the primary school through the college,” Eliot decried the educational model that produces men who have “mastered nothing but a few score pages of Latin and Greek, and the bare elements of mathematics.” College men were unprepared for the decisions they would need to make in the real world and, while the disciplined education of Day and Porter served a purpose at one time, such methods were like “[t]he great well at Orvieto . . . [which] was an admirable construction in its day” but which was no longer needed after the advent of internal plumbing (Hofstadter and Smith II:602-603).

In contrast to the earlier academic model that viewed all students as possessing the same inherent traits, Eliot and his supporters emphasized the individual traits of young men. A system of required courses “has the merit of simplicity” and comfort. However, in a society that expected that

all would be educated in the same way, the developing sciences and the awareness of the differences among students required a different form of education. Humorously, Eliot cited the “vulgar conceit that a Yankee can turn his hand to anything we insensibly carry into high places, where it is preposterous and criminal.” While “[w]e are accustomed to seeing men leap from farm or shop to court-room or pulpit, and we half believe that common men can safely use the seven-league boots of genius,” this view fails to account for the differing needs of “lawgivers” and “diplomats.” In short, where American education had trained men capable of dilettantism, it had made them ill prepared for a world that demanded specialization. Instead of expecting the college to identify the intellectual interests of a “young man of nineteen or twenty,” assuming his “previous training has been sufficiently wide,” each individual ought to know which topics he loves and despises, and in what fields he is capable. “When the revelation of his own peculiar taste and capacity comes to a young man, let him reverently give it welcome, thank God, and take courage” (Hofstadter and Smith II:608).

The intimacy of college life rapidly changed as students took different courses. Where new disciplines received increased attention, new methods of teaching developed. Most notably,

The elective system fosters scholarship, because it gives free play to natural preferences and inborn aptitudes, makes possible enthusiasm for a chosen work, relieves the professor and the ardent disciple of the presence of a body of students who are compelled to an unwelcome task, and enlarges instruction by substituting various lessons given to small, lively classes, for a few lessons many times repeated to different sections of a numerous class. (Hofstadter and Smith II:609-610)

This model is not simply revolutionary, but antagonistic to the repetitive pedagogy that characterized the early American college. Particularly, it denies that enthusiasm for the traditional model could be maintained. Eliot’s conviction would not go unanswered by the academic community. Indeed, at the very time when the national elite formed the core of Yale, the conservatism of Yale’s administration rejected Eliot’s model.

Noah Porter’s 1871 rejection of the elective system relied upon the concept of leisure being central to a liberal education. Answering Harvard’s charges, he stated that “The majority of undergraduate students have neither the maturity nor the data which qualify them to judge the relative value of studies or their bearing on their future employments.” With reference to a student’s career, Porter feared that what seemed pleasing at the present time would not be so pleasing in the future. Students still had to receive a broad education in order to be able to make informed decisions about their

lives after graduation. Perhaps most indicative of Yale's stance, though, was Porter's belief that the elective system "involves the certain evil of breaking into the common life of the class and the college" (Hofstadter and Smith II:699).

This final claim reflects the drastic economic and structural changes that would overwhelm Yale should the college accept the free elective model. Porter's phrase evokes images of the life of Yale's campus which, since the middle of the eighteenth century, had consisted of an elaborate system of secret societies, debating clubs, student publications, and athletic events. Henry Beers, writing in 1895, described the Yale life well when he wrote,

Everyone who has been through college knows that the real life of the place is not to be found in Commencement Orations, or Wooden-Spoon exhibitions, or Freshman "rushes"; nor even at Springfield regattas and Hamilton Park matches. These are only its showy and boisterous croppings out, which get into the newspapers and form the commonplaces of conversation in college society. The genuine academic life is of finer, quieter, and more enduring essence. It is to be found in the daily routine of pleasant study; in the life of chums; in the informal meetings of small reading parties or literary clubs; in summer walks and sails; and in vacation visits to the homes of classmates. This life is barren of incident, and yet its sameness is not monotonous. It is almost domestic in its simplicity, and yet the adventurous spirit of youth, the glow of early friendships, and the intellectual atmosphere which it breathes give it the charm of romance. Its appropriate expression must be sought in fiction and poetry — not in books of dry, statistical information. (22-23)

The energy of Yale life would not be discovered in the pomp of yearly ceremonies or athletic events. Life for the Yale man was filled with more nuance; balanced between adventure and domesticity, variety and simplicity, its qualities were only visible to those who had experienced its charm. Indeed, whereas much knowledge could be disseminated through charts and formulae, the ethos of Yale was far more poetic. The elitism of this description lies not merely in its nebulous language but in the type of student it attracted.

A less flattering portrayal of this system came at the beginning of the twentieth century. Woodrow Wilson, who served as president of Princeton, decried the purely fraternal college by claiming that "the 'side shows' were overshadowing the 'main tent.'" One Chinese student made another critical statement about the stark difference between American and foreign colleges. In the wake of football season, this student said that "an American college or university is a great athletic association and social club in which provision is made, merely incidentally, for intellectual activity on the part of the physically and socially unfit" (Boucher 14). Although this fraternal vision would wane during the twentieth century, Yale did not change without a fight.

The leisure one may perceive in Yale's system was abbreviated by Eliot's emphasis upon career. As Porter noted, "We prefer the theory of liberal culture which assumes that an increasing rather than a diminishing number of our choicest youth will continue their literary and scientific studies, and thus be able to dignify and adorn their life by habits of systematic research and of earnest literary activity." Those motivated by the "insatiable greed of money getting" were not the focus of the Yale education. Where Harvard would produce those students trained for careers with the "cheap glitter, of tawdry bedazzlement and showy accomplishments; plenty of sensational declamation...course argument, and facile rhetoric," Yale would offer the "more consummate culture" needed for American leadership (Hofstadter and Smith II:700).

Such a view was not simply accepted by the Yale Corporation, but by a rabble-rousing group of recent graduates who led the notorious Young Yale Movement. Best known for lobbying for alumni representation on the Yale Corporation, these young men, led in New York by William Graham Sumner and William Maxwell Evarts, decried the power of the faculty and wanted the alumni to show "a knowledge of what is wanted in the scenes for which Yale educates her children" (Kelley 235). In a comic moment noted by Brooks M. Kelley, they claimed that the college should no longer be ruled by "[the] Rev. Mr. Pickering of Squashville, who is exhausted with keeping a few sheep in the wilderness, or [the] Hon. Mr. Domuch of Oldport, who seeks to annul the charter on the only railway that benefits his constituency" (236). They portrayed the faculty as bumbling and stuffy and the alumni as vivacious. Whereas the former gradually grew to defend the German focus on specialization, the latter focused upon preserving Henry Beers' image of Yale. However, even the alumni were divided over to what extent Yale should accept the German model of rigorous scholarship. Charles Phelps Taft "could not see why Yale should hesitate at German ideas." He instead called for "the creation of a real university" (Pierson *Yale*, 53).

German ideas came to Yale through the influence of President Theodore Dwight Woolsey, who spent a number of years studying at German universities. He "returned filled with those ideals of German exact scholarship that had pushed the German universities far ahead of our colleges" (Schwab 8). The growth of the library, faculty, and scholarship in Germany left Yale pale by comparison. Woolsey began a process of expanding the academic offerings of the university to create a school more focused upon scholarship and elective study than Noah Porter had desired. The German model gradually infiltrated the Yale campus. Its entrance followed years of debate and signaled a redefinition of the Yale education. None-

theless, the college's faculty and alumni did not reach consensus on Yale's purpose. It took an international crisis to force Yale to examine its central characteristics. With the coming of the Second World War, when German distrust extended from hatred of the Nazis to hatred of the German academic system, Yale and other universities would have the opportunity to thoroughly examine their curricula. A drastic change on Yale's campus during the conflict provided the impetus for such reflection and change.



YALE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

As the armed forces began training on the Yale campus, transforming an academic environment into a military base, Yale students found themselves studying amidst the symbols of a warring nation. In *Cloak and Gown*, Robin Winks describes the transformation of the pristine campus, filled with spacious dormitories and grassy lawns, into a military base. Overcrowding, a decline in the number of non-military students, and courses in military science supplanted the commonplace in the humanities-oriented college. “Yale was, the unreconstructed on the Yale faculty complained, simply a military camp for seven thousand men, only a tenth of whom were pursuing traditional programs and then in untraditional ways” (32).

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Yale President Charles Seymour announced that the college would be operating on a year-round basis, offering undergraduate degrees after only three years. Similar proposals followed for the graduate and professional schools. Members of the athletic department were fired because of wartime economic measures; undergraduates left to serve in the armed forces while those who remained became involved in the Army and Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps. Students took courses in aeronautics and explosives use, while the programs in Latin American Affairs and Oriental Studies became increasingly important. In 1943, the Army Airforce Technical Training School was established, taking over Old Campus, Silliman College, and the Yale Law School.

Those training in the armed forces were welcomed to the college. Indeed, undergraduate life continued in a curtailed way during the “occupation.” Kelley cites the story of one soldier who described the change that Berkeley College underwent during the war. He notes that rooms which were “built originally for only two men, the spacious three room suites, have found themselves crowding six within their doors.” The extravagance of ancient Yale was gone, as “[t]he hardwood floor[s] have been shorn of their carpets and left bare, to be dusted each morning by the occupants” (404). Where dining halls had been lavish banquet rooms, they were now merely wood-paneled mess halls. Yet, even with the presence of the military, the same soldier fondly recalled his experience:

Long after we leave Yale we shall remember everything Berkeley College has given us, its foster members. We will remember the luxurious living quarters, the library, and the common room, in which we spent so many pleasant hours reading, talking, or listening to the radio or piano. We can never forget Professor Hemingway, the ever-patient Master, with always a smile for each of his hundreds of graduates since the college was opened in 1934, and with

the thousands who will graduate in years to come, the memories of Berkeley which we take with us when we leave at the end of this month will always linger on. (402)

Although the liberal learning of the college may have suffered during this era, and although the traditionally vibrant undergraduate life was limited in its expanse, a certain comfort remained in Yale's halls. Even an outsider to the academic community found a home in his residential college. Amidst the chaos of Europe and the chaos in Woodbridge Hall, the spirit of Yale fraternity lived on.

The vision of Yale during the war seems to have been a composite, drawn from the traditional images of Yale men like Dink Stover and Frank Merriwell and the hard-nosed wartime hero. The military occupation revealed the unique character of the campus that survived, even as blue-blooded Yalies left to fight in the war. However, when the war came to an end and veterans returned to campus, it became clear that the idyllic Yale campus had changed. As Frank Diamond '45 wrote to the *Yale Alumni Magazine* in October 1945, the transition from service to studies was not expected to be smooth.

After fighting in three foreign countries and soldiering for several years, I had my doubts about returning to college. I thought that perhaps I had changed a little too much for Yale or that Yale had changed a little too much for me. But I have discovered that whereas we both have changed, the development has synchronized rather than clashed. The other returning veterans with whom I have talked all share this opinion: both we and Yale are ready for one another and both we and Yale can do one another a lot of good. (6)

Entering the war forced Yale students to confront a reality far different from the social hierarchy of Yale. Diamond discussed the maturity he needed to assume as his boyhood days came to an end. Furthermore, while pre-war Yalies may have had little concern or given little thought to their post-graduate lives, the war confronted veterans with distinct visions of their future. These Yale men would not be interested in the extracurricular games of Old Yale; instead, some would hope to finish their Yale careers quickly and look toward professional life.

Despite different attitudes brought by the war, with the return of veterans, post-war Yale began to assume some familiar characteristics. The Yale Political Union, the Dramatic Association, and the Glee Club rekindled their activity, as senior societies and fraternities reopened. Yale students clearly respected their veteran brothers; Diamond described being greeted and guided to the admissions office upon his arrival at Phelps Gate. The performance of the play *And for Yale*, a show about the 1905 Harvard-Yale regatta, further fueled the sense of spirit among undergraduates.

The end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War signified a sharp break for the American university. President Seymour's memorial address on June 23, 1946, brought awareness of a growing threat to liberal democracy, even with the fall of fascism. Seymour's speech, giving "tribute . . . to the men of Yale who lost their lives in defense of the nation during this last war," called for Yale men to honor their fallen comrades because "[a]s American citizens and as members of a university, our obligation to these men and to their fellow soldiers, sailors, and marines is beyond a reckoning." Indeed, from their death,

A new opportunity has been given to us which now and hereafter we must firmly resolve we shall not waste. The occasion demands of us, both old and young, qualities which, as we were wont to boast, are those of a liberal democracy but which are achieved only through tireless and selfless effort. We must confess that over the years we have erred and strayed from the virtues essential to democracy and we must pray for power to return to the pursuit of them.

The post-war era required a new vigilance on the part of all Yale men. No longer would America be defined by a "simple economy" or "national isolation." The growing Cold War would test an earlier love of peace—Yale would have to remember that "the fostering of such qualities" that would uphold democracy was the purpose of the university and the reason why many of her sons had died. With his brief speech, Seymour drew a patriotic picture of the Yale man. The college's liberal education would need to emphasize the production of leaders for America's newly strained democracy (7).

As universities began to investigate how they could best serve the nation by training future national leaders, a number of models of education were created. The academic debates of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had, according to John Brubacher and Willis Rudy, taken on the form of a "vast Hegelian triad." The thesis of this Hegelian triad was the prescriptive model of education, best seen in the 1828 Report. The antithesis of this method was Eliot's elective system. And the synthesis which grew out of these two visions was a combination of "concentration and distribution." However, these terms are methodological, and do not effectively explain how courses can achieve such balance. In the face of a rather "artificial" synthesis, educators sought unity in a model known as general education (Brubacher and Rudy 276).

The lack of unity in university curricula was blamed on a number of sources. Poor planning by faculty, the increased number of elective courses, and the growth of specialized research through the German university model were simply a few. In 1902, John Dewey noted that growth in the amount of knowledge to be pursued also inhibited unity. As such,

he declared that what was needed was “a survey, at least, of the universe in its manifold phases from which a student can get an ‘orientation’ to the larger world” (276). Such a survey was meant to be somewhat practical and to recognize the role of experience in educating a student. Ultimately a major section of the early Directed Studies program would take its cues from Dewey. The first wave of interest in general education in elite universities was seen at Columbia University and the University of Chicago. Their core curricula are significant not merely as evidence of the earliest movements in general education, but as models for later programs. Both schools created their programs in reaction to the First World War. They are the intellectual older siblings of Directed Studies.

Columbia was the first of the two to react to the academic struggles of the previous decades. Established in 1919 with the creation of the Contemporary Civilizations program, the Columbia core offered a common curriculum that would prepare students to understand the problems facing the world. Columbia’s core rested upon the belief that the majority of the work of the first two years at a college should be “devoted to orientation in the three studies which together describe the workings of the modern world” (*A College Program in Action* 5). These three subjects—the humanities, sciences, and social sciences—would then be supplemented by more focused and specialized study during the last two years. Whereas the first two years would offer a common list of required readings and discussion topics, the latter two would be filled with free electives based upon the interests and strengths of the students. The founders attempted to avoid any form of political indoctrination in designing the curriculum—their goal was to create a common base of knowledge for all students (6).

Unique among the courses was “Introduction to Contemporary Civilization” which was created in 1919 to examine the world through numerous disciplines, including history and economics. In 1929 it became a required two-year course. Originally called “War Aims,” the course focused upon issues involved in the European conflict. As the First World War ended, “War Aims” came under the purview of the history department until a number of faculty members “wondered if there were not some stable basis on which to organize the study of the contemporary world” (95). A two-year course of study would provide that basis.

The freshman-year course examined the question of how men have related to each other since the end of the Middle Ages. Readings focused upon the two central traditions of the West—the Judeo-Christian search for justice and love and the Greco-Roman search for natural law and order. These ideas were studied from the Renaissance and Reformation through the development of capitalism and internationalism. Readings includ-

ing articles by faculty and primary texts by Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Smith, and Marx provided fodder for discussion. The goal of the year was expressed as a search for certain values within western civilization. Columbia asserted these values as follows:

We live in a free society in which the spirits of justice, love, and scientific inquiry have been the touchstones to social invention; that in such a society the individual has labored to achieve freedom from an arbitrary authority (whether ecclesiastical or political); and that in a climate of experimental science, technology, and liberal-capitalist institutions, man seeks to shape his world to achieve welfare for himself and for the constantly growing number of the human race. (97)

In the wake of war, this message, while not explicitly political, focused upon the ability of the west to improve human welfare and to spread the idea of freedom. The message was certainly American in its slant. Indeed, the rhetoric of many courses in general education would take a similar view of America's role in promoting the ideal of freedom.

The second year studied the "insistent problems of the present' in the United States" (99). Contemporary Civilizations B questioned the ability of the United States to achieve economic welfare for its citizens, as well as its role in the world. A study of the institutional formation of the nation, through the methods of economics, political science, and history, allowed students to study the evolution of the American political tradition and various changes in the United States. Contemporary authors were assigned, including writings by O. Lattimore, W. I. Jennings, and E. H. Carr.

While Contemporary Civilizations was taught during the First World War, the Science and Humanities programs at Columbia were created in 1934 and 1937, respectively. The Humanities course rested upon the assumption that a bachelor's education should not merely lead to vocational training and that a thorough study of the "great books" of history was necessary for educated men. An academic career based upon memorization and secondhand judgments was not worthwhile, for "if educated men are those who possess an inner life of sufficient riches," a strong background in letters must be demanded of students. The first year included a survey of literature and philosophy. The second year consisted of one semester of music history and one semester dedicated to the appreciation of fine arts. Specifically, the second-year course sought to develop "powers of observation and critical analysis, including analyses of individual works of art" (115).

The fundamental problem of the Humanities program was the vast amount of required readings. Students were expected to assume responsibility for their own studies and be self-directed. Many students fell prey to the "mistaken belief that 200 pages of Herodotus takes precedence —

by majority rule—over twenty pages of Randall’s *Making of the Modern Mind*.” Yet ultimately, such a juggling game taught students to read more quickly, and to recognize vocabulary and references to other works more skillfully. The challenge posed by a rigorous curriculum forced students to manage their time and develop their intellects along with a dedicated work ethic (109).

While the Columbia program was instituted to restore focus to undergraduate education, the University of Chicago created its plan to remedy its historic lack of emphasis on undergraduate education. According to Boucher and Brumbaugh’s *Chicago College Plan*, the quality of undergraduate work found itself in sharp decline in the 1920s. Indeed, “the College came to be regarded by some . . . as an unwanted, ill-begotten brat that should be disinherited” (1). With such a strong set of graduate schools it was not merely disturbing, but embarrassing, for the college to be so weak. Under the presidency of Robert Maynard Hutchins, who had previously served as dean of the Yale Law School and secretary of Yale, the college adopted the Chicago New Plan. In doing so, the school divided itself into five divisions: the College, the Biological Sciences, the Humanities, the Physical Sciences, and the Social Sciences. This restructuring meant to “promote co-operation in research, to co-ordinate teaching, and to open the way to experiments in general higher education” (8). From such experiments, Chicago established a core program.

Countering the school’s tendency to favor graduate education, the plan asserted that “[t]he function of the College is to do the work of the University in general. . . education” (9). Higher education, there and at Yale, had pursued two extremes for the previous decades. Universities had swayed between the models of prescription and election:

There was no choice of meal offerings or of dessert offerings; each student was fed the same intellectual menu as every other student who entered at the same time. [There] came a time, however, when research broadened the limits of old fields of knowledge and opened up entirely new fields. (13)

The only way to allow students to benefit from the new disciplines was through electives that would broaden the range of courses students would take. Yet this reached a dangerous level when students, arriving at college, “faced a formidably large catalogue with literally hundreds of course offerings, not clearly described and not properly related” (13). A decreasing amount of advice from faculty often led students to wander through college aimlessly or, if they had distinct career goals, to “come out at the end of four years with an academic record sheet that should now be considered worthy of a place in a museum of educational monstrosities” (14).

The creators of the New Plan viewed their program as a middle ground between the various extremes that had plagued the academy for the previous century. For example, while requiring a core set of courses, Chicago did not seek to reinstate the “old-fixed curriculum.” Arguing that the old model was “now judged to have been meager, narrow, limited, stilted, and not sufficiently integrated with life,” Chicago was concerned that many students would graduate with the same degree, but with different academic experiences. Although graduates “were now members of the same civic and social community, and were confronted with many common problems in the same physical and social world,” they had little in common other than a diploma (26).

In addition to changing the grading policies and administrative design of Chicago, the program provided four core courses in each of four academic divisions. Two courses focused upon the biological and physical sciences. A general course on the humanities investigated “the literature, philosophy, religion and art of the civilizations which have contributed most conspicuously to the shaping of the contemporary outlook on life” (44). Finally, an introductory course on the study of contemporary society examined American economic, social, and political order from the industrial revolution to the present. Courses were taught through lectures and small discussion groups. Ultimately, reviews of the plan were filled with praise, particularly because of the community atmosphere that the common curriculum and close student-teacher contact fostered.

At the heart of these two programs, particularly their emphasis on modern crises, was a belief that liberal education should not merely serve abstract scholarship, but serve society-at-large. Graduates would reflect either well or poorly upon their alma mater through their actions in the outside world. As such, each school sought to train its graduates for leadership roles. During the academic conflicts of the nineteenth century, the original Yale goal of producing leaders for church and state was forgotten by many schools. Although Columbia and Chicago assumed that stance after the First World War, Yale had never rejected this purpose – even as its conservative curriculum changed over time. At the end of the Second World War, Yale directed its interest in leadership toward George Pierson’s experimental program. The climate of the post-war academy considered general education a necessary goal for American schools. Both Harvard and Yale took cues from their sister schools, as well as the changing times, to experiment. Yale’s latent conservatism would need to give way to more radical means of achieving its goals. Directed Studies began as Yale embraced the desire for general education.

GENERAL EDUCATION AT YALE: THE FOUNDING OF DIRECTED STUDIES

Directed Studies was the first half of George Pierson's "Planned Experiment in Liberal Education." However, he did not administer the program. Instead, the primary movers behind this new curriculum were Yale College Dean William Clyde DeVane and literature professor Maynard Mack. Both men were Yale graduates and respected scholars of literature. And both, through the early years of the program, would promote its well-being in the ranks of the faculty and the administration. It was this combination of faculty initiative and administrative support that allowed Directed Studies to gain solid footing.

One of the motivating factors behind Directed Studies was explained by Mack in an article in the *Yale Alumni Magazine*. He honored the new program for responding to the many debates over the role of liberal education, stating that

On the conservative side, the program is an effort to recapture, in a modern framework, what many educational theorists now feel was a signal virtue of the old classical curriculum—a community of intellectual experience. Such community, as President Dwight observed in his reminiscences of his student days at Yale in the 1840's, can be a powerful educative stimulus, developing a common frame of reference and understanding within which students may spontaneously discuss their work and so help educate each other. In its effort to reestablish such an atmosphere, Directed Studies springs directly out of the developments of the last half-century in American education. A half-century whose main theme, to reduce it to a sentence, has been the effort to define the appropriate roles in a four-year undergraduate course of free election and prescription.

Mack reinforced the idea that Directed Studies responded to years of conflict over the role of choice. It would provide a means of teaching students what fields of study are worthwhile and force them to investigate many different disciplines. Pierson described the program best when he noted that "There is at the present time no such order and subordination in most people's conception of an education, and we must therefore educate them—and possibly in some measure ourselves—to perceive one" (Mack 9).

Directed Studies was created in an academic climate focused upon defining the idea of general education. During the first movement in general education, which happened at Columbia and Chicago after the First World War, the "dominant pattern" of the time "was one of oscillation back and forth between the two poles of commonality and diversification, between efforts to bring unity and coherence to the undergraduate curriculum." Moreover, universities confronted the logic of larger societal



forces, “the effect of which were to divide and fragment courses of study.” The former model could be seen in the great books curriculum of Robert Hutchins, with its emphasis on “the wisdom of the past—in its classic intellectual principles, enduring values, and fixed standards.” On the other side were the writings of John Dewey and his belief in the importance of “experience with present-day personal and social problems as an alternative way of providing students with a general (as opposed to specialized) education” (Lucas 247-248).

One of the most famous attempts at general education after the Second World War can be found in Harvard’s report on *General Education in a Free Society* (commonly known as the Redbook). The Redbook offered a plan for a detailed and highly planned course of study in general education at Harvard College. According to the Redbook, the problem of education has a unique place in a democratic society. In a society which prides itself on the success and creative achievements of its people, what is the best way to educate citizens? Harvard’s answer tracked the evolution both of secondary and of collegiate education, and ultimately suggests a search for unity among different disciplines. The report noted that “the search continues and must continue for some over-arching logic, some strong, not easily broken frame within which both college and school may fulfill their at once diversifying and uniting tasks.” The fields of knowledge, being so broad, must be brought together in some effective way. However, the most likely place to discern that unity is in “the character of American society, a society not wholly of the new world since it came from the old, not wholly given to innovation since it acknowledges certain fixed beliefs, not even wholly a law unto itself since there are principles above the state.” General education was an uniquely American phenomenon and one that could be pursued through an understanding and embracing of American culture (40-41).

A similar, although less explicitly American, message could be seen in the earliest years of the Directed Studies program. Created with great media attention, the experimental program closely followed the plan put forth in George Pierson’s report. Letters from students and faculty members, and the detailed records of the Dean’s Office reveal the success of the program as an attempt at general education. After its founding in 1946, Directed Studies received attention not merely in the *Yale Alumni Magazine*, but nationally. In 1948 the *Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal* quoted Dean DeVane as saying, “Our experimental program is proving its case to the hilt. We are beginning to recognize that a certain amount of direction is necessary for the college student during the first two years.”

The experimental quality of the program could be seen in its very description. Whereas the Directed Studies program of today emphasizes

its focus on exploring the ideas of western civilization, a 1949 report on the sophomore year of the program by historian Thomas Mendenhall used far more pedagogical language. “In general,” the report noted,

the purposes of the Program might be defined as follows: To explore through small classes and close contact between student and instructor the potentialities of a prescribed, integrated course of study, a common intellectual experience, for the first two years of college.

Collaboration among disciplines would be developed through a focus on philosophy in order to, repeating the words of the Pierson report, “break down the Balkanization of knowledge which rigid departmentalization has so tended to produce” (Mendenhall 1).

In discussing the nature of the program, it should be mentioned that not all courses in Directed Studies were specially made for the program. Indeed, the science and math courses, as well as language courses, were the standard classes open to all of Yale College. Among those classes unique to Directed Studies it is fitting to begin with a discussion of the two year-long philosophy courses. After all, philosophy was established as the standard by which all other courses would fail or succeed. According to Maynard Mack, the first-year philosophy course focused on forms of knowledge while the second-year which was “centered in ethics, draws upon the work in history and in the biological and social sciences to investigate the problems that the individual meets in discovering what is good and choosing what is right” (9). A report on the second year of Directed Studies remarked that the second year of philosophy easily complements the first, and “provides a central clearing house for all questions of the direction and purpose of human existence, whose origins and nature are being studied concurrently by the historian, the zoologist and the social scientist” (Mendenhall 4). Where the first year introduced students to the epistemological assumptions behind academic disciplines, the second year posed the challenge to discriminate among values and prioritize them. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, students examined the philosophy underlying Christian thought, medieval scholasticism, utilitarianism, the writings of Nietzsche, and contemporary ethicists. It was this last section, running four weeks, that “culminates with an attempt to work out a system of personal values... [along with] an examination of art and the good life.” Finally, the last part of the course was “concerned with ideological controversies and the meaning of history,” coinciding with a similar program in the History I course. Supplementing classic works were readings from C. S. Lewis, A. J. Toynbee, E. Fromm, C. S. Stevenson, and D. H. Parker, along with the daily newspaper to encourage the study of philosophical questions in a modern context (Mendenhall 5).

Monroe Beardsley, the creator of the first-year philosophy course, formulated a theory about the function of the two philosophy courses. He claimed that “the most general thing that could be said by one who believes in the Program of Directed Studies is that it is more likely to be successful than alternative programs in the work of education.” The philosophy course meant successfully to provide “wise judgment about the real and wise choice of what is possible,” without resorting to “dogmatism or conservatism.” The course trained students to be self-critical and provided a means of mediating between different disciplines. By learning to ask probing questions, the Directed Studies student would be better equipped than others for the entirety of his Yale career and beyond. Students enjoyed Beardsley’s method. As one noted, in a letter to DeVane,

It was one of the most unusual events of my life to be confronted with Mr. Beardsley’s thought in Philosophy I. His instruction focused the rather [unclear] tendencies of my mind. It became possible for the first time in my life to fit some of the pieces of knowledge into a rough picture. I do not suppose that I shall ever complete the puzzle; but, having once started, I doubt that I shall ever give up the attempt. (McGrath Letter)

Such testimonies are not limited to this letter. Indeed, the first-year course made students deeply interested in the questions of philosophy. Ideally, such preparation would make the second-year course even more successful. However, while Philosophy II was meant to be the culmination of the program by teaching the important skill of judging among ethical systems, students almost universally found it wholly inferior to its first-year companion.

Student reflections portray Philosophy II as less engaging than Philosophy I. The course, having been structured as a survey, did not allow for the same engagement that the slower paced and more personally reflective first-year course offered. Moreover, the course failed to make effective use of time by attempting to move very quickly through a number of works. Whereas Philosophy I provided a solid background with a minimal amount of texts, Philosophy II suffered because of its survey structure. One student noted the way in which the survey course, by failing to emphasize the individual development of a value system, led to a general decline in the morale of those enrolled in Directed Studies.

The esprit of our group freshman year was impressive. There was the feeling of a common intellectual quest and of competition in getting in and digging out the answers for ourselves. When you did come up with something new or original you felt you were contributing to group progress. And there was a feeling that the questions we were attacking were on the frontiers of human knowledge and that we had before us the opportunity, not only to build a personal philosophy and help others in the group do the same, but also that our investigations might reach new truths.

In contrast, during the second year,

I missed the feeling of being led through investigation to a personal system. It seemed to me that, as a result of the switch in emphasis from personal investigation and the development of personally adequate systems to the learning of historical schools, much of the most valuable spirit of D.S., the intense esprit, was lost. There was considerable apathy. The incentives of competition ... [and] personal and original achievement were lost. Also any integration around the philosophy course of the other courses was lacking. (Helgeson Letter)

Students considered the philosophy course of primary importance and the discipline which most unified the class. Robert McGrath '50 expressed this sentiment to DeVane upon graduation:

Directed Studies is as good as its philosophy courses. It is the philosophy course which distinguishes the Directed Studies program from the standard program. Specialists in each field can reach a short distance beyond their subjects; but it remains the duty of the philosophy instructor to "integrate", as the bulletin puts it, the work of these specialists. Without continuing high standards of instruction in philosophy, the program does not justify its existence. (McGrath Letter)

McGrath reveals another important element of the program—integration among courses. During the early years of Directed Studies, it was expected that professors would attend other classes in the program and thus actively incorporate information from other courses into their own. Because the faculty was handpicked to teach in the program, the strong fraternal bond among freshmen matched a similar bond among the ranks of the faculty. According to one student,

Perhaps only because we were the first group, but the instructors and students alike, we had a bond of the spirit that will always be one of my most cherished memories of Yale. Our instructors enjoyed working with us, we enjoyed them and the competition among ourselves, and therefore we couldn't help enjoying our work. (Lohnes Letter)

Only with this feeling of fulfillment could the program function. As another Directed Studies graduate noted:

In all the courses, one gets strongly the impression that this program is of great personal interest to the instructors—that they feel themselves an integral part of Directed Studies, are whole-heartedly in accord with its purposes, and are doing all they can to make the experiment a success. This spirit has communicated itself to the students, and the result has been an intensified interest in the program. (Matthews Letter)

Maynard Mack's Literature I, another survey course, also became a cornerstone of the early program. Mack claimed that "The theme in literature is the evolution of the Christian-classical cultural tradition, together with the modifications to which changing knowledge and changing standards

have subjected it during the last three centuries” (9). The course consisted of three components: a close study of the Bible, a reading of various plays from ancient Greek playwrights through Shakespeare, and a study of the epic tradition. Current Yale Students may recognize the syllabus as the precursor to English 129, “The Western Literary Tradition,” a central course for any English major. An article in the student publication *Et Veritas* offered a more detailed description:

The work was built around the development of the European value system: the hierarchy of being, from the animals through man and the angels to God. The continuity of this development was traced to its height in Shakespeare and Milton, and to its disintegration in Byron. The works of T.S. Eliot were presented as a picture of the complete lack of values in the contemporary world. The significance of this course lay in its nature as a philosophy of history, whereas elsewhere the task of evolving such a philosophy was left to the individual. (Crocker 7-8)

Mack controlled Literature I and used it as a training ground not merely for students, but for faculty members. The late Thomas Greene recalled teaching alongside Mack during his first year as an instructor. “Every week we would meet in Mack’s office to discuss the text. Those meetings were some of the finest seminars I’ve ever experienced” (Greene Interview).

Alvin Kernan, who also taught in the early years of Directed Studies, remembers the importance of the Literature I course for English professors of his generation. As the course was a favorite of Mack, he took very seriously the lectures given by young faculty members to Directed Studies. Given the importance of Mack’s opinion in the tenure process, faculty members would carefully eye him during lectures. If Mack wrote patiently in his notebook during the lecture, taking down notes, professors could be confident that he approved. Kernan, though, also remembers a day when, during a colleague’s lecture, Mack simply closed his notebook and stared ahead at the podium — hardly a good omen for that colleague’s career (Kernan Interview).

When discussing the literature program, students mentioned its effect on their personal philosophy. One student, though, noted the flaw of Directed Studies in that Literature I did not use the same epistemological approach of the Philosophy I course.

The lines of thought developed in the latter were often at apparent cross-purposes with those brought out in Literature; I say apparent because the schism is exactly analogous to that sometimes cited between faith and reason.... While no dispute between the two disciplines exists in fact, nevertheless there is nothing fruitful to be gained from attempting to integrate them. (Sternbach Letter)

The influence of the Philosophy I course is again demonstrated. Integration was an expectation held by students.

The same student remarked that “from the limited point of view that considers solely an integrated course of study, I submit that in first year, it might be advisable to substitute for Literature, Studies in Society.” The Studies in Society course indeed may have been better placed in the freshman year, for with its emphasis on method, as opposed to an emphasis on values, it could have supplemented the epistemological training of the Philosophy I course. This interdisciplinary course was similar to Columbia’s Contemporary Civilizations course in its attempt to integrate history, economics, and political science. In addition to discussions of current issues in society, the second-year course also included a project to examine the Connecticut River Valley from a number of perspectives – in order to understand concepts of environmental and sociological change. The yearly field project varied, but always required students to investigate and solve a real-world social problem in the New Haven area.

Such questions were examined from a historical perspective, as well. Thomas Mendenhall’s sophomore-year history course was called the “Individual in Europe and America from the Middle Ages to the Present.” This history survey was established on the assumption that it could be the only history course taken by students in Directed Studies. It assumed a basic knowledge of American history (Mendenhall 2). Taught through both lectures and seminars, the instructors were a European historian, an American historian, and a political theorist. Such division of teaching responsibilities offered an interdisciplinary quality to the program. According to Mendenhall, “the central role of history and philosophy in the sophomore year has been most striking; in the face of the social sciences and biology they have joined to reassert the importance of the individual quest for values” (4).

Finally, Directed Studies required students to take the general Yale courses in language and science for both years. These courses in the biological and physical sciences provided a grounding in more than the humanities, a fact that many early students in the program resented. Stephen Brown ’50 wrote that

The Physics department worked out a special term course designed for those who would in all probability have no other course in their field, while the Chemistry department, with a stiffness and lack of imagination perhaps characteristic, seemed merely to have condensed their usual first-year course amid great wailing and gnashing of teeth as to the wealth of chemical wisdom we poor humanities students would miss. (Brown Letter)

Although Directed Studies was not meant merely to cater to students interested in the humanities, Brown’s comment causes one to realize that the

structure of the program made the natural sciences take second place to the study of letters, especially given that the science courses did not adopt the Directed Studies pedagogy. One student went so far as to state that he did not “think there [were] many who are going on in science once they [left] Directed Studies” (Harbachick Letter).

The Yale administration kept close records on the forty students admitted to Directed Studies during its first year. One document tabulated the grade point averages of each student, as well as their extracurricular achievements, post-graduate fellowships, and their early academic history. Of the forty graduates, fifty percent came from elite prep schools and the other fifty percent from general high schools. Majors varied from drama to the social sciences, newly created special divisional majors, and the liberal arts. Notably, no students seem to have majored in the natural sciences. Extracurricular activities varied among a number, including rowing, varsity football, baseball, the Yale Political Union, the Elizabethan Club, the Yale Dramatic Association, and Dwight Hall. Some students received invitations to senior societies and one became a Whiffenpoof. Seven students were elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and one became a Rhodes scholar. This extensive list reflects the concern that the administration showed in tracking the intellectual and social achievements of its “guinea pigs.”

Such detailed statistics reveal a rarely discussed motivation behind the program. Dean DeVane’s records chronicle the fact that students in Directed Studies became campus leaders not merely in the classroom, but in the extracurricular realm as well. The fruits of Directed Studies were not merely the academic successes of its students or a successful response to the problem of general education. Directed Studies’ academic focus did not preclude the concerns of its founders with maintaining the social Yale from which they had graduated. The fraternity within the program paralleled the fraternity in the university itself. Successful Directed Studies men would become successful Yale men.

By 1949, when two classes of Directed Studies students had successfully completed the program, spirits were high. Mendenhall’s report on the sophomore year recommended that the program be expanded to allow up to eighty students to be enrolled. However, he noted that “The size of the university and its academic traditions certainly preclude any thought of extending . . . such a program to the entire student body”(24). The strength of the program lay in its selectivity. He further encouraged curriculum expansion, particularly by adding a course in the fine arts (which were merely touched upon in the history class). Finally, he noted with fear that “The [Directed Studies faculty] pioneers may well be obliged to drop

out in the next few years and on the caliber of their successors will ultimately depend the perpetuation of the program”(25). Maintaining faculty and student standards would permit the program’s continued success for some years. However, with the beginning of the next decade, the program would face problems which were less pedagogical than financial.

MR. MELLON'S GIFT

The financial crisis facing Yale after the Second World War had a direct impact on Directed Studies. Brooks Kelley noted that the “endowment problem” was caused by a number of issues, including a drop in donations during the war, a poor investment formula for spending the endowment, a decline in New Haven property values, and inflation. Additionally, the university suffered from tremendous capital needs that would not be met for some time. At one point, Charles Seymour noted with concern that “Yale is the only important university in the country that has not embarked upon a great building enterprise.” While Seymour did much to restructure the finances of the university, by the time he passed his office to A. Whitney Griswold, there was still much to be done (Kelley 437).

On April 26, 1950, the financial crisis reached the office of Dean DeVane. In a brief letter from Provost Edgar Furniss, the Dean was advised that “Among the items to be scrutinized in our search for economies one, I believe, should be taken under consideration before the end of the present academic year. I refer to the program in Directed Studies.” The tone of the letter seems akin to an offer of fair warning “prior to any action by the administrative officers of the University.” Furniss admitted that he felt such a program would have to be cut given “the serious financial emergency” and that the new president agreed (Furniss Letter).

DeVane did not hesitate to share this information with the Directed Studies faculty. The announcement launched Maynard Mack from a teacher of the *Iliad* to a warrior in his own right. While President-elect Griswold was touring England before assuming office, Mack set forth to save the program from extinction. His letter to Griswold of May 11, 1950, reveals not only Mack’s intense dedication to Directed Studies, but his belief in its ability to uphold the values of the university itself.

After explaining how he did not “like to trouble the quiet waters of the Cam,” Mack acknowledged that the financial crisis of the university meant “that to the best of everyone’s abilities economies must be made. I think we are all ready to work as a team on this.” Mack continued:

Some things, however, are more expendable than others. There are certain values no faculty can sell out and keep its self-respect. Among those values for the Yale faculty are the things that make Yale different from Ohio State, and Directed Studies is one, a very valuable one, of those things. We cannot have our class agents, our Office of Development, our Alumni magazine and brochures appealing for money for a quality education, while in the meantime, at home, we liquidate the enterprises that make a quality education. Directed Studies is only one of those, but it is one. We must seek to save money there – not wipe it out.



According to this letter, in under five years Directed Studies had become an important part of Yale's strength. The "enterprising" quality of the program was of particular importance in understanding why it should not be discarded. However, Directed Studies was also cited as successful. "No business house would liquidate first its most vigorous and (in the outside world) best-known branch. It tries to prune out the dead wood." Griswold had only to consult former students and faculty members to recognize that "Directed Studies belongs to the green . . . [and] the careless elimination of green wood leaves very great scars behind." Mack concluded with a warning, "I want you to know that I am going to resist this to the best of my ability – and I am not the only one. I have been one of your admirers for a long time, and I want your reign to be a remembered one."

The tone of Mack's letter was matched by swift response from Griswold. Acknowledging the difficult times that Yale was facing, Griswold did not deny that Directed Studies was in danger:

The economies forced upon us by a \$1,000,000 operating deficit are not pleasant to any of us. They will cost us all sacrifices and perhaps some friendships. I hope the latter will not prove true in this case and that we may give the question our best thought without personal bitterness.

The president-elect's words are both ominous and realistic. However, he was also concerned that the conflict between Furniss and Mack reached him while abroad. He wished "also that I would not be drawn into decisions like this *in absentia* like a Ubangi witch doctor." Moreover, the actions of Mack at a recent faculty meeting, during which he expressed his outrage at Furniss' plan, did not endear either Mack or the program to the administration. Griswold told Mack that "Directed Studies lost friends."

The dialogue did not end there. Mack continued to communicate with both Griswold and Furniss, prompting the provost to become increasingly annoyed with Mack. As Furniss wrote to Griswold on May 23 of that year, "I had not intended to bother you with University business while you were on leave; but Mack's activities on behalf of Directed Studies – which I deplore – have forced me to depart from that resolution." Furniss then noted with a certain amount of disdain that the solution to the crisis would most likely not involve the dissolution of the program. "It's evident that none of those involved in this enterprise will agree to give it up entirely; and I am hardly in [a] position to order them to do so" (Furniss Letter).

It is not surprising that Directed Studies should garner such loyalty then. Nationwide the program was receiving attention and Andover had just created its own Directed Studies program on the secondary school level. The purpose of the Andover plan was to establish a course of study to "enable students to move steadily forward through a coherent and uni-

fied program of study, with a continuous desire to learn and at a rate commensurate with their ability" (Blackmer 9). Their emphasis was upon the "superior student," hoping to create a system that would "offer all students of college caliber a better education" such that students would develop strong analytic and communication skills. The forms of knowledge to be studied included "the world of nature, the world of human society, and the world of human ideals (10, 22). Andover borrowed some of the structure of Directed Studies to imitate Yale in training liberally educated students. Such a student "has convictions, which are reasoned" and "values [that] he can communicate . . . to others. Most importantly, "service to his society or to God, not personal satisfaction alone is the purpose of his excelling" (20).

However, even though Directed Studies would not be destroyed, it was not sustainable in its current form. Only with the influx of money from outside sources could Directed Studies survive. Its first benefactor was an alumnus from the Class of 1929 with a love for British art and Yale. Paul Mellon's Old Dominion Foundation saved the program. An active student during his time as an undergraduate, involved in the *Yale Daily News*, the *Yale Literary Magazine*, and Scroll and Key, Mellon was the son of philanthropist Andrew W. Mellon. He went on to become an avid collector of British art and horses, and the patron of Directed Studies.

Mellon's respect for Yale and undergraduate education meant that a generous gift from the Old Dominion Foundation was not unexpected. The endowment given by Old Dominion was announced to President Griswold on February 19, 1952. The goal of the endowment was to "strengthen general education for undergraduates at Yale University by expanding and extending the integrated program of studies in the liberal arts and sciences developed over the past several years." The proposal from Yale called for an expansion of the program from 100 to 270 students a year (in both classes). However, in order to accommodate this influx of students, as well as to maintain the "high ratio of faculty to students," Directed Studies required its own budget under the administration of the dean of Yale College. "From the funds received as reimbursement . . . departments will be able to procure such faculty replacements as are required." Mellon's gift also helped explore how the residential colleges could be used for academic purposes through the creation of residential college seminars, the creation of a new tutorial program for juniors and seniors, and the renovation of Connecticut Hall. This proposal recalls the language of Pierson in his early proposal for Directed Studies. Connecticut Hall, as the oldest extant building on the Yale Campus, reflected the Old Yale of DeVane and of Mellon's undergraduate years. And because of their experimental quality, Directed Studies and

the other proposals for the Mellon grant supported advances in general education that were precipitated by historic needs (Griswold Letter).

The Mellon funding allowed Directed Studies to expand and placed it on stable financial footing for a while. At the same time, further influxes of money came from two more sources. In 1951 the Carnegie Corporation created a set of Internships in General Education, offering faculty members from around the country the chance to teach in general education programs at Harvard, Yale, Chicago, and Columbia. The internship program remained successful for some time and the structure of the grant is worth examination. Much debate ensued among the leaders of the four universities as to the best way for the Carnegie Corporation to dole out its money. Unanimous consent among the university heads led them to reject the notion of a term grant which would be paid out yearly. The reasons were best put forth by Harvard President James Conant, who wrote,

Our fundamental thought here is that we look with great distrust on annual grants and even term grants. We are doing all we can to say that what we need is permanent endowment. I feel this particularly so when it comes to supporting an education program as apart from special research projects which, in theory at least, can be liquidated when the term money disappears. (Conant Letter)

The Internships in General Education were funded by a larger endowment, lasting a number of years. This point is important given that long-term funding would become a major factor in the shaping of Directed Studies during its later history. Another major grant, from the Ford Foundation, also provided needed support.

Directed Studies maintained its traditional structure during this period, continually being known for the academic rigor demanded by the program. However, while it was initially the center of experimentation at Yale, under the Griswold administration the faculty turned to other areas to design innovative academic policies. Griswold's controversial 1953 "Report of the President's Committee on General Education" offered two models of liberal education at Yale that were meant to revolutionize the undergraduate curriculum. The more radical of the two plans would have involved drastic changes to the freshman and sophomore years. Modeling itself after the undergraduate experience in England, students would be required to read a number of "syllabi" while attending lectures and discussion groups. The abolition of the traditional class structure for two years was an idea received with amazement and credulity by most. The other plan was "less ambitious" and aimed "to achieve more progression and sequence in a discipline and more concentration in an area of knowledge than in general at present" in the freshman and sophomore years (Smith 1953). To facilitate

these changes, the report called for the creation of a special faculty in general education, ended the freshman year as a specialized unit within the school (which it had been for years), and allowed students to accelerate through both high school and college given appropriate preparation.

The radical plan was quickly dismissed by the *Yale Daily News* as unrealistic. "We feel that Yale does not, and never will, have the student body or the faculty capable of handling such a plan. Not more than one percent of any freshman or sophomore class would be truly worthy of benefiting from the idealistic freedom and flexibility" of the plan. The other plan was recognized as having certain similarities to the Directed Studies program, although it would have been applied to all Yale College students. It involved taking two years of five courses each, focusing on mathematics and the natural sciences, history and social science, and the arts. Additionally, students would concentrate in a more technical subject such as ROTC or languages. This plan would allow students to balance breadth of knowledge with specificity (Smith 1953).

One of the harshest criticisms of the plans was that they were composed in secret. Moreover, no one on the President's Committee was a member of the philosophy department. Where the Pierson report had demanded the elevation of philosophy for freshman and sophomore year, philosophy was surprisingly missing from Griswold's report. As philosophy professor Paul Weiss wrote,

The committee's interests and doctrines account perhaps for the fact that the report shows little appreciation and sometimes little understanding of the nature, accomplishments and aims of Religion and Philosophy. They account perhaps for the fact too that the report's stresses in the social sciences, art, and literature are primarily on historical aspects. In the case of philosophy in particular I think it tends to envisage the subject as it was taught in various places some dozens of years ago. It does not seem to be aware of philosophy as a speculative, critical and integrative subject.

Merely a decade after the proposal for Directed Studies was written, philosophy had begun to shrink in the estimation of proponents of general education. While philosophy had been the central factor in the founding and continuation of Directed Studies, a new general education program—to be implemented on a larger scale than Directed Studies—lacked that emphasis. Due to a lack of support, however, Griswold's vision never came to life.

In the "atmosphere of reform" that accompanied the hype and debate over Griswold's report, members of the Yale community debated the merits of the Directed Studies program. In a lengthy piece in the *Yale Daily News*, Directed Studies chairman John Ellsworth described the reasons why Directed Studies "commands a remarkable amount of attention." He reit-

erated the significance of the unique two-year structure, writing that "To achieve integration, philosophy was asked to assume its traditional role of stimulating students to adopt a simultaneously critical, comparative, and creative attitude toward all courses." Additionally, the first-year emphasis on the "ways by which man tries to understand the universe and to express himself" contrasted with the second year's focus on "man's physical, social, and individual nature and with man's values."

The reputation of Directed Studies at that time was mixed. According to Ellsworth, the program was known and respected for its selectivity and its creativity. "While the courses are prescribed, each course is probably more flexible, freer, and more conducive to creative originality than are most of the courses in the first two college years." At the same time, there was clear acknowledgement that the program's existence was precarious. Financial problems which, "but for Dean DeVane's sagacity and the generosity of some instructors," would have destroyed the program earlier had not disappeared, even with the Old Dominion donation. Ellsworth was quite explicit in his belief that the rest of the Yale community would simply need to garner the benefits from those "lucky enough to be in" Directed Studies. He noted, as well, the occasional "complaints from upper-class instructors — 'I don't like your Directed Studies men. They ask too many questions; they upset my lectures.'"

THE TWO CULTURES AND THE DIRECTED STUDIES REVOLUTION

When Directed Studies was founded, the sciences were deliberately placed in the program in accord with trends in general education. In the atomic age, all leaders would be expected to understand the nature of scientific discoveries. Although nineteenth-century Yale had separated its science students from its humanities students, such a separation was no longer viable. However, the success of the science program within Directed Studies was questionable. The science courses were not well tailored for Directed Studies students, and thus early complaints focused on the extent to which students felt short-changed. One student, as has already been noted, bleakly wrote that “I don’t think there are many who are going on in science once they leave Directed Studies” (Harbachick Letter).

However, the problems with the Directed Studies science courses were not unique to the Directed Studies program. The 1940s and 50s had seen a growing divide between what Cambridge scholar and novelist C. P. Snow called the “two cultures.” First discussed in a 1956 *New Statesman* article, Snow’s lecture on “The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution” offered a case for why universities had failed to create scientifically minded humanists. Snow’s lecture cannot be ignored, for it recognizes a severe divide between the intellectuals studying the humanities and intellectuals involved in the sciences. In describing his own experiences as a member of a Cambridge college, he said that

I have had, of course, intimate friends among both scientists and writers. It was through living among these groups and much more, I think, through moving regularly from one to the other and back again that I got occupied with the problem of what, long before I put it on paper, I christened to myself as “the two cultures.”

Snow saw these two groups “comparable in intelligence, identical in race, not grossly different in social origin, earning about the same incomes, who had almost ceased to communicate at all” (2).

The reasons behind such a division varied; they were, however, similar to the tensions that gave rise to Directed Studies. Specifically, the specialization of the university itself had led to the division. Snow argued that the separation between cultures was not a purely English phenomenon. He traced its acute nature in England to two points. First he cited “our fanatical belief in educational specialisation, which is much more deeply ingrained in us than in any country in the world.” Furthermore, he described the British “tendency to let . . . social forms crystallize;” as such, “once anything



like a cultural divide gets established, all the social forces operate to make it not less rigid, but more so" (18). While the latter reason was not so pressing within the American context, the former was a new twist on a familiar American academic refrain. After all, specialization had been a cause for concern at Yale since before the Reforms of 1945.

Snow's argument was clearly on the mind of Yale professors when, in 1958, they created the program in Directed Studies in Science. This program was not to be taken in conjunction with Directed Studies in the Humanities, and was a similarly selective course of study. According to an article written in *The Superior Student* by chemistry professor Harold Cassidy, the Directed Studies in Science program was established on three premises. First, a large number of freshmen usually arrived at Yale unsure of what course of study they wanted to pursue. Second, most of these people had been well educated in math and science. Finally, perhaps the point most relevant to Snow's thesis, "The increasing effect of science in shaping our culture makes it imperative that we develop scientifically literate laymen." The few science courses pursued by many humanities students "[cheat] the modern student of some of the most exciting and significant developments of his life."

Cassidy continued by writing that the standards of elementary science education were improving at the time of the founding of Directed Studies in Science. Citing the work of the National Science Foundation's Summer Science Institute, Cassidy claimed that in the near future, "Colleges will have progressively less remedial work to do, and will in fact be forced to upgrade their own offerings at the elementary level, as the students prepared by these teachers flow into colleges." Honors-level work would soon become "the pattern for an improved elementary curriculum." Of course, such honors-level work would be more focused on the sciences and less humanistic than the earlier model of Directed Studies (Cassidy 10).

As with the Directed Studies in the Humanities program, Directed Studies in Science had a two-year structure. However, while Directed Studies in Humanities continued to place philosophy at the center of the program, Directed Studies in Science was centered around two-year sequences in mathematics and in the sciences. Coordination between the two was provided as the "high-level combined physics and chemistry course were taught in the light of the mathematics that the students are known to be studying" (Cassidy 10). Biology took center-stage in the second year science course, and built upon the physics and chemistry of the first year. The humanities were not ignored in the program. Social Science, language, literature, philosophy, and history were all part of the new Directed Stud-

ies in Science program. Furthermore, students were not expected to major in the sciences upon completion of the program, although the option was open to some.

The university's proposals to the National Science Foundation and Carnegie Corporation for funding for Directed Studies in Science provide insight into the details of the program. A proposal one year after the founding of Directed Studies in Science to the Carnegie Corporation remarks that

There are at Yale, and we imagine also at other good colleges, many top-grade students who are not committed to science. These men among our students usually combine high mathematical and verbal aptitudes.... They are "good at everything," and cannot make up their minds [about] what to major in.

The tone of this statement is quite remarkable, coming thirteen years after the founding of the first Directed Studies program. Whereas the early program defied the concept of specialization, the tone of the proposal seems to question whether students should not be more focused in their early intellectual pursuits.

The Directed Studies name took on a new meaning with the science program. Although Directed Studies in the Humanities never successfully taught students to find a unity between the humanistic and scientific fields of knowledge, it at least gave lip service to such a goal. Directed Studies in Science was, instead, a crash course in the sciences for those who might never pursue them again. In the Carnegie proposal, Yale notes that "The Program is essentially an Honors Program in Science at the Freshman and Sophomore levels for students who do not plan to major in science, or who have been unable to make up their minds." The program was meant to "set a pattern for a great many other colleges [as] ... there are forces, or pressures, developing which will accentuate the need for a Program like this." Directed Studies in Science responded to the "growing recognition among young people who do not plan to become professional scientists that they must study the sciences as a science-major might study literature and the classics — so as to keep in touch with his culture."

As with the original Directed Studies program, the science program was meant to serve as an exemplar both to universities and to secondary schools. The small course size allowed for a strong *esprit de corps*, as well as ample opportunity for curricular experimentation by the faculty. The laboratory course in physical science was meant to serve as a "radical departure from normal laboratory methods," allowing students to engage in laboratory methods to demonstrate concepts in physical science, to learn the techniques of laboratory work, and to perform their own experiments. This hands-on approach was continued in a proposed course on "Life and

the Earth,” which would study biology and geology as “historic and analytic sciences.” Even the Studies in Society course had an empirical quality, as students planned to study the “functional basis of culture in terms of individual needs and the instrumental needs of social organization” in the residential colleges (Cassidy “Proposal”).

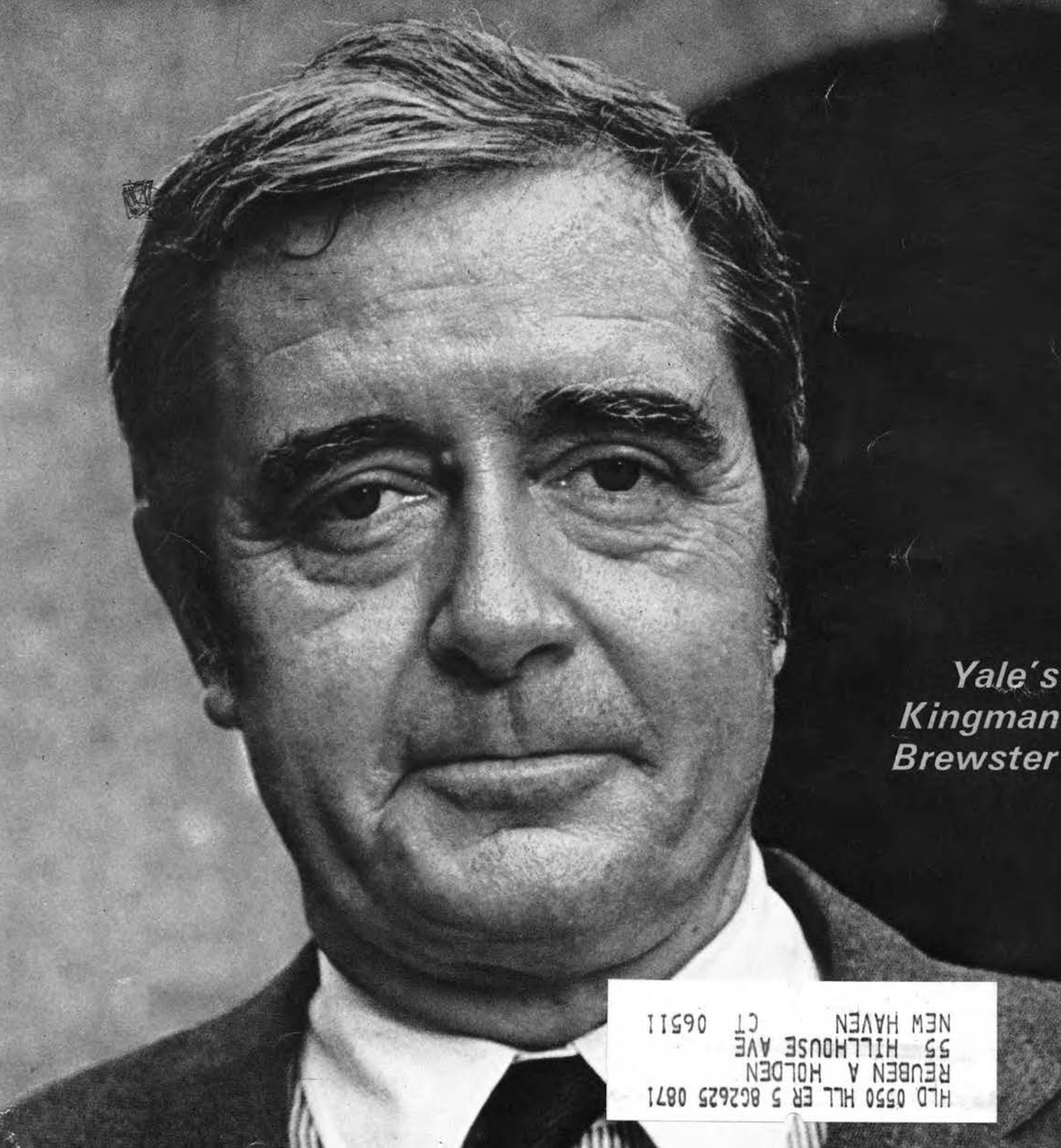
And what of the philosophy that was the pride of early Directed Studies? Where did the keystone course fit into this scientific honors program? One document from the period describes the philosophy course as serving “to show the constant interplay between philosophy and the sciences from the period of the Greeks to the present.” Philosophy would be taught as a necessary foundation for understanding the sciences. Possible names for the course included “Natural Philosophy,” “Philosophy and Nature,” and “The Philosophy of Nature.” Ultimately, philosophy was relegated to the second year of the program, and served as a general survey meant to show that “Philosophy is essentially an attitude and an activity, rather than a set of fixed doctrines or dogmas” (Brief Description of Proposed DSS Course).

Directed Studies in Science did receive media attention upon its founding, but was not continued after 1961. The reasons seem to be both intellectual and financial, as just mentioned. The new program was never fully endorsed by the science departments themselves—departments geared toward students majoring in the sciences. While highly focused, the program could not match the specialization of the majors. Furthermore, the intellectual unity of the science program was not emphasized as it was in the humanities program. As one program came to a close, the original Directed Studies would soon face another major financial crisis of its own. And as in the past, it was a Directed Studies founder who struggled to keep the program alive.

June 15, 1970/50 cents

Newsweek

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THE VIKING'S FUNERAL AND BREWSTER'S MILLIONS

Problems with the Directed Studies program were outlined first in 1960 in a report to the Yale College Course of Study Committee. This report followed a similar audit in 1954. The result, according to the 1960 report, was the argument “that relative academic success in the upper class years in Yale College is more directly related to factors of ability and motivation than to the particular type of program elected in the Freshman and Sophomore years” (Burnham). The report noted that most students would elect Directed Studies again, should they have the opportunity, but also listed a number of flaws. Most importantly, the intellectual coherence of the program seemed to fade from its earlier success. Students, while pleased at the broad education offered by Directed Studies, complained that such breadth made choosing a major difficult. These were new discussions of perennial problems.

Perhaps the most interesting ideas to come out of the 1960 audit came from Professor James Haden’s response. While discussing the flaws of the report, he reflected upon the relationship between Directed Studies and Yale College’s values:

[Directed Studies] has always been at least partially at odds with Yale College, in the shape of its departments. Only by confronting them with such cash-value arguments as the direct relation between the caliber of the instructors they supply and the caliber of the majors they derive, have we been able to extract certain key men from them. . . . The belief prevails that doing this kind of teaching does not help the young man’s career, and I tend to think that this rumor is justified. . . . Probably there is a widespread suspicion of the type of teacher we need most in [Directed Studies], and this operates to cause them to go elsewhere as soon as possible.

Haden noted a matter of continuous concern for Directed Studies. The form of general education, praised so highly in the 1940s, was becoming a relic. The energy of the 1940s, in this regard, had long ago vanished. Moreover, staffing the program was becoming a greater problem, because teaching in Directed Studies took faculty away from responsibilities in their own departments.

Numerous faculty members involved in the program have commented on the difficulty in staffing. As department budgets became tighter in the 1950s and 1960s and as competition over tenure grew, a new mentality developed in the university. The mantra “publish or perish” reflects this trend. Junior faculty members did not have the leisure to focus exclusively on teaching—which a time-intensive program like Directed Studies demanded. Additionally, departments expected faculty to teach their

department's own courses. A free-floating program like Directed Studies would thus suffer; to teach in it would be to shirk departmental responsibilities. And given that the program was only directed to freshmen and sophomores, senior faculty in high demand might not be able to stop teaching upper-level classes in their specialties.

With all these problems, Directed Studies continued to be popular at Yale, although its costs were almost prohibitive. As the program admitted more students, the funds from the Old Dominion Foundation did not provide enough to completely support faculty salaries and other expenses. As such, on October 30, 1962, a short yet significant note appeared on the desk of Dean DeVane. Written by President Griswold's hand, it simply read, "Bill: I'm troubled by Directed Studies. It grows harder and harder to explain its fortunes to our Old Dominion friends. Is a Viking's funeral in order? —W."

The reasons for this note are numerous. At first glance, it seems as though Directed Studies' experimental quality was no longer sufficient explanation for its failures as well as its successes. The momentum from Maynard Mack's defense of Directed Studies had decreased. Additionally, the demise of Directed Studies in Science was a part of the problem. The ideals of an integrative program like Directed Studies, while still discussed, did not have the same impact as before. An article in *The Superior Student* in 1961 explained the problems with Directed Studies. According to Dean DeVane, "Age was the main factor....The newness wears off any experimental program; Directed Studies had become a bit commonplace because of its years. It had also become too big." Dissatisfaction over the program could be seen in the fact that many members of the Class of 1963 chose not to continue through the second year of the program. A report by three Directed Studies professors in December 1960 remarked on the way in which the program had become "a shocking and agonizing waste of a human and an educational resource." They noted, like DeVane, that "We know how idealism becomes disillusioned and impotent when it finds it is not matched by an equal idealism and effort on the part of the University." Funding and departmental demands were taking their toll (Hooker 14).

Rumors quickly spread about the dissolution of the program in 1962. Yet, as before, members of the Directed Studies community rallied to its side. A letter by eleven current and former Directed Studies students was sent to the president on December 17, 1962. Responding to word that the program was to be abolished during the following academic year, they appealed to Griswold to continue the program. Their argument defended the inherent value of the program, even with its flaws, and expressed that the purpose of general education had evolved. Indeed, "While the original

concept of unity implied in the goals of Directed Studies has waned somewhat, we feel that such a unity, stressed to extremes, becomes meaningless in its superficiality." The students argued for a more *laissez-faire* approach to the program, such that each student would need to determine the unifying strands in the courses: "A much more wholesome relation comes from an effort by the student to seek out the trends which appear as *correlating* factors in the history of men and ideas." Students themselves could have to take responsibility for the holistic quality of the program, especially if the faculty and administration were unable to do so (Sawyer Letter).

The letter does not criticize Directed Studies, but instead the administration. These students wrote "on the assumption that the university administration plans to replace D.S. with another sort of freshman honours program." They noted, with concern, that "There has been, however, no concrete guarantee of this up to this point, indeed, the entire matter has been handled in a way which seems to contradict the basic tenets of a liberal academic tradition." Students admonished Griswold for consulting neither the faculty nor the students directly involved with the program. With trepidation, they closed their letter hoping that Directed Studies be replaced with a similarly successful freshman honors program, although they seemed to expect its demise.

Despite its lack of optimism, the initiative shown in writing this letter was similar to that taken by Maynard Mack during the first financial crisis. By 1962, the dissolution of the program seemed to be a common expectation. However, times had changed. Whereas Mack defended Directed Studies on the grounds that it *provided* a unity for the students, the students in the 1960s proposed to discover that unity themselves. The experimental program, which by now was nearly twenty years old, would develop a more sophisticated understanding of its relationship to students.

One day after the student letter, the dean announced that Directed Studies would not be continued. However, quickly thereafter, the faculty stated that all program difficulties had been removed. While such a claim is at best outlandish, it is telling of how seriously the faculty continued to concern themselves with Directed Studies. The *Yale Daily News* reported in January 1963 that Dean DeVane had chosen to renew the course for the 1963-1964 academic year, following "impassioned" recommendations by a faculty committee. With little time to rework the budget, the program would continue under intense scrutiny. Yet again, it seemed, the program had been given a bit more time (Garabedian and Knott).

While faculty and student support may have helped show the rest of Yale that people cared about the program, the reasons for its survival were not publicly known. According to Thomas Greene, who would run

Directed Studies in the late 1960s, President Griswold considered taking the Old Dominion money away from Directed Studies and spending it elsewhere. Dean DeVane, recognizing the danger this would pose to the survival of his brainchild, very shrewdly investigated who controlled the Old Dominion funds. It turned out that according to stipulations set up by the Foundation itself, the money was not in the hands of the president, but in those of the dean of Yale College. DeVane reported on this news to the president, who was thus unable to redirect the money. Ultimately, Griswold's "Viking's funeral" never took place. Yet as the financial woes of Yale College increased, Directed Studies would find itself confronted with a growing staffing problem. And, while Griswold did not gain control of the Old Dominion funds, his successor ultimately would.

The administration may have questioned the value of the Directed Studies experiment, but at least it still maintained its experimental quality in some forms. The 1960s were a time of great creativity in the program, as the freshman and sophomore years of the program were notable for their new syllabi. The curriculum began to include a new breed of courses in the second year, including studies of "Law and Society" and cinema. A history of art survey course, which had been instituted in 1950, continued to be a strong part of the program. However, as the course developed beyond the earliest visions, the intellectual coherence of the program decayed. The sophomore year became optional, with students choosing among a number of Directed Studies courses. As choice detracted from a common intellectual experience, the early *esprit de corps* continued to decline.

Yet the changes within Directed Studies could not compare with those outside of the program. The 1960s were years of great upheaval nationwide, and such change was acutely felt in the university itself. Throughout the 1960s, academic goals and courses of study were redefined according to new standards. The reasons for such change were numerous—from the influence of the Vietnam War to a new politicization of the academy. The revolution that was sweeping America was felt acutely at the university because, according to Thomas Bender and Carl Schorske, "Many ... academic intellectual[s] redefined politics in cultural terms; the campus became the world [and] [t]his move made academic culture and the syllabus ... the locus of political energy" (39). In such a time of upheaval, the contrast between the left and right at campuses around the nation began to focus on the role of education in civil society. Just as a rethinking of education had occurred after the Second World War, such thoughts developed in earnest during the 1960s. However, where general education grew out of one war, a far different set of ideals grew out of this culture conflict.

Through the battles waged in literature and history departments over the years from approximately the mid-1960s to the present, political agendas have been either overtly or subtly attached to various curricula. Where post-modern ideas became the hallmarks of the academic left, programs of the great books model were seen as staunchly right-leaning. And while the Directed Studies program was once conceived as a radical experiment, its latent conservatism began to take root as the academy changed. Indeed, the program would soon accept the mantle of a great books program, and its approach to texts would be seen by many as old-fashioned.

One of the most striking revolutionary changes in the academy during this period was the rise of a new approach to literature. Rejecting the critical model that had been pioneered at Yale by figures such as Maynard Mack, literary theorists sought new ways of approaching texts. New theories, such as structuralism, reflected the changes in the academy. As Alvin Kernan, a former chairman of the Directed Studies program, writes, in describing the impact of later literary theories,

Looking back, it cannot have been chance that the social revolution in the universities in the sixties was followed by a philosophical revolution in the seventies that challenged the intellectual authority of professors, their books, subjects, and methodologies....Social and intellectual forms move together and the proponents of the new philosophy ... considered themselves from the start to be "intellectual freedom fighters." (Kernan 186)

The example of structuralism is indicative both of the changes in the academy and of how such changes related to Directed Studies. As structuralism took hold, a number of former Directed Studies faculty broke away to create a new literature course, rejecting Maynard Mack's traditional design.

Structuralism was born from an attempt to instill a scientific approach in the study of literary texts. In the mid-twentieth century, literary study had been driven largely by the work of the New Critics. Motivated by such scholars as Cleanth Brooks and William Empson, the New Critical approach elevated the work of literature (particularly the poem) to a seeming apotheosis. A poem was a work complete unto itself—a source of pleasure and an escape from the hazards of the modern industrial world. Having arisen from a particular tradition of thought, the New Critical approach to literature reveled in finding the complexities and ambiguities of literature through close reading. The New Critical approach emphasized readings of individual texts without concern for the biography of an author or his larger interactions with the world while providing both a respite from political battles and a defense of reading for pleasure. Terry Eagleton writes (with perhaps a certain amount of scorn), "New Criticism's view of the poem as a delicate equipoise of contending attitudes, a disinterested

reconciliation of opposing impulses, proved deeply attractive to skeptical liberal intellectuals disoriented by the clashing dogmas of the Cold War." It was, in essence, a reading of poetry that taught disinterestedness, "a serene, speculative, impeccably evenhanded rejection of anything in particular" (43).

Whether Eagleton's characterization of the New Criticism is wholly fair, it is true that the New Critical outlook did not view the study of literature as a scientific enterprise. The poem had its own set of rules which were internally coherent. However, reacting to the New Criticism, various schools of literary theory sought to integrate works of literature with larger trends in human history and politics. The roots of structuralism could be found with scholars like Northrop Frye. Describing Frye's writings, Kernan says, "In Frye's hands, literature became a kaleidoscope that when shaken always revealed a structured and coherent field." Literary works throughout history could be connected through the underlying forms and themes within the texts:

Though it tended quickly to be too much, Frye's touch made it seem as if it was at least possible that all the diverse pieces of historically accumulated literature — oral epics, religious plays, prayers, novels, songs, and so much else — were the manifestation of a set of central symbols and a few basic myths.

Developed through the studies of Claude Lévi-Strauss, structuralism became an influential literary theory. The basic idea of structuralism rested upon the notion that societies were constituted by a set number of ideas and structures. Lévi-Strauss explained that, "The ensemble of a people's customs has always its particular style; they form into systems. I am convinced that the number of these systems is not unlimited and that human societies ... never create absolutely." Underlying the structure of societies was a "set of strict rules" that men used to create a world filled with "meaning and purpose" (Kernan 113-115).

Structuralism studied the forms of a text, more than the content itself. Meaning for the structuralist came from the relationship between various components of a work — be it a novel, opera, or comic book. How the characters related was more important than who the characters were. Content gave way to form so that the fundamental structures of human existence could be examined and understood. Although in many ways the structuralist reading of a text required divorcing the text from reality (even the detailed realities within the text itself), the definition of a text could vary according to social norms. Texts were not part of a stagnant tradition, but came from all genres and time periods. Because its methods and readings were revolutionary, it is not surprising that a structuralist approach had the potential to fly in the face Directed Studies' teaching methods — teaching methods which had been grounded in the New Critics' talk of tradition.

The impact of structuralism could be felt throughout the academy, but on the undergraduate level, one specific change that came about was a redefinition of what undergraduate students of literature ought to study. Today, the prerequisite course in the literature major is a class on “Fiction and the Forms of Narrative.” A recent course description follows:

A team-taught course, with lectures and seminars, that examines the role of storytelling, plot, and fiction in a variety of narratives: novels, short stories, and autobiographies; case studies from law and psychoanalysis; drama and film. Emphasis on how stories are told, the act of reading, the invention of the self, the play of language, and the relation of fact to fiction. Readings range from classical literature to Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, including works by such authors as Poe, Borges, Melville, Freud, Kafka, Henry James, Sartre, Spiegelman, and Ghosh. (*Yale College Programs of Study* 2002-2003)

This current class does not seem revolutionary, although certainly more so than the standard courses in the western literary tradition that run from Homer to Joyce. However, the precursor to Literature 120 was, even in name, a far more revolutionary class. Created in a tradition of educational experimentation and given life by former Directed Studies professors, Literature “X” (the letter, not the Roman numeral) was the progeny both of Directed Studies’ radical history and of the radical history of the 1960s.

Literature “X” was a team-taught experimental course designed to “examine literature as a universal and general tool of culture.” It was taught by Adam Parry, Paul de Man, Peter Brooks, Peter Demetz, Michael Holquist, John Freccero, Hillis Miller, and Alvin Kernan. Using a new textbook called *Man and His Fictions*, the course combined “Tarzan of the Apes with Conrad’s Mr. Kurtz; Superman with Achilles; advertisements with sonnets; *The Thousand and One Nights* with TV soap operas, all in the interest of showing the range of fiction making ... trying to define its working principles” (Kernan 191). This course was revolutionary in its attempt to redefine the nature of reading. According to Michael Holquist, Lit X was motivated by both theoretical and political concerns. Through theory, the teaching of literature could become “relevant” in ways that the old approach to teaching English was not. He describes a “triple revolution” seen by the Lit X creators—to change undergraduate education, to break out of the post-war definition of literary study (and literature), and to change the institution of the university itself. Grounded in new texts of philosophy and literature, the founding of Lit X indicated a change in the climate of Yale College (Holquist Interview). Whereas the experimental nature of Directed Studies had once rested upon its method and its dedication to the idea of general education, the definition of experimentation had changed by this time. Directed Studies seemed stodgy and outdated in comparison to new courses. The radicalism of the program had all but vanished.

The 1969 *Yale College Course Critique* offers insight into how the program was perceived by students throughout the college. The article refers to Directed Studies as “the oldest and most established of the ‘new’ programs in Yale education.” Citing that it was staffed by strong faculty and rising junior stars, students wrote that

[I]t is always difficult to lure a professor to teach a course outside of his department, particularly when he is focused on winning tenure ... [but] the promise of teaching the apt and fluent Directed Studies students has won over more than one reluctant instructor.

However, such praise did not go without ample criticism. Students felt that “the courses themselves are generally well-constructed, but with a determined open-endedness that can easily lead to high-in-the-sky bullshit-ing.” Directed Studies students also cited the “intellectual laxity of some of their classes.”

Lest it be assumed that the program was not changing with the times, the same course critique noted that high faculty turnover left Directed Studies “in a constant state of flux.” A sense of being a member of “the Directed Studies Club” was a notion that still existed, they wrote, “believe it or not . . . in these days of anti-elitism.” Nonetheless, such pride was “often justified.” Additionally, as admissions standards gradually changed under the Kingman Brewster administration, Directed Studies students were not seen as particularly old school.

Image, though, was a minor problem faced by Directed Studies during this time. As always, financial woes were central. Before the early 1970s the finances of the program were drastically changed. While confronting the general budgetary crisis of the university during his presidency, Kingman Brewster forced the drastic redefinition of Directed Studies and instigated a chain of events that led to the Directed Studies of today.

The date of Kingman Brewster’s spending of the Old Dominion funding is difficult to determine. Indeed, none of the archival documents of the period mention it. The event occurred between the years 1968 and 1970, while Harry Miskimin was serving as chairman of the program. The Old Dominion gift of the 1950s had served Directed Studies well over the course of two decades. It, along with gifts from the Ford and National Science Foundations, had permitted the expensive program to pay salaries. Thomas Greene notes that during his tenure as program chairman he was helped in convincing departments to provide faculty members by “sweetening the deal” with a couple thousand dollars. Hoping to share this wealth, Brewster divided the Old Dominion fund among various departments — such as French, English, Philosophy, and History — to fund them individually. This action flew in the face of the precedent set during Gris-

wold's plan for a "Viking's funeral." After all, DeVane had deliberately kept the Directed Studies funds out of the hands of the president. Most likely, Miskimin and the Dean agreed to allow the money to be transferred after pressure from the president himself (Greene Interview).

Brewster expected a gentleman's agreement from the department chairs that they would continue to provide faculty to teach in the program in recompense for this increased funding. While the system functioned well at the outset, institutional memory is weak. Very quickly, departments failed to supply faculty members to teach in Directed Studies. The reasons varied, according to Robin Winks (Interview). Budgets were tight and departments had a responsibility to teach a specific number of courses. Also, as previously noted, teaching in the program was not considered beneficial to one's career. The sorts of people who would desire to teach in Directed Studies might have to do so at the expense of tenure. So while the program lost its funding, it began to lose its faculty, too. At the same time, the direction of the program also suffered; students largely ignored the second year and the *esprit de corps* which had once characterized Directed Studies was in steady decline. As course options grew, the program became decentralized. By the early 1970s it seemed little more than a disparate selection of courses, drawn together mostly by legacy.

Directed Studies could not survive all of these developments. During the academic years 1973 and 1974, the *Yale College Programs of Study* did not even mention Directed Studies as a separate program. Just as Directed Studies was born from a radical solution, so would a radical solution be necessary to revive it. By the time change was implemented, Directed Studies would have a permanent position on the Yale campus.

A NEW BIRTH OF DIRECTED STUDIES

Brewster's spending of the Old Dominion funds did not go unnoticed. A letter to Provost Hanna Gray on November 11, 1977, from A. Bartlett Giamatti, then the chairman of the Advisory Committee to the Division of the Humanities, stated that

In reviewing the history of the financing of Directed Studies and History, the Arts, and Letters, in particular, the Committee found that at some point in the past decade or so the monies allotted to the Programs from Old Dominion funds became mingled with departmental funds. We know that the Dean of Yale College has begun the process of discriminating special program funds from departmental funds in order to insure the maintenance of staff for the Special Programs. We applaud this effort; we think it crucial to the future of the Special Programs and we urge that this effort proceed apace. (Giamatti Letter)

Dean Horace Taft recognized the precarious situation of programs like Directed Studies. Without departmental backing, they could only survive at the whim of faculty members and administrators. Indeed, the history of Directed Studies had, to that point, been a series of crisis points where only through the energy of figures like Maynard Mack and Bill DeVane could the program have survived.

The significance of Directed Studies had changed. George Pierson's experimental program had been placed under the aegis of the Special Programs in the Humanities, a special division of the college, in the early 1970s. Such a reorganization was a step in the right direction. However, in order to survive, Directed Studies needed both strong funding and strong leadership. Taft's proposal to the Mellon Foundation for money in 1976 provided the former, and his decision to appoint Donald Kagan as head of the Special Programs provided the latter.

The October 28, 1976, proposal by Hanna Gray and Horace Taft to the Mellon Foundation for "The Development of Organized Interdisciplinary Programs of Study for Undergraduates" is reminiscent of George Pierson's "Planned Experiment." However, while Pierson's report was written to establish a new program of study, the 1976 report sought to establish a permanent place for interdisciplinary studies at Yale College. Its purpose was threefold. "First, we wish to provide more opportunities for the growing number of undergraduates who prefer to work within a prescribed, integrated curricular framework." Such programs included Directed Studies, the History, Arts, and Letters program, and British Studies. Furthermore, "this effort will help to maintain the strength of interdisciplinary studies at Yale in a time of economic adversity, when they might otherwise lose the momentum developed over the years." After the financial crises that had



caused tremendous damage to the success of Directed Studies, such prevention was necessary. "It aims at providing them, by endowment, with a position of permanent significance, on a par with departmental programs." And finally, a Mellon grant would allow Yale to set an example for other institutions "to renew their commitment to the ideal of a liberal education" (1).

Such a renewed commitment was necessary at a time when "[t]he condition of liberal education even at the best American colleges and universities is less than satisfactory." Like George Pierson, Gray and Taft noted the increase "in scholarship, research, and even teaching has eroded the concept of a general, liberal education for college students, regardless of their plans for a career." Yet whereas the 1940s offered major advances in people's desire to "undertake new intellectual challenges, discover new disciplines, learn of new bodies of knowledge, [and] consider new values," both students and faculty members have turned toward their own narrow interests (2).

Given the history of Directed Studies, such concerns were a familiar trope. Nonetheless, the language of the dean of Yale College had changed since DeVane's era. Instead of calling for a new pursuit of knowledge, as demanded by John Dewey and other reformers from earlier in the twentieth century, the solution to the problems of liberal education now rested upon the support of interdisciplinary studies. Gray and Taft wrote, "We are proud of Yale College's tradition of devotion to a broad liberal education which may serve as a basis for a satisfying and useful life." Moreover, "We are seeking ways to improve our performance in these new circumstances." Such improvement did not involve the major reshaping or creation of programs in the humanities. This proposal was far less daring than the Reforms of 1945. Instead, the Special Programs in the Humanities merely sought financial and institutional stability:

The effects of inflation and recession on the financial condition of the University have hit the interdisciplinary programs especially hard. These programs are seldom backed by traditional departmental structures, usually have no independent budgets and are rarely represented in the appointive process.... Our new plans require another infusion of endowment in order to confer the necessary security and adaptability upon these programs and experiments that to some will always seem dispensable.

As such, Gray and Taft cited the need for something of a reestablishment of Directed Studies and its sister programs. While not achieving departmental status, they could achieve an institutional stability that they had never previously known (2).

The experimental qualities of the Special Programs were not intended to vanish. "In requesting endowment, we do not seek to [enshrine] these particular programs permanently. We seek to endow the capacity to change" (4). The Special Programs would foster creativity while pursuing a common goal of maintaining interdisciplinary courses of study. Yale tried also to place itself in the position of educator for the rest of the academic world. "[Yale has] been fortunate in attracting the finest young teachers and scholars to our faculty, and there is every reason to think that Yale will continue to be the source of fine teachers." On the basis of such a faculty, and with the knowledge that faculty members will not stay but go to different institutions, Yale faculty "may hope that they will become evangelists of liberal education" (7).

Coming three decades after Pierson's report, the proposal merits praise for recognizing a necessary change for Directed Studies. When Directed Studies was founded it was carried along by a wave of interest in general education. The program was Yale's great experiment and was revolutionary. However, as Yale's interest in general education waned, its ability to preserve Directed Studies in its early form became less tenable. Gray and Taft's work to revitalize the Special Programs from a financial standpoint came at a crucial time in the history of Directed Studies.

However, financial stability was not enough. Directed Studies would need to be reshaped to survive as a part of the Special Programs. To solve this problem Taft turned to a recently hired classical historian who had taught in Directed Studies for one year. Donald Kagan was appointed Director of the Special Programs in the Humanities in 1976 and was charged with the responsibility of saving the experimental program. By the time Kagan inherited the program, it suffered from two weaknesses. First, the program could no longer claim the elite status it once did. Applications had become worthless by the mid-1970s; Directed Studies was accepting anyone who applied. Moreover, the curriculum had suffered to the point of being known as "misdirected studies." Directed Studies had lost track of its common core, and the number of electives in the program made the program similar to the common experience of the rest of Yale College.

As such, a drastic decision was made. Directed Studies would be turned into a one-year program, consisting of classes in literature, philosophy, and historical and political thought. These three courses were chosen based upon the need to create as well-rounded a curriculum as possible. The decision to eliminate courses was not easy, according to Kagan. Specifically, the survey of art history which had existed since the earliest days was taken out because "we had a verbal instead of a visual prejudice" in the program (Kagan Interview).

Literature, History and Politics, and Philosophy had taken on the characteristics of great books courses over time. Their methods had changed, as had their reading lists, but the combination confirmed Directed Studies' place as a program in western civilization. On one hand, this administrative change signified a major break from the tradition of the program. The original model for Directed Studies required the sciences to play a large role and had attempted to do so up to the time of the Kagan Reforms. Indeed, a new biology course had been instituted in 1968. However, according to Kagan, by the time of his reforms, the sciences had long ceased to be a vital part of the program. When Kagan took over, Directed Studies was considered by many to be a great books program. The Kagan reforms confirmed that perception.

An attempt was made to maintain the more experimental quality of the program in its second year. For the first year after the reforms, students were encouraged to volunteer to take two sophomore Directed Studies courses. If more than thirty students agreed to sign up for the second year, it would continue. Although offered choices including history of art, history of science, and social science courses, students did not take the bait. Directed Studies was permanently shortened to one year.

The three courses that remained in the program were not new. However, the realignment brought significant changes to them. The Literature course had remained largely unchanged since its creation by Maynard Mack. It examined Western literature not chronologically, but in terms of genre, beginning with drama and ending with the epic tradition. According to Cyrus Hamlin, during the mid-1960s students would finish the year with *Paradise Lost*. History and Politics had become a survey of political thought that suffered, most often, from students' lack of knowledge of history. The weakest of the three, Philosophy, suffered from a weak department and teachers not wholly excited about the course. Indeed, fifteen students dropped out of Directed Studies during the first year of the reform after having begged Kagan to be allowed to drop Philosophy. In an effort to restore the *esprit de corps* of the program, Kagan told them to take Philosophy or leave.

Even with these innovations, the central problem for Directed Studies lay in the need to find willing faculty members to teach. It is not surprising that Kagan describes his efforts to staff the program as a "dragooning operation." Letters from the program refer to his attempt to "commandeer" faculty members from their departments (Pollitt Letter). After the "Brewster Swindle," a phrase coined by Kagan, few felt an obligation to the program. However, Kagan told Horace Taft that Yale had an obligation not to cheat students, even if the money had been spent.

Part of his proposal was to create a permanent staff for the Directed Studies program. He argued that other departments could hire faculty for whom teaching in Directed Studies would be a requirement of their contracts. The idea was sound for the program, but dangerous for most faculty members. As any tenure-track faculty member knew, such a job could mean academic suicide. Not being a department of its own, Directed Studies could not tenure faculty, and with so much time dedicated to teaching freshmen, it was almost assured that departments would not grant tenure to such professors either. Nonetheless, as Peter Brooks wrote to Horace Taft on July 8, 1976,

I very much share [Kagan's] concern about the health of interdisciplinary programs. I feel in particular that such programs should not be in a position of having to put together a staff on a year-by-year basis. In my experience, running a program on this basis becomes an exercise in Penelope's garment, which unravels as fast as it is stitched up.

Brooks, who taught in Directed Studies in the 1960s, noted that the reason why the recently founded Literature major was in "sound condition" was partially because faculty members "belonged" to the major. Brooks suggested either going ahead with Kagan's vision of joint appointments or perhaps temporarily taking faculty members from departments in the same way professors receive a yearly appointment to be DeVane lecturers. While this may have helped staffing problems temporarily, the long-term problem of staffing was not solved.

To strengthen the elite status of the program, the size of Directed Studies was decreased. And to further increase the academic intensity of the students in the program, Kagan allowed the Admissions Office to encourage students to apply based upon their high school record. The impact of this plan was successful not merely for Directed Studies but for Yale as well. At the time, two-thirds of students accepted to both Yale and Harvard would choose to attend the latter. When the new program entered the equation, the ratio shifted toward Yale's favor. Directed Studies was a clear draw.

During his first year as director, Donald Kagan received a phone call from a frantic mother in Detroit. She told Kagan that her son had been admitted to both Harvard and Yale, and that because of the Directed Studies program, her son was leaning toward moving to New Haven. Kagan took the compliment well. However, the woman begged Kagan to explain how she could convince her son to attend Harvard, instead. "Professor Kagan," she asked, "do you know how beautiful an acceptance letter from Harvard is?" Kagan merely retorted, "If the letter is so beautiful, then I encourage you to frame it and hang it on your wall – and then send your son to Yale." The mother did just that.

A Meeting of the Trustees of the Collegiate School
at New Haven Octob. 30. 1717.

Present
the Rev^d Messieurs

James Noyes

Moses Noyes

Sam^l Andrew

Tim^o Woodbridge

Sam^l Ruggel

Joseph Webb

John Davenport

Thomas ~~Buckingham~~ ^{Ruggles}

Thomas Ruggles

1. Agreed that the Reverend Mr James Noyes be the Moderator of this present meeting.

2. Agreed that the Rev^d Mr John Davenport be the Scribe of this present meeting.

3. This Question was propounded, -
Whether the Reverend Trustees, Viz^t Mr Ruggel & Mr Ruggles be deputed & ordered by us to make inquiry of Major Clark of Saybrook, or any other, as soon as may be, concerning the Books belonging to us the Trustees of the

Collegiate School, which are (as we hear) in Mr Dan^l Buckingham's hands, Whether the said Books are under any seizure, & what is the present condition of the said Books?

The Above question is resolved by Vote affirmatively.

4. These two Questions were propounded -

First Question. Whether the Trustees here mett agree & vote that the Reverend Mr Thomas Ruggles of Guilford hath been to us a Trustee & associate of the Collegiate School of Connecticut for full six years past, & that all the doings of the Trustees that have his Name signing any of our acts within the time aforesaid are valid because of his signing any the same as much as of any other Trustee whomsoever?

Second Question Whether in ord^r to remove the scruples & doubts of any on the Account of Mr Ruggles being a Trustee We do hereby declare Nominate & associate him the Reverend Mr Ruggles a Trustee of the Collegiate School, & shall accept his signing with ourselves any of our future acts a satisfying assurance of his Acceptance?

Both these questions Resolved in the affirmative & signed by
Joseph Webb James Noyes
John Davenport Moses Noyes
Samuel Andrew
Samuel Ruggel

ABIDING QUESTIONS

A committee chaired by literature professor Cyrus Hamlin published a formal review of Directed Studies in the Spring of 1986. Hamlin wrote that “Whether by design or accident, the program in Directed Studies has achieved a remarkably successful pedagogical form and educational content.” The program had changed drastically since its founding, and the nature of that change could be seen in the new focus for the program. “[Directed Studies] serves the specific need of first year students at Yale to be introduced systematically to the tradition of Western culture through the critical study of representative major texts.” A program in general education was now a program in western civilization. Directed Studies had become a text-based program in the “great books” of the West with its three classes in literature, philosophy, and history and politics. The program was revolutionary at its founding because of its focus on small seminars, its attempt to integrate the humanities and sciences, and its desire to revive the notion of a common curriculum. Now it was deemed traditional because of the texts it asked students to examine and because it mandated a common curriculum. What remained the same from the founding, though was the perceived value of small courses, a strong faculty, and “the development of critical skills in reading and writing” which are the primary virtues gained from a year in Directed Studies. “[T]he organization of the courses along historical lines and the limitation of the content in each to the classical and Christian traditions of Western Culture [could] be defended” and Directed Studies’ very existence reminded the community of the centrality of the humanities to Yale (Hamlin 5).

The survival of Directed Studies could be seen as anomalous given the tumultuous canon wars of the decades following the 1970s. Figures on the right and left of the political spectrum sought deep reform in the academy. Those on the right were most often considered the defenders of the traditional canon; those on the left were seen as the defenders of a less traditional curriculum. The right accused the left of a cultural relativism that could only be confronted by the study of great texts. The left attacked the right as being closed-minded and anachronistic. Some of this debate entered the Directed Studies program, such that it was not surprising in the 1980s to see the Directed Studies literature course teach Mary Shelley or Virginia Woolf, all in an effort to bring female voices to the canon. Fundamental conflicts in Directed Studies, though, did not come from the highly charged politics of the era. The History and Politics course, for example, was divided between historians and political theorists. Both vied

to set the direction of the course. Indeed, where the historians desired a course in the history of western civilization, the political theorists (who ultimately won) wanted a survey of political thought. While fights over the syllabus ensued in two courses, the strength of the philosophy course would vary as departmental struggles placed demands on faculty members teaching in Directed Studies.

During a time of such tension, both within the academy and outside, Directed Studies was forced into a new position. It could no longer be viewed as revolutionary. That place had been taken by new fields of inquiry. If anything, the canonical study of texts became the hallmark of a conservative curriculum. By the point at which Hanna Gray and Horace Taft made their appeal to the Mellon Foundation in 1976, Directed Studies was recognized as a fully established institution. On the basis of a shifting academic climate, that which was once revolutionary had become a part of the Yale establishment.

Directed Studies, while remaining a selective program, was expanded in 1995 with the support of President Richard Levin, allowing approximately thirty-four more freshmen to take part. In 1999, shortly after medievalist María Rosa Menocal was appointed Director of Special Programs, she appointed Jane Levin Director of Undergraduate Studies for Directed Studies. Building on the energy given to the program through its expansion, the two worked on improving the cohesion of Directed Studies, beginning with an increase in coordination between the three Directed Studies courses. In particular, Levin took steps to strengthen the colloquium series which, since Donald Kagan's era, had provided an opportunity for further lectures and debates offered exclusively to students in the program. Recent colloquia have drawn on outside faculty, as well as professors in Directed Studies. Lecturers have included Homeric translator Robert Fagles, Cambridge's Dame Gillian Beers, ancient historian Peter Brown, and award-winning poet Mark Strand. These events, coupled with faculty debates and tours of the Yale art galleries, have added to the breadth of experience afforded by the Directed Studies curriculum. Most recently, the colloquium series has provided an opportunity for the Class of 1937, which had displayed active concern over the teaching of western civilization during the 1990s, to reconcile with Yale. In 2003, the establishment of the Class of 1937 Western Civilization Fund fully endowed the colloquium series which Jane Levin had revived.

The program continues to flourish, further strengthened by direct ties to the Whitney Humanities Center after Menocal's appointment as director in 2001. Administratively and physically housed in the newly renovated center, Directed Studies now offers freshmen the opportunity

to involve themselves with the larger world of the humanities on the Yale campus. Classes and lectures, as well as colloquia, take place at the Whitney, furthering the cohesion between parts of the program. And the appeal of the program has made competition for entry increase over time. Admission is still selective, with applications available to all admitted Yale students. However, the admissions office recently has taken an increased role in admitting Directed Studies students in order to entice them to enroll at Yale. The experimental program—though less experimental than it was once—still takes advantage of its small size and committed faculty to develop from within and attract students to the university.

To close, it is worth examining the influence that such a program has had on undergraduate education at Yale and elsewhere. What may now be taken for granted as a special program for Yale freshmen has recently assumed an important role in the academic world. As recently as 2001, both Yale and Harvard began extensive studies of their undergraduate curricula, the dean of each producing a report on the future of general education. The similarities and differences between the *Report on Yale College Education* and *The Report of the Harvard College Curricular Review* reflect how questions of general education are asked today. In light of the history and success of Directed Studies, it is worth examining these two new approaches in comparison to the Directed Studies model. The fundamental structure and underlying goals of Directed Studies have become goals for both schools' curricular reform.

The Yale report, initiated by Yale College Dean Richard H. Brodhead upon the occasion of Yale's tercentennial celebration, focused largely on structural changes to the college curriculum. The prefatory note states that "The Committee does not propose radical innovation in the Yale College program of study. But it does recommend a variety of important changes, some sweeping, some more narrowly targeted" (6). The report reads much like an affirmation of faith in a system of undergraduate education which has been largely successful. Yale has been able to uphold the importance of undergraduate teaching even as the university has become increasingly focused on cutting-edge research. Liberal education, the report asserts, "although considered by some to be passé, may bear even greater value in the future than it has in the past" (10). Instead of training students for particular careers in particular disciplines, students who are liberally educated should be able to examine critically the world through a variety of "frames of reference." They should be curious and capable enough to present their findings to an increasingly global community of peers.

Central to these goals is the continued strength of teaching at the undergraduate level. The benefits of a research university stem from the

resources available to students and the ability to have available leading scholars in many fields. If the connection between faculty and students is strong, students may have the opportunity to explore fields of knowledge with those on the forefront of research. “At such a school,” the report says, “intellectual discovery is not a distant activity or spectator sport. Students study in an environment where knowledge is being not just transmitted but created and where they can be partners in the unfolding of new understanding” (11). The focus of the report is how to foster this partnership while also describing what critical skills are necessary for life in the twenty-first century. Among the suggestions made are the establishment of small freshman seminars, a revision of the distribution and language requirements, a new focus on studying abroad, and increased attention toward ensuring that the sciences are an important part of each student’s education.

Implementing such a program requires increased faculty resources, which explains why the report calls for an increase in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences by at least ten percent within five years. Moreover, the courses created by such faculty are meant to be interdisciplinary—forcing students not simply to take advantage of one methodology, but to use many different disciplines in their study. Interdisciplinary courses have become something of a catch-all solution for current discussions of general education—and for good reason. As the purpose of general education has shifted to countering the impact of faculty specialization, pursuing interdisciplinary studies allows students to respect the biases of disciplines while breaking free of their control. And faculty can expand their course offerings without totally rejecting their fields. Of course, in the end, one question should be asked: What is the value of disciplinary education itself?

This question was dealt with directly in writings about the Harvard report. Like the Yale report, Harvard’s committee focused on fundamentally structural changes to the curriculum. After the creation of a new core curriculum in the 1970s, Harvard had focused on “ways of knowing” in structuring its course of study—language which combined ideas of critical thought with the exploration of numerous disciplines. The new program, which also focuses on changes in distributional requirements, language study, and international experience, holds as its keystone the newly created “Harvard College Courses.” The central phrase for these classes is “integration.” As at Yale, these small courses are meant to foster interdisciplinary study. However, the Harvard report reflects another step in this idea, beyond the notion of working between disciplines. The authors write,

If our specialist faculty are to be engaged in undergraduate education, to make their advances in knowledge part of that education, then they must find ways to translate specialized knowledge into formats that are accessible to the generalist, that show how a field is related to other areas of knowledge, and that demonstrate why it matters. (14)

The emphasis of the new program is on small classes which force students to think broadly about knowledge and disciplines, before pledging their allegiance to a given concentration. Additionally, the program is meant to teach the faculty to learn to communicate their own scholarship to a larger audience than merely their peers. Becoming a generalist is an important goal for each undergraduate. It seems, though, to be an equally important goal for the faculty.

The message of these new reviews is similar to part of the message of Directed Studies at its founding. Namely, while the “Balkanization” of disciplines that was discussed by George Pierson continues to be a problem, integration remains a solution. Today’s focus on interdisciplinary courses, though, reveals a fundamental change in the climate of the academy. Although faculty may recognize that too much specialization is problematic, the concept of general education now bases itself on the assumption that disciplinary study is the proper end of a college education. Indeed, in a collection of essays on the question of general education prepared by Harvard in honor of its report, Peter K. Bol, a professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, writes in response to concern about lowering the number of required courses for a major that,

Some worry that a lower concentration cap will harm student progress; I would be more worried if it undermines the conviction that knowledge is something that we create through cumulative learning in a discipline, that is, in an evolving tradition of assumptions, knowledge, protocols, interpretations, and questions. (1)

The particular type of learning that Bol discusses reflects the strong place that disciplinary studies have in the curriculum. The “common learning” of the modern university is now based more upon engagement with the assumptions and questions of individual disciplines than with appeals to national or cultural tradition—those elements which were pursued by the early Directed Studies curriculum.

The modern understanding of general education has changed. When Directed Studies was founded, an undergraduate liberal education had a decidedly political goal of training citizens for national service. There was an American purpose to education. It was far easier to define the necessary qualities of an American education for any number of reasons—national consensus in a post-war period and a willingness to speak broadly of a common cultural tradition, for example. Whether in the new critical

approach of the literature course or an emphasis on the development of American visions of liberty in the history class, these broader goals did not seem outlandish to pursue. The questions of general education and the content of a general education course could thus be defined according to “national” standards.

The nature of general education in today’s Directed Studies is fundamentally different. Although the evolution of the program was not expected, the shift to studying “great texts” means that students are driven less by national or disciplinary guidelines and more by the questions that come from various authors. The program reminds students of the importance of being driven not merely by methodologies and academic debate, but by more fundamental questions about the human condition. Directed Studies, because of its extra-departmental status, is able to explore a wide range of questions in general education.

The value of Directed Studies, and programs like it, is that they keep alive these larger concerns of general education. In the end, the success of the program has rested upon its ability to constantly reexamine its purpose and adapt itself to changes in the surrounding academic world. Although its mission has shifted along with the demands of general education, it has not lost sight of a few key goals: a focus on undergraduate education, the value of integrating fields of knowledge, and the importance of asking questions not merely about what we should learn, but why we should learn. It takes students who have no loyalties to any field and encourages them to ask questions that are valuable within both the university and the wider world. And it reminds faculty members of the worth of those questions, too.

As Directed Studies continues to evolve in the coming years, allowing faculty to continue to experiment with the texts of the course as well as their own teaching methods, it can keep the debate over general education vibrant. So long as these questions continue to be asked, it can remain the experimental program originally conceived in 1946. Maynard Mack, in his *Yale Alumni Magazine* article describing the founding of Directed Studies, expressed concern that the program always retain its creative flavor. He wrote,

The highest compliment that in the opinion of its supporters a future historian could possibly pay Directed Studies would be to say that in the middle of the twentieth century, when, as always, there were worse and better ways of meeting the eternal perplexities of education, this program was a vigorous instance of the latter class. (9)

To vigorous we might add long-lasting. The eternal perplexities of which he speaks continue, and it is up to the current leadership of the university to decide how much the program will continue to set an example for the rest of the academy.

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