

**1: ASHE Reader on Community Colleges, 4th Edition**

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Comments American higher education today looks nothing like it did a few generations ago, let alone at the founding of the country. The author is Roger L. Geiger, who is distinguished professor of higher education at Pennsylvania State University. His previous books include *Tapping the Riches of Science: Research Universities and the Paradox of the Marketplace*. He responded via email to questions about his new book. On the surface, the earliest American colleges have evolved into very different institutions. How relevant do you consider the origins of American colleges generally as small religious institutions to understanding them today generally as secular research universities? Before , American colleges existed in a pre-industrial society that had limited use for advanced education. To capture elements of continuity over three centuries, I focused on connections with society through culture, careers and knowledge. The only career directly linked with pre-industrial colleges was that of clergy, and only in churches that favored educated ministers. Even this role was superseded by theological seminaries. The growth of knowledge became ingrained with the Enlightenment of the 18th century. Most colleges honored this ideal, but only wealthier institutions were able to employ learned instructors. By the s expanding knowledge could no longer be crammed onto the undergraduate classical course. Culture, in contrast, was integral to the ongoing mission of colleges. Through the 18th century, graduation from college conferred a privileged social status of gentleman, but deference toward social superiors withered with Federalism in the new republic. Students then took it upon themselves to fashion the cultural distinction they wished to acquire from their college experience. Literary societies and rebellion against college authority were original expressions of student class culture, soon followed by fraternities and a growing slate of organized activities. For most Americans, this tumult of student-led and student-run activities defined the identity of colleges and college-going; but this was largely a legacy of the student culture of the early colleges. Was the founding of American colleges notably different from the way European colleges and universities were created? European education systems were characterized by state-sponsored universities with well-developed systems of secondary education serving as gatekeepers. After the American Revolution, the efforts to create republican universities sought to emulate something like the European pattern: Republican universities failed on all of these counts by the early s. Further, the United States had no system of secondary education, and thus no clear demarcation between secondary and higher education. After , colleges were established at a quickening pace, sponsored by churches. To matriculate students had to learn some Latin and a little Greek “ in any way they could “ but nearly all denominational colleges had to include a preparatory department. The uncertainty of admissions to colleges and professional schools distinguished American from European education systems and was long an impediment to improvement. The proliferation of high schools from ultimately resolved one problem, but proprietary medical and law schools remained open to all comers. The Flexner Report spurred university medical schools to require two years of college science, but law schools that required college preparation, did not gain ascendancy until the s. European systems, with effective gatekeepers, maintained very high standards, but for a small portion of the age group. The United States, with little or no gatekeeping, quickly became the most highly educated nation see below. How did the land grant colleges define public higher education? Justin Morrill [the lawmaker who pushed the legislation creating the land grant system] wanted practical subjects “ the practical arts, and especially agriculture “ to be taught in institutions of higher education on the same level as the liberal arts and sciences; and he wanted those institutions to be accessible to the industrial classes “ those laboring in the commercial economy. The Land Grant Act deserves credit for achieving the first goal. Only a few of the land grant colleges initially embraced the university model and dedicated themselves to advancing knowledge in both liberal and practical arts, but led by Cornell, Wisconsin, and California and non-land grant Michigan they set the standard for public higher education. Once securely established, the adoption and cultivation of more-or-less applied subjects distinguished American universities. With respect to

access, the land grant ideal was probably more significant than the institutions. The original land-grant colleges contributed little to expanding access, but they exemplified the principle that higher education should be open to all, although largely fulfilled by other institutions see below. Finally, agriculture has a special relationship to the land grant movement. Abject failure characterized the first decades, but when the Hatch Act established agricultural experiment stations, agricultural science began to blossom. The Smith-Lever Act then established a conduit to practicing farmers through cooperative extension. The unique federal partnership in agriculture resulted in the world-leading position of American agriculture and agricultural science. As American research universities were born some as such and others evolving from colleges, what were the key points at which their model was going to become distinct from European universities? Andrew White combined advanced education in practical and liberal arts at Cornell; Charles Eliot at Harvard opened the curriculum by undermining the classical course; and Daniel Gilman at Johns Hopkins installed a system of graduate education and research that was less intense than German practices, but more flexible. Just 14 of these universities dominated academic research and doctoral education, but each discipline had a national society and publications that were open to all qualified practitioners. When foundations began funding research in the s, additional resources heightened these activities. The existence of large, interactive scientific communities complemented those few universities dedicated to advancing knowledge. The decentralized university system provided both competition and recognition of merit. How did "mass" higher education come into being in the U. These developments were made possible by burgeoning numbers of high school graduates, and by the openness of American higher education – the lack of barriers to extension campuses, night schools, elevated normal schools, or freshman-sophomore courses in high school buildings. Urban universities in particular responded to student demand by opening branch campuses and offering practical curricula in business, law, and other practical subjects. There was considerable backlash against mass higher education by supporters of traditional colleges, but this never diminished enrollments. African Americans increased attendance significantly in the s and s from a miniscule base, despite being confined to segregated institutions in Southern and border states and suffering blatant discrimination in the North. Jewish students achieved higher education in considerable numbers, although not in the institutions that many preferred. Ethnic minorities in large cities were more likely to seek employment than continue their education. Women were well represented in all forms of higher education, especially after They faced discrimination in the workplace, which denied them opportunities to utilize their education. Can you provide a hint about the next volume and your approach to the post-World War II era? I have had a good deal to say about higher education since in two books *Research and Relevant Knowledge* and *Knowledge and Money* and many articles. American higher education grows wider throughout the 20th century, forming too many stories to be captured in a single narrative. There are broad, underlying currents that deserve explication, but they are everywhere contested and obscured by systemic noise. Still, the historical changes have been dramatic. To transcend mere description, a history of the postwar era would have to be thematic and much less comprehensive than *The History*.

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Graduate programs[ edit ] Advanced degrees were not a criterion for professorships at most colleges. This began to change in the mid-century, as thousands of the more ambitious scholars at major schools went to Germany for one to three years to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy PhD in the sciences or the humanities. The major breakthrough came[ according to whom? By the s, Harvard, Columbia, Michigan and Wisconsin were building major graduate programs; their alumni were in strong demand at aspiring universities. By , there were 6, enrolled graduate students. It was impossible for professors who were not approved by Berlin to train graduate students. In the United States, private universities and state universities alike were independent of the federal government. Independence was high, but funding was low. This began to change when private foundations began regularly supporting research in science and history; large corporations sometimes supported engineering programs. The postdoctoral fellowship was established by the Rockefeller Foundation in . Meanwhile, the leading universities, in cooperation with the academic scholars of the time, set up a network of scholarly journals. Their graduate faculties had to have a suitable record of publication and research grants. Late in the 20th century, "publish or perish" became increasingly important in colleges and smaller universities, not just large research universities. They were usually set up by city school systems starting in the s. Junior colleges grew from just 20 in to in . By , 37 states had set up 70 junior colleges, enrolling about students each. Meanwhile, another were privately operated, with about 60 students each. Rapid expansion continued in the s, with junior colleges in enrolling about 70, students. The peak year for private institutions came in , when there were junior colleges in all; were affiliated with churches, were independent non-profit, and 34 were private Schools run for-profit. Students, parents and businessmen wanted nearby, low-cost schools to provide training for the growing white-collar labor force, as well as for more advanced technical jobs in the blue collar sphere. Four-year colleges were also growing, albeit not as fast; however many of them were located in rural or small-town areas away from the fast-growing metropolis. Community colleges continue as open enrollment, low-cost institutions with a strong component of vocational education, as well as a lower-cost preparation for transfer students into four-year schools. They appeal to a poorer, older, less prepared element. Presidency of Franklin D. Only the richest schools like Harvard had endowments big enough to absorb the losses. Smaller prestigious schools, such as MIT and Northwestern, had to cope with serious cutbacks. The university responded with two salary cuts of 10 percent each for all employees. It imposed a hiring freeze, a building freeze, and slashed appropriations for maintenance, books, and research. Enrollments fell in most schools, with law and music hardest hit. However, the movement toward state certification of school teachers enabled Northwestern to open up a new graduate program in education, bringing in a new clientele. The two presidents were enthusiastic, and the faculty were supportive. However, the Northwestern alumni were vehemently opposed, fearing the loss of their traditions. The medical school was oriented toward training practitioners, and felt it would lose its mission if it was merged into the larger, research oriented University of Chicago medical school. The merger plan was thus dropped. That allowed many of the spending cuts to be restored, including half the salary reductions. They kept tuition close to zero. Many were very hard-pressed by the Great Depressionâ€”it almost shut down the University of Colorado, as the legislature slashed its budget, there was practically no endowment, and tuition was already very low. The medical school was nearly closed in â€” it survived when the legislature allowed it to borrow more money. The main campus in Boulder came within a few days of having to close. The bright spot came in the building projects. That included a fieldhouse, a natural history museum, new wings for the college of arts and sciences, a faculty club, a small library and a new hospital. He collaborated with Frederick L. For Wells, it was to build a world-class music school, replacing dilapidated facilities. He added matching funds from the state legislature, and opened a full-scale fund-raising campaign among alumni and the business community. In , Wells reported that "The past five years have been the greatest single period of expansion in the physical plant

of the University in its entire history. In this period 15 new buildings have been constructed. The educational establishment was ignored. Pleas for emergency assistance for higher education, or for research projects, were rejected. Well, the New Deal would not give money to colleges or school districts, it did give work-study money to needy students, from high school through graduate school. Bill Eager to avoid a repeat of the highly controversial debates over a postwar bonus to veterans of the first World War, Congress in passed the G. It was promoted primarily by the veterans organizations, especially the American Legion , and represented a conservative program of financial aid not to poor people, but one limited to veterans who had served in wartime, regardless of their financial situation. The GI Bill made college education possible for millions by paying tuition and living expenses. This included forgone earnings in addition to tuition, which allowed them to have enough funds for life outside of school. The GI Bill helped create a widespread belief in the necessity of college education. Most campuses became overwhelmingly male thanks to the GI Bill, since few women were covered. However, by , women had reached parity in numbers and began passing men in rates of college and graduate school attendance. Johnson , Congress in , passed numerous Great Society programs that greatly expanded federal support for education. The Higher Education Act of set up federal scholarships and low-interest loans for college students, and subsidized better academic libraries, ten to twenty new graduate centers, several new technical institutes, classrooms for several hundred thousand students, and twenty-five to thirty new community colleges a year. A separate education bill enacted that same year provided similar assistance to dental and medical schools. They have traditionally appealed to low-income students, who could borrow money from the federal government to pay the tuition, and to veterans who received tuition money as part of their enlistment bonus. They have become very controversial in the 21st century, because of the high proportion of students who fail to graduate, or who do graduate and fail to get appropriate jobs; many default on repayment of their federal loans as a result. There has been additional concern over for-profit colleges as they fundamentally changed the view of colleges as a public good [56]. As of , some for profit colleges have been sanctioned by federal agencies for preying on vulnerable populations who accrue massive student loan debt in the course of earning a degree that has less value than those obtained from public or private institutions of higher learning [57]. Federal and state officials started cracking down on for-profit universities, and some have gone out of business. Some of the small colleges of the 19th century have become major universities and integrated into the mainstream academic community. The first was the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, which opened elementary and secondary schools in Baltimore in and a four-year college in It added graduate programs in the s that accepted men and is now Notre Dame of Maryland University. By , there were Catholic colleges for women. Mostâ€”but not all of themâ€”went co-ed, merged, or closed after

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