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DePaul University Changes and Grows: 1950–1990

Albert Erlebacher, Ph.D.

**BIO**

ALBERT ERLEBACHER, Ph.D., professor emeritus, History Department, came to DePaul University in 1965 after teaching high school and college in Wisconsin for a decade. He remained on the history faculty until 2007. His doctorate in history is from the University of Wisconsin (Madison). Prof. Erlebacher taught courses in American history specializing in the Civil War and Reconstruction, as well as economic, political, and constitutional issues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He has written articles on life insurance reform in the twentieth century, and has reviewed books on many political and economic topics. He is also among the co-authors of *DePaul University Centennial History and Images* (1998) and *Rhetoric and Civilization* (2 vols., 1988), and he has lectured on “The Weimar Republic and the Rise of Nazism.”
The half-century following the end of World War II brought about major growth and changes in American higher education. Several factors contributed to this. First, higher birth rates beginning in World War II and lasting through the 1950s meant that there was a much larger college-age population beginning in the 1960s. Second, millions of war veterans who might not have otherwise afforded college now benefitted from the G.I. Bill of Rights, which allowed them to pursue undergraduate and graduate education as well as job training. Finally, the Cold War encouraged a renewed federal interest, which provided funds for research and scholarship in many scientific and technical fields. These funds were allocated to public, private, and church-related colleges and universities. Thus, Catholic universities experienced some of the same growth issues as many public higher educational institutions. An analysis of the major changes that occurred at DePaul University during this period will illustrate how a large, urban Catholic university dealt with this new reality. It will also focus on how the university adapted without sacrificing the aspirations that had motivated its Vincentian founders at the end of the nineteenth century.

Founded in 1898 as St. Vincent’s College, DePaul acquired its new name and a revised charter in 1907. It dedicated itself to providing educational opportunities to the sons and daughters of the first two generations of European immigrants. During its first half century, the school faced a constant financial struggle. It lacked any endowment other than the services provided by the Vincentian fathers and brothers who taught its classes and served as administrators and student counselors. In addition, at its establishment, St.

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1 A recent history of the GI Bill of Rights can be found in Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *The GI Bill: A New Deal for Veterans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
Vincent’s College had borrowed heavily to construct a campus. In 1929, just as the Great Depression began, the school completed the construction of its own building in Chicago’s Loop financed entirely with borrowed funds. These debts owed to the Vincentian order, to individuals, and to financial institutions in Chicago prevented any curriculum expansion or enlargement of the physical facilities for the next two decades. After struggling to gain and maintain accreditation in the 1920s, DePaul managed to remain open during World War II by providing short-term industrial training courses to war workers and by participating in the Army Specialized Training Program. In the immediate postwar years, its facilities were so overwhelmed by the thousands of returning veterans that its Loop building operated from early morning to almost midnight six days a week. When DePaul University celebrated its golden anniversary in 1948, its debts were finally paid off, and it stood as one of the largest Catholic universities in the United States. Shortly afterward, however, the university found itself in a new, desperate, and unexpected struggle to remain open.

In the autumn of 1949, the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges (NCA) conducted its first full accreditation visit to DePaul since before World War II. To the complete surprise of the university’s president, Reverend Comerford J. O’Malley, C.M., the report strongly criticized almost every aspect of the university’s operations. DePaul lacked qualified faculty and sufficient library resources. Its facilities were overcrowded and did not provide space for student social and recreational activities. The NCA concluded that DePaul had failed to maintain a minimal standard that could be described as “university quality,” and it was threatened with the loss of accreditation. If carried out, DePaul’s degrees would be worthless. Realizing the danger, Father O’Malley promised to take the necessary actions to restore DePaul’s standing.

To reach the goal quickly, Father O’Malley took a number of immediate steps and instituted some long-term policies that he hoped would improve the school. The short-term remedies included hiring a significant number of new faculty who possessed their terminal degrees, and he offered financial assistance to DePaul’s students who were close to completing their graduate work. He also approved additional appropriations to the library

2 My colleagues and I touched upon the topics discussed in this paper in John Rury and Charles S. Suchar, eds., DePaul University: Centennial Essays and Images (Chicago: DePaul University, 1998). Of particular interest to me were the chapters by Thomas Croak, C.M., “Towards the Comprehensive University: The Teaching-Research Debate and Developing the Lincoln Park Campus,” pp. 253–89; and Charles Strain, “We Ourselves Are Plural: Curricular Changes at DePaul, 1960–1967,” pp. 291–342. Many of the sources in this paper were not available when the book was written. Available online: https://via.library.depaul.edu/vincentian_ebooks/20/

3 “North Central Accreditation Report, 1950,” in NCA Manuscripts, located in the DePaul University Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Richardson Library, Chicago, IL. All manuscripts cited in this paper are located in the DePaul University Archives (DPUA) unless otherwise noted. One such example notes the hiring of an instructor in the Physics Department who recalled he was “more or less dragooned” into accepting a position when he completed his doctorate at the University of Notre Dame. See author’s interview with Professor Edwin Schillinger, 2 July 1992, in author’s possession.
budget and promised to develop plans for the physical expansion of the Lincoln Park campus. By the mid-1950s, these plans included an all-purpose physical education facility that had a basketball gymnasium, a swimming pool, some classrooms, and recreational facilities. These initial steps and promises to do more led the NCA to restore full accreditation by the mid-1950s. In 1959, Father O’Malley appointed a committee to study every aspect of the university’s operations. The study’s major topics were as follows: (1) the size, status, and working conditions of the faculty; (2) financial stability and resources; (3) libraries and other instructional resources; (4) the organization of administrative structure; (5) the need for new physical facilities; (6) the quality of student life; (7) opportunities for transfer students; and (8) new graduate programs. The overall tenor of the several hundred-page report was so replete with criticisms that one administrator advised Father O’Malley to bury it, contending that it was “more damaging to the university’s reputation than the NCA report of a decade ago.” On the opposite side, one of the younger Vincentians advised the president to circulate the report among the faculty because its recommendations would lead to “many constructive changes,” which “if not adopted would place DePaul into a second-class status.” In the end, Father O’Malley circulated the report within the university community. The recommendations led to the undergraduate and graduate curricular reforms of the 1960s. These, in turn, led to the curricular and physical growth of the university during the

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next generation. The report’s authors would propose and execute the many specific changes that occurred from 1960 to 1990.

In 1955, a benefactor donated an old Loop office building to the university. By the next year, having completely remodeled it, the university was able to concentrate all its downtown activities in this single location. In addition, starting in the late 1950s, the university took advantage of federal slum-clearing legislation to acquire several blocks of older houses near its Lincoln Park campus. This would eventually provide the space for academic buildings and dormitories. Such development enabled DePaul to move forward from near extinction in 1950, emerging as one of the major urban Catholic universities in the United States by 1990.

These educational and physical changes did not occur without internal and external opposition. Father O’Malley, born and raised within blocks of the university, was a conservative man. Rather than engage in major educational reforms, he preferred leaving things as they were. However, he understood that change had to occur for the university to remain viable.

Could the university develop a master plan to assure itself a chance to succeed, especially as it was heavily reliant upon tuition? Father O’Malley and his Vincentian colleagues understood that debts incurred decades earlier thwarted expansion. In the 1950s, the Western provincial, Reverend James A. Stakelum, C.M., created the Board of Control. The board limited the university’s borrowing power to $1 million unless it obtained prior approval from the superior general.6 DePaul’s hiring of Vincentian priests and brothers as teachers and administrators also gave the Province a degree of control over the university’s growth.

In 1952, Father O’Malley considered several options. One was to move all the university’s operations to the Lincoln Park campus in the hope that the archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal Samuel Stritch, might donate an abandoned high school building. A more extreme option was that Cardinal Stritch might consolidate all the Catholic colleges and universities in Chicago into a single institution.7 Whether Father O’Malley originated these ideas or merely passed them on as suggestions to the provincial is not clear. But what

6 There was no legal support in the charter or in the bylaws of the university for such a board.

7 Letter, James W. Stakelum, C.M., to Comerford J. O’Malley, C.M., 25 April 1953. Father Stakelum, the provincial, warned Father O’Malley that when the lease on the building at 25 E. Lake Street expired in 1955, the university would lose any surplus funds it may have accumulated over the past few years. The 25 E. Lake Street building opened in 1929 and almost drove the university into bankruptcy, entangling it in many complicated legal battles which lasted until the mid-1950s; Memo, Comerford J. O’Malley, C.M., to Priest Members of Board of Trustees, 10 December 1952, in O’Malley Papers. According to Father O’Malley, these options may have originated with Father Stakelum, the provincial. According to Father Richardson, the idea of moving the entire university to a suburban location was never seriously considered. See Memo, Edward Udovic, C.M., to Albert Erlebacher, 26 February 2011, in author’s possession.
is certain is that Father O’Malley and the provincial were at odds over the future control of DePaul University. Given these constraints, it is easy to understand why Father O’Malley was reluctant to assume the risks of major curricular reform and large physical expansion, even as he understood the need. Despite this, some progress did occur before the 1960s. The new physical education and student recreation building in Lincoln Park was completed in 1956, and the newly remodeled Lewis Center in the Loop opened that same year.\(^8\)

The major catalyst for change came with the arrival of two young Vincentians who would lead the university between 1964 and 1993: Reverend John R. Cortelyou, C.M., and Reverend John T. Richardson, C.M. They changed and expanded the curriculum, developed several new colleges, increased the size and quality of faculty, and built and acquired new facilities in Chicago and its suburbs.

The two were quite different in background and personality. A native Chicagoan, Father Cortelyou was the first president (1964–1981) whose academic background was not theology. While teaching the sciences at DePaul Academy, a boys’ high school connected to the university, he completed his doctorate in biology at Northwestern University and then joined DePaul’s Biology Department. His research experience at Northwestern convinced him that full-time college faculty members needed to do research in their disciplines. He rejected the idea, so common at DePaul from its very inception, that good teaching was the sole function of faculty. From the moment he arrived, he urged the university to offer

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\(^8\) The newly opened Lewis Center in the Loop housed all the professional schools (Law, Music, and Commerce), and served as home to some Liberal Arts daytime courses, and virtually all its night courses. Altogether, it was home to a large majority of the student body. The Lincoln Park campus mainly served the daytime Liberal Arts students, as well as some evening programs.
a limited number of doctoral programs in the hope that faculty in these disciplines would encourage students to consider a research agenda.

Father Richardson’s background was more traditionally that of former DePaul presidents, a theology degree followed by teaching experience at a Vincentian seminary. But, when he was unexpectedly assigned to DePaul at the relatively young age of thirty in 1954, he was determined to listen to both veteran and new faculty who insisted that change was necessary. Although Father Cortelyou and Father Richardson had quite different personalities, they worked well together for almost three decades. For the most part, they enthusiastically supported each other’s positions and ideas. One tactic they used was to hire academic chairs who agreed with their aims. These new chairpersons, in turn, would employ faculty to re-energize old programs and initiate new ones as the university’s enrollment surged during the 1960s.

What happened at DePaul over this time also reflected larger changes occurring throughout the American Catholic higher education community. Several factors contributed to the timing and nature of these changes. Emerging from World War II, the American Catholic community felt far more confident about its rightful place in American society than it had earlier. Church membership grew rapidly. New parishes and schools opened up as both urban and suburban populations swelled. Enrollments at Catholic colleges and universities also increased. The popularity of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, whose weekly TV program “Life is Worth Living” had fantastic ratings with both American Catholics and the general population, and the consistent athletic successes of Notre Dame’s football team added to a growing feeling of self-confidence and self-respect among American Catholics.

Along with these positive signs came important critiques from several respected Catholic thinkers. The first emerged in 1954 in a lengthy essay by Reverend John Tracy Ellis, a distinguished historian at Catholic University of America, who attacked the lack of intellectual quality in American Catholic universities and colleges. He charged that they had not produced a community of intellectuals and scientists who could match those of other private and public universities. According to Father Ellis, this resulted from a “self-imposed ghetto mentality” exhibited by many Catholic educators. In the realm of Catholic theology, an American Jesuit, Reverend John C. Murray, S.J., argued against what he considered

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as a reactionary and defensive position of some American bishops towards church-state relations. He advocated a more open discussion, both within and outside of the academy, on issues such as religious freedom. Father Murray preferred the US Constitution’s definition of religious freedom and church-state separation to the narrower traditional Catholic one.\footnote{Although Father Murray was silenced by church authorities in Rome during the 1950s, he had become extremely influential by the time of Vatican II (1962–1965) and served as a peritus (expert). He was a major force behind the document on religious freedom (Dignitatis Humanae) issued by the Council. For a good overview of Vatican II, see Maureen Sullivan, O.P., \textit{101 Questions and Answers On Vatican II} (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002) or John W. O’Malley, \textit{What Happened at Vatican II} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).}

Church traditionalists could not argue that such criticisms were demonstrations of anti-Catholicism, especially as they emanated from highly respected Catholic leaders. Catholic educators who advocated curricular change and greater lay activism in many Catholic colleges and universities, including DePaul, were influenced by these critiques. The reforms that occurred at DePaul University, and at many other Catholic higher educational institutions in the 1960s and beyond, serve as prime examples of how university reformers used critiques to justify why their schools should improve.\footnote{There is a vast amount of literature on this topic. I have mainly consulted Neil J. McCluskey, S.J., ed., \textit{The Catholic University: A Modern Appraisal} (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970) for essays by educators while the process of reform was ongoing; and John P. Langan, S.J., ed., \textit{Catholic Universities in Church and Society: A Dialogue on “Eccorde Ecclesiae”} (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1993) and Alice Gallin, O.S.U., \textit{Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education Since 1960} (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000) for a reflective view of what happened. A major force in the movement was Reverend Theodore C. Hesburgh, C.S.C., who served as president of Notre Dame throughout the era. His views about the important issues faced by Catholic higher education are in Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., \textit{The Hesburgh Papers: Higher Values in Higher Education} (Kansas City, KS: Andrews and McMeel, 1979). Years later, he reflected on the changes that occurred in another book, \textit{The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University} (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).}

Beyond these critiques, though, the atmosphere created by Pope John XXIII at the second Vatican Council (1962–1965) provided further momentum that encouraged change. Its two major themes were openness to the non-Catholic world and a willingness to re-examine Catholic institutions and move them into the twentieth century. Pope John XXIII called this \textit{aggiornamento}, a term loosely defined as “renewal” or “bringing up to date.” In the decree \textit{Perfectae Caritatis}, the Vatican Council required that each religious community renew its particular mission. The Vincentian order initiated its efforts in 1963 and eventually held a general assembly in 1968–1969, during which many changes were adopted, including a reconsideration of the apostolates it wished to accept. Several changes directly influenced what would occur at DePaul. One was a reduction in the term of the superior general of the Congregation. A second shift allowed each province to determine the tenure of its own provincial. In the Western Province, which encompassed DePaul, the provincial would be limited to three three-year terms. One important power held by the provincial was appointing the president and top officials of the university. The new provincial elected in 1962, Reverend James A. Fischer, C.M., used his authority the next year to name Father
Cortelyou president of DePaul University. He made this task easier by transferring several Vincentians who had opposed some of the changes Fathers Cortelyou and Richardson were attempting at DePaul. Father Fischer proved to be supportive of Vatican II’s reforms, and he worked hard to implement them within the Vincentian community.

Many Vincentians were asking themselves how to translate the goals of Vatican II to their individual lives and their corporate missions. The reaction to these changes was mixed. For some priests, the reforms enacted did not go far or fast enough; for others, they went too far and too fast. As provincial (1962–1971), Father Fischer exerted a strong but different kind of influence on the university from that of his predecessors. Rather than issuing directives, Father Fischer engaged in an ongoing dialogue with Fathers Cortelyou and Richardson and other Vincentians at DePaul about their ideas. A biblical scholar himself, Father Fischer agreed that faculty should do research, and he understood the arguments of those proposing that DePaul initiate a limited number of doctoral programs. Unlike previous provincials, he saw his role as that of a listener, not a regulator, and he encouraged the faculty at DePaul to decide on their own goals. Father Fischer also talked with lay faculty to find out what changes they wanted, and he was determined to support those changes as long as they clearly represented the considered thought of the administration and faculty. Father Fischer’s leadership style offered a much greater degree of autonomy to DePaul’s president than had ever existed under previous provincials. He was actively interested in what went on at the university, but he did not wish to micromanage the operation as his predecessor had. He was also strongly committed to the reforms outlined by Vatican II. Father Fischer thought that DePaul should progress by “using a truly Vincentian orientation

13 An ongoing, lengthy correspondence about the curricular changes that ought to occur at DePaul can be found in a series of letters among Father Fischer, Father Cortelyou, and Father Richardson from 1959 to 1963. See Letters, John Cortelyou to John Richardson, 12 January 1959; John Cortelyou to James Fischer, 17 January 1963; John Cortelyou to James Fischer, 1 March 1963; William Cortelyou to James Fischer, 1 October 1962, all in Cortelyou Mss. Each of these Vincentians was dissatisfied with the status quo and was eager to initiate some of the changes described in this paper.


15 Father Fischer very strongly supported those in the Congregation who most favored reform and change. For a statement of his views, see Letter, Reverend James Fischer to Reverend William Slattery, C.M. (November–December 1965) in Fischer Mss. in DeAndreis-Rosati Memorial Archives at DPUA. The letter was marked “Preliminary Copy and Not Sent.” In discussing the need to do something, Father Fischer remarked, “We should get something going before the zeal evaporates ... and we have left only disgruntled and disillusioned men.”

16 For examples of some of Father Fischer’s views, see Letter, Father James A. Fischer to Father William Slattery, (November–December 1965) in Fischer Mss. The letter is marked “Preliminary Copy and Not Sent,” but it expresses Father Fischer’s sympathy with the reformers within the Congregation who are eager to implement the reforms of Vatican II into the Congregation. For Fischer’s views about academic freedom for Vincentian priests, see Letter, Reverend James A. Fischer to Cornelius Sippel, 2 June 1967, in Fischer Mss. While Father Fischer tried to maintain the confidence of the older, somewhat more conservative priests in the Congregation, it is clear from his correspondence that both his mind and heart were with the reformers. Also see James A. Fischer, C.M., to Robert Schwanne, C.M., 23 February 1966, in Fischer Mss.
to its education.” If this meant moving into more graduate work, he could accept that, rather than forcing “the reality into a mold.”

The changes that occurred at DePaul in the 1960s can be identified in several distinct but related moves. The first resulted from a long study by a committee chaired by Father Richardson, who was then serving as executive vice president and dean of faculties. The committee included some of the younger people who had recently arrived at DePaul, such as Father Cortelyou and his younger brother, Reverend William Cortelyou, C.M., as well as the lay chairs of the Philosophy, Mathematics, and Physics Departments. The group convened once a week for almost two years, and in 1964 issued a lengthy report titled “A Curriculum Design.” It recommended a total redesign of the general education share of the undergraduate program that would guide students to the “distinctive opportunities for education and service that exist in an urban culture and an urban university.” Rather than maintain the lock-step general education requirements, which had been controlled by each college, the new proposal placed direction of general education into a new entity named “DePaul College.” Father Richardson, the chief author of the “Curriculum Design,” argued that general education courses should lead students to focus on the processes of learning rather than simply accumulating factual knowledge.

17 “A Curricular Design for DePaul University,” April 1964, in Richardson Mss.; Charles Strain says that the “Curricular Design” was the single most important reform because it did not need the approval of Vatican II, and it created “a solid set of core requirements in liberal education during the very period.... when other institutions were abandoning theirs,” see “We Ourselves are Plural” in Centennial Essays and Images, pp. 298–302. This is a judgment with which I strongly agree.
The purpose of a university curriculum was to encourage students to develop intellectual curiosity and apply that curiosity throughout life. The DePaul College structure contained four divisions: philosophy and religious studies, humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences and mathematics. Each division would create and approve the required and elective courses designed by faculty. For two years prior to its implementation, Father Richardson met with every affected department to explain and defend the new curriculum and to seek suggestions for carrying it out. This was to create uniformity for general education requirements throughout the university rather than leaving it to the judgment of each college. “Curricular Design” was meant to combine a set of common educational experiences as well as offering students some choices in course selection.\textsuperscript{18}

DePaul College was launched in 1967. In its first few years, the curriculum was tweaked and adjusted frequently as individual departments attempted to add more courses to their share of the general education pie. DePaul College did not meet with universal applause. The professional colleges did not appreciate losing the autonomy to determine their own general education requirements. Many Liberal Arts departments feared that they might lose some of their authority to set requirements for their majors. The History Department faculty split, with younger members designing a new course titled “Man and History: Historical Concepts and Methods.” The class focused on how historians thought and worked, rather than just teaching traditional surveys of Western civilization or American history. The assumption behind this was that first-year students would have already mastered broad historical events in high school. Disagreements also occurred in several other departments. The Philosophy Department, under the leadership of Professor Gerald Kreyche, had introduced a new curriculum with titles such as “Man’s Encounter with Man,” “Man’s Encounter with God,” and “Man’s Encounter with Morality,” prior to DePaul College. These courses considered both Western and non-Western philosophical influences and perspectives. Some senior faculty favored the continuation of a more traditional Catholic philosophical structure based on Neo-Scholasticism. Professor Kreyche wanted to show that philosophy was relevant “to the needs of the twentieth-century lay student, rather than insist on a curriculum which featured only a single Catholic view.” Kreyche, who arrived at DePaul in the early 1960s, hired a number of young instructors who had recently completed their training in Continental and phenomenological philosophy and were eager to introduce

\textsuperscript{18} See “A Curricular Design for DePaul University,” (April 1964), in Richardson Mss.
such ideas to DePaul students. While the traditional Scholastic-based courses remained among the department’s offerings, Kreyche was keen to test out his new approach.¹⁹

Weaknesses in the teaching of theology were already apparent in the late 1950s. Father William Cortelyou, head of the Theology Department, had observed a lack “of spirited and dynamic teaching by some Vincentian priests.”²⁰ He blamed himself for not executing sufficient oversight and cited the example of an instructor who asked students why they were Catholic and then responded, “Because you were born of Catholic parents.”²¹

A few years later, another theology instructor mused that the courses offered at DePaul were simply “much diluted” versions of what was being taught in Catholic seminaries.²² In the new DePaul College curriculum, the Theology Department was renamed the Department of Religious Studies, and it included a far broader menu than had been previously offered. Father Richardson raised the quality of both graduate and undergraduate courses by recruiting outstanding instructors such as Reverend John MacKenzie, and Reverend Bruce Vawter, C.M., both Hebrew Scripture scholars, and Reverend John Dominic Crossan, a

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¹⁹ A thorough introduction to and examination of the problems DePaul College faced is contained in Memo, Avrom A. Blumberg to Charles Strain, 13 December 1995, in possession of author; Interview, Professor Edward Allemand with Albert Erlebacher, 13 May 2013, in author’s possession; Memo, Albert Erlebacher to Charles Strain, 23 December 1995, in author’s possession for my analysis of the successes and failures in the course titled “Man History: Historical Concepts and Methods.”


²¹ Ibid.

²² Letter, Edmund J. Fitzpatrick to Albert Erlebacher, 3 February 1996, in author’s possession. Many of the views of how theology was taught at Catholic universities can also be seen in critiques of men like Father Hesburgh, who argued that theology as a discipline should be treated by the same standards as any other discipline.
highly controversial Jesus scholar. These teacher-scholars eventually provided the core of a new graduate program in Religious Studies. The department also took on an ecumenical shape by hiring Protestant and Jewish clergy as instructors. By the end of the 1960s, the new Religious Studies Department was headed by an ordained Presbyterian minister, Professor Paul Camenisch. These curricular modifications soon attracted national attention.

Another example of applying the new curriculum occurred in the mathematics and science division. With the encouragement of Father William Cortelyou, the Mathematics Department hired a number of young men and women who had just completed their doctorates at the University of Chicago or the Illinois Institute of Technology. They were research oriented and eager to design general education courses with topics such as personal financial management and family planning (one such class was titled “Math and Life Decisions”).

The second major curricular reform was the introduction of doctoral studies in three areas: philosophy, biology, and psychology. This was a goal of Father Cortelyou’s, who had preached about it since he first arrived at DePaul. From its earliest days, the university had offered some master’s level graduate work in many liberal arts disciplines, as well as in the Colleges of Music and Commerce. However, these programs were primarily aimed at public and parochial high school teachers or business people needing the degree for promotion. Very few of these programs attracted full-time students who had a strong interest in research. In 1959, based on fourteen years of experience in the Biology Department, Father Cortelyou put forth a well-organized argument. Examining the records of all biology graduate students, he concluded that too many required too long to complete their degrees or simply dropped out altogether. He criticized graduate students who could not see any value “beyond what is able to be presented in a secondary school biology course.” He bemoaned, “We do not get the above-average students from institutions with sound majors,” and concluded that DePaul students would “never give a performance consonant with graduate level studies.” He unfavorably compared the performance of part-time versus full-time students, and concluded the latter would more likely be successful than the former. According to Father Cortelyou, the program existed mostly because “Mother Superior need[ed] Sister X to teach

23 All three had a national reputation in the field of biblical studies. Crossan was considered one of the earliest of the group of “Jesus Scholars.”

24 *Time* featured an unsigned article about the ecumenical character of DePaul’s Theology Department. See “Curriculum: Departure at De Paul,” *Time*, 23 October 1964, pp. 68–69. Available online: [http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,897332,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,897332,00.html)

25 Telephone Interview with Professor Jerry Goldman, 12 March 2013, in possession of author.

26 Letter, Reverend John R. Cortelyou, C.M., to Reverend John Richardson, C.M., 12 January 1959, in O’Malley Papers. When writing to his closet friends, Father Cortelyou did not mince words or rely on overly diplomatic language. In evaluations of his academic colleagues he used blunt language to describe those who did not engage in research.
Biology…. and therefore Sister X should be given a degree simply because of maximum fidelity to attendance in class with a minimum effort and abilities in pursuit of a Graduate Degree.”\textsuperscript{27} Cortelyou was adamant that education in the sciences had to improve, because “either you go forward or backward—you don’t stand still.”\textsuperscript{28}

Father Cortelyou wanted DePaul to launch a limited number of doctoral programs that would attract faculty committed to research. The result, he hoped, would be a higher quality of teaching at the undergraduate level. In the first years of his presidency, Father Cortelyou focused his efforts on those departments he thought best prepared to proceed rapidly toward doctoral work. Besides biology, they were psychology and philosophy. He repeatedly urged the university trustees to provide greater material resources to hire new faculty, offer graduate assistantships, provide laboratory equipment and modern spaces, and add to the number of scientific journals in the library. These minimal steps would support DePaul’s application to begin offering doctoral work. When the NCA accreditation team visited in 1967, it offered provisional approval for the three doctoral programs. The approval came with the expectation that the university would continue to increase funds to hire more faculty, provide additional graduate assistantships, and institute a graduate council that would involve students in designing curriculum. Father Cortelyou was satisfied that this was the beginning of important educational and material improvements. He also hoped that these academic advances would lead to the construction of dormitories so that DePaul could begin to draw students from beyond the metropolitan Chicago area.\textsuperscript{29}

The new DePaul College undergraduate curriculum, together with the start of doctoral work, completed the initial steps of a lengthy list of curricular innovations and additions that would mark the next three decades. DePaul, like many urban universities, had always offered nighttime courses for working adults eager to obtain a degree. Such programs were often little more than duplicates of their daytime equivalents, stretched out over a longer period. In 1971, Father Cortelyou hired an outside consultant and directed him to design an entirely new curriculum for adult education. The resulting design was a radically different educational plan which created a new college named School for New Learning (SNL). It aimed to attract adult students over the age of twenty-five who had never had the opportunity for post-secondary education. Instead of structuring the degree around general education and traditional major requirements, SNL accepted students only

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} Memos, John R. Cortelyou to James A. Fischer, 17 January 1963 and 1 March 1963, in Fischer Mss. To be fair to Father Cortelyou, he applied the same criteria to other disciplines as well. Perhaps his strong stand for academic progress is what most appealed to Father Fischer when he selected Father Cortelyou as the next president of DePaul.

\textsuperscript{29} John R. Cortelyou, C.M., “Address to the Faculty,” 22 September 1964, in Board of Trustees Mss. Memo, John R. Cortelyou, “To All Faculty and Administrative Officers,” 18 July 1967, in Cortelyou Mss.
after they had achieved minimal levels of writing and communication competencies. Each accepted student, along with a faculty advisor, would design an individualized program meant to move him or her toward a degree. Each student’s program might include some traditional college courses, but for the most part these new courses were taught by men and women drawn from the business world, the professions, or from nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies. Students’ requirements depended upon their own educational background and work needs. SNL students could also be awarded a limited amount of college credits for past work experiences directly related to their educational goals. The school instituted a strong continuous counselling procedure for its students. In the beginning, faculty consisted solely of adjuncts not eligible for tenure, supplemented by a large number of academic counselors. In the decades that followed, SNL modified some of its methods and adopted several traditional academic procedures and policies (such as tenure); by the 1980s, it had even begun to offer a master’s degree.

A second innovation, which took place in the 1970s, illustrated DePaul’s traditional eagerness to expand and innovate by taking advantage of unexpected academic opportunities. Until the mid-1970s, the Goodman School of Drama had been associated with and housed by the Chicago Art Institute. When the Art Institute required more display space for its collections, it decided to evict the Goodman School. DePaul’s leaders quickly negotiated the purchase of the Goodman and incorporated it within the university. DePaul had always maintained a small but strong drama department, but it lacked a theater building and the necessary working space to create large full-scale productions. Several years after the
Goodman was acquired, the school’s name was changed to the DePaul Theater School. Most of the Goodman faculty were incorporated with tenure, and some temporary classrooms and lab spaces were obtained on the Lincoln Park campus. At first, plays were produced in the round in a pit on the ground floor of a classroom building. A few years later the university obtained, through donation, an old legitimate theater in the Loop, which it quickly rehabbed. However, the Theater School continued to require space in Lincoln Park for classrooms and set construction. It took more than three decades before the university constructed entirely new quarters for the Theater School. This allowed the school to finally combine classroom teaching with production facilities for set construction, as well as two performance venues, in one building.30

Another major expansion of the curriculum occurred in the mid-1970s when computer science courses were separated from the Mathematics Department and emerged as an autonomous department. By the 1990s, it grew into a college.31 As the field of computer science grew rapidly and developed many subfields, the college expanded its offerings to include master’s programs and doctorates in new areas such as game theory and artificial intelligence. By the 1990s, computer science had become one of the largest colleges in the university.

Similarly, but with smaller enrollments, new fields of study were identified in the Colleges of Law, Business, and Music as each quickly adapted to developments within their respective professions. Thus, the curricular adaptations of the 1960s and 1970s transformed DePaul into quite a different institution. Yet another adaptation came in the 1980s when the university began to build or rent satellite campuses in the northern, western, and southern suburbs of Chicago. Students attending them were connected through the internet with library facilities at the two central campuses.

The success of these changes was best measured by examining NCA visitations of the period. The Cortelyou-Richardson years illustrated quite a different approach to these decennial visits. On earlier occasions, the university had furnished information produced by its administrators for the NCA in a straightforward and mostly statistical manner. But the new approach was far more thorough. It relied on a long, in-depth, cooperatively made self-study that began several years prior to a given NCA visitation. It included widespread participation by faculty, staff, and administrators. The foundation of these studies usually

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30 It was not until 2013 that the university completed a building on the Lincoln Park campus solely dedicated to the work of the Theater School. It retained the theater in the Loop as well.

31 The Department of Computer Science was established in 1981; it became an autonomous college in 1995, and it is now known as the College of Computing and Digital Media. See Memo, Jill Tinkle to Albert Erlebacher, 1 August 2017, in author’s possession.
emphasized changes that had resulted from the critiques of each previous NCA visit. Emphasis was placed on the successes of traditional academic programs and new programs recently created. The idea was to demonstrate the extent to which the university had met the NCA’s previous suggestions and had set forth its own goals for the next decade.

The NCA approved the “Curriculum Design” for the new general education prospectus and provisionally approved doctoral work in 1967. Before the subsequent visit, the NCA fully approved the doctoral programs for biology, psychology, and philosophy. In their regular decennial visit of 1977, the NCA had expressed strong reservations about the DePaul College curriculum. These concerns mirrored some that faculty and administrators had noted, even those of DePaul College’s most ardent advocates. One problem was the inability of the university to offer general education credit for DePaul College courses that would satisfy the needs of transfer students from community colleges, a segment of undergraduates rapidly growing in the 1970s. An internal paper noted that “little effort had been spent in the development of integration,” and cited a history course that did not provide “sufficient insight into this method” of teaching. Some of the science faculty also expressed strong feelings that their DePaul College courses minimized laboratory experiences. One faculty member, originally part of the group that designed DePaul College, commented that many colleagues were impatient with the constant course adaptations. Numerous Science-Math division courses were too rigorous, and some professors simply continued doing what they had done before the college. A full summary of the changes and their criticisms was compiled by one of DePaul College’s strongest supporters.32 The NCA team concluded that the curriculum was not “sufficiently integrative” and lacked “a cohesive and permeating means of transferring culture.”33 Ultimately, the university decided to eliminate the autonomous status of DePaul College and returned general education courses to the control of academic departments. Despite this, the principle belief continued that general education needed to remain under some university-wide control.

In the early 1980s, a new structure for general education titled “Liberal Studies” succeeded DePaul College. A unique component was a requirement that all undergraduates take a two-quarter world civilization course, combined with a writing and research skills course. Instructional teams were formed consisting of two teachers drawn from the History and English Departments who worked separately with the same group of students. The history instructors wrote their own common text, and their evaluation process included a

32 Interview with Gerald Kreyche, 1996, in possession of author; Avrom Blumberg, “Report on DePaul College, 1966–1982,” 1995, in author’s possession; Patricia Ewers, “General Education and DePaul College,” 1978, in DPUA is a detailed critique of DePaul College’s problems by its final dean. She was sympathetic with its aim, but felt it had created many new problems which it had not solved.

33 NCA Report, 1977, in Box 21 of NCA Mss.
common exam, but they were also encouraged to write their own essay questions. This unique experiment lasted for a decade. However, after the next NCA visitation it was replaced by a generic course titled “Discover Chicago,” created so that first-year students received more exposure to the experiences and issues of urban life. The move made sense as a steadily increasing portion of the student body came from outside of Chicago, and it worked well with the idea that Chicago could serve as a laboratory for the university.\textsuperscript{34} The willingness of Liberal Arts departments to constantly engage in redesigning existing courses and create new ones became an ongoing characteristic from 1970 to 1990. It was a result of the internal self-studies that preceded each successive NCA visit, and the adoption of some of the NCA’s suggestions. Change was expected and planned for; it became the accepted order of the times.

The onset of significant changes to the general education undergraduate program was matched by the introduction of entirely new undergraduate programs. This was accomplished by creating interdisciplinary majors such as women’s studies, Latin American and Latino studies, international studies, community service studies, public policy studies, and Catholic studies. Likewise, entirely new departments such as Anthropology and Art and Art History were created. While such programmatic adoptions required some new faculty, the university was also able to staff them by drawing members from traditional departments. Another innovation of the 1980s was the creation of study abroad programs established for undergraduates. This allowed students to travel to many European, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries to study for several weeks or up to a full academic year. New joint undergraduate and graduate programs were also established between Liberal Arts departments and the professional colleges. The 1967 onset of doctoral programs in philosophy, biology, and psychology expanded with the addition of new graduate programs in commerce, computer science, and the School for New Learning, as well as joint master’s programs in both the Commerce and Law Schools.\textsuperscript{35} All of these curricular additions and adaptations followed the same pattern. DePaul’s administration responded to the changing needs of the job market and provided new opportunities to attract students from Chicago and elsewhere. The success of the DePaul men’s basketball program beginning in the late 1970s also won the university more national exposure on television. Increasingly positive evaluations provided by NCA teams after their 1977, 1987, and 1997 visits led the university to welcome them and to use their visits as a stimulus for continued improvement. No longer did university leaders fear a visit from the NCA.

\textsuperscript{34} The world civilization sequence continued to be housed in the History Department after DePaul College. When it was no longer a university-wide requirement, it could still be used by any undergraduate as an elective or a requirement depending on the demands of the student’s major.

\textsuperscript{35} See “DePaul Undergraduate Colleges and Schools Catalog, 2001–2003” and “Graduate Programs of DePaul University, 2001–2003,” in DPUA, for samples of many such programs at DePaul.
A summary of key items in these three NCA evaluations demonstrates the breadth and depth of the major changes that occurred over these thirty years. Prior to the regular decennial review in 1977, a special visitation had made the provisional approval of the three doctoral programs permanent. Yet the NCA kept pushing the university to provide more financial aid to students, to encourage more minority students to apply, and to hire more research faculty. The evaluation noted strong faculty morale in these departments, and it praised the willingness of the university to build community support of the Psychology Department by opening a mental health clinic. Unfortunately the biology program, closest to the heart of Father John Cortelyou, needed to be discontinued due to lack of sufficient enrollment. A major negative cited in 1977 was the DePaul College curriculum. The remainder of the report praised the university’s openness and its willingness to acquire more space for the new programs it was creating on the Lincoln Park campus. The School for New Learning was singled out for special praise and described as “a significant educational alternative of high quality.” However, concern was raised that SNL needed to maintain a cadre of full-time faculty and staff in case the current leadership left the university. Other concerns raised in 1977 mentioned the university’s need to develop more long-range planning and to engage more with affirmative action in its hiring practices. The NCA also concluded that

36 Letter, Thurston Manning to Reverend John R. Cortelyou, 8 August 1975, in Box 21 of NCA Mss.
37 “The Psychology Department: Fifteen Years of Progress,” April 1983, in DPUA, offers a complete picture of the successes and problems for one the first disciplines to offer a doctoral program.
DePaul needed “to augment ... library resources” and give them “more support.” This was a consistent concern in every NCA evaluation, and one that continued for at least another ten years.\(^{38}\)

In the decade after the 1977 review, Father Cortelyou retired as president and was replaced by Father Richardson. The transition was smooth since the two had worked so closely together over the past twenty years. Also, prior to the next review in 1987, a special evaluation of the Law College was conducted by the Association of American Law Schools. It noted that a legal education at DePaul met society’s needs, in part through the development of several specialized institutes and in offering a master of law degree program. But, the report also noted antagonisms between faculty and administration with students from minority communities, and it urged the college to address this.\(^{39}\)

When the NCA returned in 1987, it found that many of the recommendations from a decade earlier had been successfully addressed. The report affirmed that the administrative structure of the university was lean, that the Board of Trustees understood their mission, and that the university’s finances demonstrated a growing ability to support new programs and construction as well providing modest increases to the endowment. It lauded the administration for producing and carrying out systematic five-year plans that guided new areas of curricular growth, as well as the physical expansion necessitated by it. It praised DePaul for providing computer services that benefitted both students and faculty as the university joined a new library consortium of academic colleges and universities throughout Illinois. This vastly increased the breadth of library and research resources available. However, the report did note that the university had not yet constructed a freestanding library on its Lincoln Park campus, and that funding for books and periodicals was still less than it ought to be. Finally, it recommended that professionally trained computer staff should be provided at both campuses as a resource for faculty and students.\(^{40}\)

By the NCA evaluation conducted in 1997, another major administrative change had occurred. With Father Richardson’s retirement in 1993, the Board of Trustees chose another Vincentian, Reverend John Minogue, C.M., as his successor. Father Minogue had limited academic experience at DePaul prior to his appointment, and most of his tenure extends beyond the chronological limits of this paper. Two major trends marked the early part of his

\(^{38}\) The problem was that the university had not yet constructed a separate building for its library, and this goal was not finally achieved until 1992. See “Report of a Visit to DePaul University by the Commission on Higher Education of NCA,” March 20, 1977, in Box 21 of NCA Mss. The lack of a separate library facility on the Lincoln Park campus had been one of the constant criticisms of NCA visitation teams.

\(^{39}\) “Visit of American Association of Law Schools to DePaul University,” 22–25 April 1980, in Box 21 of NCA Mss.

\(^{40}\) “Review and Evaluation of DePaul University,” 23–25 February 1987, in Box 22 of NCA Mss. Father Richardson stated his reaction to the report in “Memo to the DePaul University Community on the NCA Report,” 15 May 1987, in Richardson Mss.
presidency. The first was his determination to improve existing academic programs, as well as continuing to take advantage of any new academic opportunities that arose. The second was a far-reaching expansion of the university’s entry into computerization, promoting the use of computers by faculty, staff, and administrators in all phases of their activities. Within the College of Computing and Digital Media, existing programs were expanded and new ones implemented so that it became one of the largest departments within the university. Father Minogue described the necessity of entering the computer and digital age as urgent and comparable to earlier generations learning “to use a pencil and pen.”

The 1997 NCA evaluation of DePaul once again examined every aspect of the university’s teaching, research, and community service goals. It discussed all the characteristics of change that occurred during the Cortelyou-Richardson years, and, as usual, provided some new direction for qualitative change over the next decade. The NCA reported all constituencies at the university accepted a commitment that their programs fit within “DePaul’s Catholic, Urban, and Vincentian” mission, and that this was illustrated by the faculty’s concern for its students. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students all had accepted an obligation to improve the lives of disadvantaged individuals and groups within their urban setting. The NCA lauded the strong partnerships the university had developed in all its colleges with public and private institutions in the metropolitan area, thus becoming “a cornerstone for Chicago.”

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The NCA did note that DePaul had fallen behind in its fund-raising because of a rapid turnover of personnel in the Development department. It also urged DePaul to create a university-wide programmatic evaluation that would improve ways to measure student academic assessments and outcomes. The review also encouraged the university to continue to expand its representation of people of color and of women in all areas of its operations. One of the final recommendations was that every college within the university should appoint an advisory council of professionals in business and industry, some of whom would no doubt be alumni, to serve as a marketing tool and springboard to help support vocational opportunities for graduates. This, the visitors claimed, would aid the university in achieving its goal of using Chicago as “a living laboratory” for teaching, research, and service activities. As to expansion, the report praised the newly constructed freestanding university library, fully opened in 1992, the fulfillment of a long-sought goal. It also suggested that DePaul consider merging all the fine arts programs into a new facility in downtown Chicago.

The last major reform of the 1960s had involved the restructuring of the university’s charter so that it would more accurately reflect recent societal and academic changes. When the original 1898 charter was amended in 1907, the document recommended a board of fifteen trustees, ten of whom were to be Vincentians, while the other five were to be laypersons. It included an ironclad provision that this ratio “shall be forever unalterable.” This phrase made it difficult to make minor changes without rewriting the entire charter. The ten Vincentians included the president of the university and the provincial, as well as Vincentian priests working at DePaul or at other Vincentian institutions. Lay members were usually Roman Catholic businessmen and professionals from the Chicago area. While Vincentians owned and operated the university, the charter also included provisions that prohibited any religious test for students, staff, or faculty. DePaul was one of the first, if not the first, Catholic universities to admit laywomen as full time students. From its very inception, DePaul hired some non-Catholics as teachers, and one of its earliest deans was a Protestant. However, the provision of ten Vincentians to five laypeople maximized the Province’s control over the university.

43 Ibid., p. 51.
44 Ibid., pp. 52–53. Instead, the university built a new facility for its College of Drama on the Lincoln Park campus that opened it in 2013, and a new building for its School of Music on the Lincoln Park campus, completed in 2018.
45 “Charter of DePaul University,” 24 December 1907, in DPUA Mss.
46 There is a dispute among Catholic universities as to whether DePaul University or Marquette University was the first to admit women. The answer depends upon whether the term “women” meant nuns, laywomen, or both. For the Marquette version, consult Raphael Hamilton, S.J., The Story of Marquette University: An Object Lesson in the Development of Catholic Higher Education (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1953), pp. 124–27. Both schools had issues with their religious superiors on this policy, DePaul with Chicago’s archbishop, who was opposed to coeducation and Marquette with its Jesuit superiors for the same reason. Each found a different way to ignore these objections.
Early on during the post–World War II period, some Vincentians at DePaul began to realize that the governing structure established in 1907 no longer met their needs or society’s. By the 1960s, many Catholic higher educational institutions reached the same conclusion. This was but one motivation that moved Catholic colleges and universities towards appearing more similar to private and public higher educational institutions.\(^{47}\)

Looking back at this in her study *Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education Since 1960*, Alice Gallin notes several factors which contributed to these changes. One was the decreasing number of Catholic men and women entering and remaining in religious orders that operated colleges and universities. Another was the eagerness of Catholic colleges and universities to tap into the many new sources of federal and state financial aid, to which certain conditions were attached. One of the most important reasons was the greater willingness by Catholic institutions to accept the norms of academic freedom practiced at their private and public counterparts.

In 1970, Reverend Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., then president of the University of Notre Dame and probably the most well-known Catholic higher education leader in the United States, received the prestigious Alexander Meiklejohn Award for Academic Freedom from the American Association of University Professors. It was the first time the award had been given to a Roman Catholic educator. In accepting the award, Father Hesburgh dismissed an old comment made by George Bernard Shaw that a “Catholic university was a contradiction in terms.” He emphasized that a university “does not cease to be free because it is Catholic.”\(^{48}\) Father Hesburgh used his prestige and considerable diplomatic skill to push many of the specific reforms required to enhance the academic standing and status of Catholic higher education.\(^{49}\) He accepted the challenge issued in the 1950s by Father Ellis. Looking back, Gallin confirmed that many of Father Hesburgh’s ideas encouraged major shifts in Catholic higher education. Some of these were as follows: providing faculty with a greater degree of academic freedom; trying to maintain the religious allegiance of a Catholic faculty and student body; improving the quality of both undergraduate and

\(^{47}\) This issue is discussed from a historical perspective by Alice Gallin, O.S.U., *Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education Since 1960* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000). For a more contemporary view of how the issue developed in the 1960s see Edward J. Power, *Catholic Higher Education in the United States: A History* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1972), and McCluskey, *The Catholic University*. Both authors agreed that the self-identification of what a Catholic university or college stood for was the most single important issue these educators and leaders faced.

\(^{48}\) Father Hesburgh’s views on academic freedom are elaborated in *The Hesburgh Papers*, pp. 63–67.

\(^{49}\) *Ibid.* The book contains a series of talks in which Father Hesburgh analyzes the changes occurring in American Catholic higher education in the 1960s and 1970s. Many, but not all, Catholic educators shared his views of reforms. I believe that DePaul’s leaders were sympathetic with his ideas. In 1973, DePaul awarded Father Hesburgh the Saint Vincent DePaul Award for his “vision and conviction that the dignity of the human person could be realized only by massive changes in our institutions and mores.” See “75th Annual Graduation Exercises,” June 1973, in Academic Commencement File, Box 4 in DPUA.
graduate programs; changing the governance of institutions to make them more consistent with accepted American standards; increasing the ability to raise funds from foundations and alumni; and reducing the reliance on student tuition. To some degree, each of these shifts occurred at DePaul University as well.

One Catholic historian noted, “for some years before Vatican Council II, a more critical spirit and greater eagerness for the democratic process had begun to appear among the leading Catholic centers of learning.” The vital struggle for academic freedom at Catholic universities faced several obstacles. For example, there was the reaction to the papal silencing of Jesuit Reverend John Courtney Murray, S.J., who had been writing on the topic of religious freedom since the 1950s. The Catholic University of America refused to allow a series of student sponsored lectures that included talks by Father Murray and Fathers Hans Kung and Gustave Weigel. Of most probable interest to the DePaul community was the arbitrary firing of thirty-three faculty, including several priests, at St. John’s University, another Vincentian institution. Finally, some local bishops tried to continue to exert control over universities in their dioceses.

At DePaul, the issue of academic freedom was approached more diplomatically than at other Catholic institutions. The local chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) actively defended faculty rights. In one instance, it helped defend an older priest who felt he was being discriminated against because he would not accept assignments teaching philosophy and theology in the new DePaul College. In the mid-1960s, the AAUP supported a resolution urging the Illinois legislature to repeal a law requiring loyalty oaths for professors at public institutions. It also passed a resolution condemning the firing of faculty at St. John’s University, and it urged its members not to accept any academic appointment there. In the mid-1970s, the chapter successfully defended three psychology professors, two of whom were tenured, terminated because their outside grant funding had ceased.

One of the first steps that Father Cortelyou took as president was to cease using the Index Librorum Prohibitorum, an old Vatican document that restricted the use of certain

50 Gallin, Negotiating Identity, pp. 1–29, especially p. 29.
51 John Tracy Ellis, “A Tradition of Autonomy” in McCluskey, The Catholic University, pp. 207–70. Father Ellis, the doyen of American Catholic historians, had been the first to publicly identify the lack of an intellectual tradition among American Catholic universities as early as 1955. See Footnote 10 of this paper.
52 See “DePaul AAUP Chapter Minutes of May 12, 1966,” for a vote to condemn the administration at St. John’s University for firing the faculty members; Minutes of May 15, 1967, urging the university to give rank and tenure to full time faculty in the College of Music. “Decision of the Board of Review of DePaul University in the Appeal of Dr. Ernest J. Doleys and Dr. Philip F. Caracena,” 8 August 1974, all in DePaul AAUP Mss. The DePaul AAUP chapter provided both moral and financial assistance to the two in their struggle. The university accepted the decision of a board appointed by the university that the two professors should have their tenured status and positions restored; “DePaul University AAUP Chapter Minutes,” May 12, 1966, in AAUP Mss.
books by faculty and students unless they had prior permission. After the St. John’s University firing, faculty at many other universities came to the aid of their beleaguered colleagues. Father Fischer, the Western provincial, was disturbed by what had occurred at St. John’s. However, based on talks with lay faculty and administrators at DePaul, he felt that the situation was much better there and illustrative of a more mature and collegial relationship. One Vincentian at DePaul even suggested that his criteria for academic freedom would be whether the university would allow a known homosexual spokesperson to address students.

In the 1940s, DePaul’s Vincentians began to assume greater control over their institution and to increase lay participation and influence, reaching a culmination in 1967. In 1945, Father O’Malley created the Lay Advisory Board of Trustees, which he hoped would assist with fund-raising and promote the university to the larger Chicago community. But this board, while helpful, was purely advisory. It lacked any legal power to deal with policies, budgets, curricula, or the appointments of top administrative officers. The financial restrictions imposed by the provincial in the early 1950s, and DePaul’s continuing...

53 As late as 1962, Father O’Malley had told the bookstore manager that he had seen some books on the list sitting on open bookstore shelves. See Memo, Comerford J. O’Malley to Joe Keenan, 19 April 1962, in O’Malley Papers. Pope Paul VI finally dropped the Index altogether in 1966.


55 Memo, William Cortelyou, C.M., to John Richardson, C.M., 1 November 1973, in Richardson Mss.
dependence on the Province to provide priests as teachers and administrators hampered the university’s attempts to expand physically, modernize and enlarge its curriculum, and improve its financial strength.\textsuperscript{56}

What occurred at DePaul in the 1960s typified some of the trends experienced at many Catholic higher educational institutions. Not only did undergraduate, professional, and graduate enrollments rise sharply, but many Catholic institutions also began broadening their graduate, research, and professional offerings. The spirit of Vatican II motivated some presidents in Catholic higher education to become more assertive about expanding curricula, increasing lay involvement in control, and embracing academic freedoms to promote a higher quality of academic life at their schools.

Prominent scholar Andrew Greeley believed that American Catholic higher education had gone through an “identity crisis” during the postwar period.\textsuperscript{57} Father Greeley thought that Catholic institutions that accepted the basic values and overall style of American higher education would be the quickest to adapt. However, he also warned that the methods of control at the time were “at variance with what has traditionally been considered the proper spirit of a Roman Catholic religious order,” and added “the leadership ... must, by one means or another, create acceptance within the religious order for the innovations it proposes.”\textsuperscript{58} Greeley and others cautioned “that academic freedom is a new idea to American Catholic educators because they have only recently arrived at the point where it has a vital bearing on the activity of the college.”\textsuperscript{59}

The question of academic freedom was foremost in the minds of many critics. One such observer claimed that the obedience demanded by some religious orders might seem “to fly in the face of the ideas set forth by Pope John and Vatican II.”\textsuperscript{60} Another critic cited the mass firings of faculty at St. John’s University and felt that this demonstrated that the relationship between the faculty and administration was a time bomb at many Catholic colleges. He believed St. John’s administrators had done all in their power to ignore and reject every reform that emanated from faculty with regard to finances, academic freedom, and tenure.\textsuperscript{61} Administrators and faculty at DePaul understood what was occurring at St. John’s, and they were determined to avoid it. Father Fischer told one of his colleagues, “We

\textsuperscript{56} The history and functions of the Lay Board of Trustees are described in Dosen, Catholic Higher Education, pp. 202–04.


\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. p. 100.


\textsuperscript{61} Leo, “Some Problem Areas of Catholic Higher Education,” p. 201.
are taking quite a beating over the St. John’s affair. ... DePaul has a lot of explaining to do to professors they are trying to hire;” but the outlook wasn’t entirely negative as he added, “I just talked to a half-dozen of the lay professors ... and there is not the slightest feeling I can detect that would cause any worry. They keep talking about ‘our university.’”

In 1970, Father Cortelyou increased faculty and staff influence over decision-making by launching a university senate.

As previously noted, Professor Gerald Kreyche had been hired to design a different approach to the study of philosophy and theology, which had gone a long way in making the disciplines more relevant to students’ needs and experiences. Father Fischer had defined DePaul as an “eclectic” school not wedded to any one school of philosophical or theological thought. Instead, DePaul was devoted to finding the best ways to approach truth and the best methods for relaying knowledge to students. He declared, “crucifixes, Roman collars and pious sayings do not make a university Catholic.”

Several of the older priests did not appreciate the de-emphasis of the Scholastic philosophical tradition, long the bedrock of philosophical instruction at most Catholic universities and colleges. However, by offering students choices beyond courses based on Scholasticism, DePaul was at the forefront of change among Catholic universities. Academic freedom was also evident in the way the Religious Studies Department’s offerings and faculty reached beyond traditional Catholic theological perspectives, as previously noted. These moves and others described in this paper’s section on DePaul College improved the quality of philosophy and religion courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. They pushed the reputations of these disciplines forward as earlier reforms supported by Father Fischer had suggested.

The Soviet Union’s successful launch of the first space vehicle in 1957, prior to American space exploration, became another factor in stimulating qualitative improvement of American higher education. Public reaction to the Soviet achievement was shock and amazement, and many Americans felt they had lost a round in the Cold War. Public and political pressure stimulated both the executive and legislative branches to react quickly. From the late 1950s through the 1960s, congressional leaders and the Eisenhower, Kennedy,

62 Letter, Reverend James C. Fischer, C.M., to Reverend John Zimmerman, C.M., 14 January 1966, in Box 1 of Fischer Mss. Father Fischer was also heavily involved in bringing about changes within the structure and activities of the Vincentian order.

63 “DePaul University Senate: Underlying Principles, Constitution, By-Laws” (1970) in Cortelyou Mss. I chaired the committee. The structure proved to be cumbersome and unwieldy. In the mid-1980s it was replaced by a series of separate councils representing students, faculty, and staff each elected by their constituents. See Richardson, The Playful Hand of God, p. 96.

64 For specifics, see earlier discussion of Kreyche in this paper.

65 Minutes of Board of Trustees, 19 November 1963, in Board of Trustees Minutes at DPUA.
and Johnson administrations used the space race to prod Congress to enact a massive increase of federal funds into scientific research and applied technology. These funds provided research grants for academics and awards for high school science, mathematics, and foreign language that teachers used to renew and expand their subject matter competencies. Loans and grants were made available to build and expand research facilities at many universities and scientific laboratories, especially those related to space.66 These laws were in addition to earlier ones that provided federal funds and loans for classroom buildings and dormitories, as well as research grants and scholarships for students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. All of the laws were written to make church-related schools eligible for their benefits, provided that such benefits did not directly relate to any sectarian religious activity.

The issue for Catholic colleges and universities was whether they could qualify for these new governmental benefits without diminishing or destroying their religious affiliation and ethos. Not receiving a share of these federal and state benefits would make it more difficult for them to attract high-quality faculty and students in competition with public and other private institutions. Legal issues first arose at the state level in Maryland in 1962. Maryland had appropriated public funds to improve the teaching of physical sciences and mathematics by providing for the construction of buildings and scientific laboratories. The question was whether religiously affiliated or sponsored schools qualify for such funds. The Maryland court constructed a set of criteria that allowed the government to provide funding if the particular college or university which received them was not fundamentally a religiously run institution.67 The court did allow such monetary awards if the institution receiving them was primarily sectarian. Under this interpretation, the burden of proof rested on the institution.

While this case applied only to Maryland, federal courts began using similar criteria to decide whether religiously affiliated schools might receive federal funds. The ultimate decision permitting Catholic and other church-related colleges to received federal funds came in 1971, when the United States Supreme Court handed down a verdict in Richardson v. Tilton.68 The statute in question was the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, but

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66 The major laws that contained these funds were the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, 72 US. Stat. 426–2; the National Defense Education Act of 1958, 75 U.S. Stat. 1580; and the Higher Education Act of 1965, 79 U.S. Stat. 1219. Each was amended frequently in the following years.

67 The case was Horace Mann League of the United States v. Board of Public Works, (1966), 242 Md. 645, 220. The case is analyzed in Walter Gelhorn and R. Kent Greenwalt, “Public Support and the Sectarian University,” Fordham Law Review 38, no. 3 (1970): 404–05. It provided the aid if schools could demonstrate that they were not essentially religious institutions. For example, theological seminaries could not receive state funds even if they were accredited.

68 Tilton v. Richardson, 403 US. 672 (1971). The US Supreme Court allowed church-sponsored universities to receive grants and loans under the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 if those funds provided a “legitimate secular objective entirely appropriate for government action without having the effect of advancing religion.” See Ibid.
the court’s language allowed it to be applied to other federal statutes providing monetary benefits to non-public colleges and universities. The key issue was that federal funds could not be used for purely sectarian purposes. For example, a chapel inside a school’s science building would not be eligible for federal funds. This decision was vital for the future of Catholic institutions.⁶⁹

DePaul, like many other Catholic institutions, was eager to tap into this federal largesse. However, administrators were concerned by the political ramifications of engaging in the constitutional issue of church-state separation. A single example illustrates their dilemma and how the problem was managed.

Since the early 1950s, the archbishop of Chicago had served as the university’s honorary chancellor. During this period, Father O’Malley enthusiastically sponsored an effort to obtain papal recognition for DePaul’s College of Music from the Papal College of Music. Father O’Malley thought that such a gesture, if approved, would substantially improve the university’s prestige. With a great deal of work, which included extensive clerical lobbying in Rome, DePaul gained this papal acknowledgment for its College of

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69 Paul C. Reinert, S.J., *The Urban Catholic University* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1970), pp. 61–69. Father Reinert, the president of St. Louis University and a leading Catholic higher education reformer, urged increasing lay control in boards of trustees and administration. He emphasized finding more financial resources from foundations, corporations, and government. He also advocated avoiding duplication of programs among various Catholic schools in the same metropolitan area, and even possibly merging Catholic higher education institutions within a metropolitan region.
Yet during Father Cortelyou’s administration, this recognition became a sensitive issue. Fears arose that it might indicate DePaul had too close a legal relationship with an arm of the Catholic Church and that a federal court might argue DePaul was under papal control. This would severely limit the university’s ability to qualify for federal and state funds, as well as loans, for construction, faculty research grants, and scholarship funding for students. Therefore, Fathers Cortelyou and Richardson led a determined effort to have the papal designation rescinded. This required even more intensive lobbying than their earlier attempt to obtain recognition. Finally, the Papal certification was removed from DePaul’s catalog in 1973.

This example illustrates how important obtaining Federal and state funds was to the administration.

An important ideological challenge for DePaul was maintaining the Vincentian spirit and ethos that motivated the institution. Fathers Cortelyou and Richardson had pushed for reform even before Vatican II, but they used its goals to support their own ideas. Principally, these were that Catholic institutions must broaden and deepen their curricula, especially in disciplines related to the nation’s need to improve education in the sciences and its application in technology. This was largely part of a national response within higher education to the burgeoning Cold War.

By the 1960s, Father John Tracy Ellis’s criticism of the quality of intellectuals produced at American Catholic universities were shared by the presidents of Notre Dame and St. Louis University, and others, including several nuns who presided over women’s colleges. They were motivated by the spirit of Vatican II. They also recognized that public and private institutions were growing in size and improving the quality of their academic offerings. Since there were so many different types of institutions within Catholic higher education...
education, it would have been impossible and undesirable to design a single plan for all
them. What, then, would be the plan for DePaul, an urban institution offering a large variety
of baccalaureate programs as well as professional degrees in business, law, and music?73

The issue of what it meant to be a Catholic and Vincentian institution was a complex
one for DePaul’s leaders, and it has remained a frequent topic of internal discussion since the
1960s. There were many factors behind this. One was the decreasing presence of Vincentian
fathers and brothers at the university. Concurrently with Vatican II, the number of Catholic
men and women entering religious life dropped sharply. Also, an increasing number of men
and women were leaving clerical orders for a variety of personal and professional reasons.74
Practically, this meant fewer Vincentians serving DePaul’s students. In a larger sense, it
also contributed to changes in the various apostolates that the Vincentian order assumed.75
Could there be a time when very few or even no Vincentians were present? This was
partially addressed in 1976 by the Midwest Province. It was concluded that in future there
ought to be at least twenty active Vincentians at DePaul, with four serving in administrative
positions, ten holding teaching appointments, and the rest serving as chaplains or in middle
management positions. The Province proposed sustaining the university’s goal to provide
educations for a high percentage of inner-city students, and to offer the school’s resources
to those most in need of help in Chicago. This, they felt, would maintain the traditional
Vincentian identification and heritage of the university.76

The twin issues of maintaining a Vincentian presence and according laypeople a
greater say in policy-making were linked together in the 1960s at DePaul. This tension was
felt at other Catholic schools as well. A leading scholar on this topic has argued that the
addition of laymen and laywomen to the governing boards of Catholic higher education
institutions was a necessary step in their growth. This change was achieved through a
variety of processes and resulted in a number of different leadership models.77 Not only did
increasing lay leadership help to fulfill the spirit of Vatican II, it also provided a satisfactory
response to some of the legal challenges caused by the Horace Mann and Tilton decisions.

73 A rich literature on contemporary critiques of American Catholic higher education in the United States in the 1960s
is cited in this paper. See the books by Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C.; Alice Gallin, O.S.U.; Robert Hassenger; Neil
G. McCluskey, S.J.; and Edward J. Power previously cited. An early retrospective of the solutions can be found in
Germaine Grisez, “American Catholic Higher Education: The Experience Evaluated” in Why Should the Catholic

74 I can offer no judgment as to the cause and effect relationship between Vatican II and the fall in the number of men
and women joining or remaining in religious orders.

75 See Rybolt, The American Vincentians, pp. 85–94 for a full discussion of the immediate changes within the Vincentian
order as a result of Vatican II.

pp. 51–53, in Box 4 of Provincial Records in DeAndreis-Rosati Memorial Archives. The fears of this group became a
reality. As of 2017, only twelve Vincentians were actively employed at DePaul.

77 On the national level, the result of these changes is fully discussed in Gallin, Negotiating Identity, pp. xiv–xx.
Vincentian reformers who questioned the future of DePaul feared that the declining number of religious could mean the school would lose its connection with their order. One solution began to evolve in the late 1960s. The larger issue, greater lay control, posed a difficult problem considering the ironclad provision contained in the school’s 1907 charter that a ratio of ten Vincentians to five laymen must be maintained. The university was not interested in the complexity of having to re-charter itself. Fathers Cortelyou and Richardson recognized, however, that the major social and educational upheavals that had occurred since the charter was created did not destroy or even alter the school’s spiritual obligations. What had motivated the founders of the university would remain essential, as would a Vincentian presence.

The question was how this presence be would be defined. Laypersons had gradually become a larger part of every aspect of the university’s organization and programs. If laypeople could be more involved in determining university policies, they might also then provide greater material resources to support development. Between 1965 and 1967, Father Cortelyou considered how this could be achieved. Counselling by Father Richardson and the provincial, Father Fischer, as well as by his Vincentian colleagues, Father Cortelyou developed proposals that would result in a plan “more representative of the body being governed.”78 The Vincentians were simply formalizing what had been done since 1946 when the Lay Board of Trustees was created.79 Recognizing the changing nature of the faculty, administration, and student body, and relying on the inspiration of Vatican II, they proposed to alter the makeup of the Board of Trustees. They also cited the importance of the 1962 case in Maryland and the need to raise money from sources other than tuition. The university would still adhere to its religious orientation “along the bases of the Judaic-Christian tradition,” and it would pass on the “heritage of St. Vincent de Paul,” while remaining “intellectually free…. to distinguish between the pursuit of it and a commitment to it.”80

By November of 1967, the board had completed the revision. The former board would be transformed into a body called Members of the Corporation with the sole power to appoint the new Board of Trustees. The new Board of Trustees would become much larger than the former, and it would be dominated by laypeople with the power to determine the goals and policies of the university including the appointment of the president and

78 John R. Cortelyou, C.M., “Consideration of the DePaul University Board of Trustees Considering Charter Revisions,” 20 February 1967, in Cortelyou Mss. The same discussions occurred at many Catholic colleges and universities.
80 Ibid., p.2.
executive vice president. These two top executives would not necessarily be members of the Vincentian order. Since laypeople were now a majority of the new board, the former Board of Lay Advisors was abolished. It is worth noting that a high percentage of members were drawn from this old lay board.  

There were reservations. One Vincentian felt the lay dominance of the board over-represented the “moneyed class,” and that the lay members might emphasize financial concerns while sacrificing academic freedom. Father Cortelyou defended the new scheme by replying that the necessity of relying on contributions from Vincentians was over. He reiterated that the university required greater funding than what tuition could bring in.  

The qualitative and quantitative changes that took place at DePaul University from the 1960s to the 1990s resulted in an institution quite different from that which existed at its founding in 1897. The initial step that ignited these changes was the NCA threat to remove DePaul from its list of accredited institutions in 1950. When Catholic sociologist Father Andrew Greeley looked at DePaul in the late 1960s, he described it as a commuter school that took great pride in producing many lawyers who held city, county, and state positions. He thought its challenge would be to “combine scholastic excellence ... with

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81 “By-Laws of DePaul University” (1984) in Board of Trustees Mss. The first two presidents appointed under the new rules were Vincentians, but in 2017 the Board chose a layman as president.

82 Bruce Vawter, C.M., to John R. Cortelyou, C.M., 28 March 1967; John R. Cortelyou to Bruce Vawter, 11 April 1967, in Cortelyou Mss.
a distinctive atmosphere that facilitates personal growth.”

To meet this challenge, the university launched a series of initiatives. It restructured its undergraduate general education program, expanded its graduate and professional programs in commerce, music, and law, and added a huge new computer science college, as well as a drama school. Thus, a complex institution was born, one that constantly reviewed and updated its curricula to meet the demands of a rapidly changing society in post–World War II America. In four decades, DePaul emerged from its debts, its reliance solely on tuition, and its need for a constant supply of Vincentian priests to fill teaching and administrative functions. These former characteristics had limited the school’s physical expansion and curricular improvement. That change for the better occurred can be explained by a number of factors as follows:

1. The need to respond quickly and positively to the NCA challenge in order to maintain accreditation; and the willingness of Father O’Malley to begin a process of change that would alter the school.
2. The arrival of Fathers Cortelyou and Richardson, who understood the need for change and were willing to take the necessary steps to bring DePaul into the post–World War II world of American higher education.
3. The institutionalization of a regular planning process that would demonstrate to NCA that the university knew how to involve all its constituents in the review process and how to use this process to bring about change.
4. The determination to make fundamental changes to its general education program and to bring it under university-wide regulation.
5. The constant willingness to recognize shifts in the educational marketplace, and to introduce professional and graduate programs that would satisfy those needs, as well as aid in attracting students not only from the Chicago region, but also beyond.

In addition to the above, several other factors occurred within the larger sphere of American Catholicism that had a profound influence upon the university:

1. The challenge of the Vatican II council to the Vincentians to reexamine their activities and align them with the contemporary world.
2. The willingness of the Vincentian community to modify some of its structures and apostolates, and thereby adapt them to contemporary life.

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83 Greeley, *From Backwater to Mainstream*, pp. 26–27. Greeley’s view of DePaul at that moment is quite critical, but he offered some hope that the new undergraduate curriculum might “prompt the student to ask ultimate questions, and maintain some sort of environment of Christian community and morality.” See Ibid., p. 76.
3. The stimulus Vatican II provided American Catholic educational leaders, which spurred change in how institutions would be led and the improvement of programs.

4. The increased willingness of the federal government (and to a lesser degree, state government) to financially assist institutions and students in higher education. This was rooted in the GI Bill and the generous treatment the program accorded to World War II veterans.

5. The eagerness of institutions within Catholic higher education to adapt their policies so that they might better take advantage of new federal and state financial incentives.

As a result of a combination of the factors discussed in this article, both internal and external in nature, DePaul University evolved from “the little school under the El” to become one of America’s major Catholic universities. Several decades prior to the end of the twentieth century Father Theodore Hesburgh identified a number principles that might help distinguish Catholic higher education. Among them was the need to develop values that “would serve as constants with a great need to challenge our students to create a rather new kind of world, characterized by quite different social, economic, and political arrangements.”

The steps that DePaul University took from 1960 to 1990 served it and its students well in ultimately progressing to reach this goal.

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Aerial view, ca. 1908, of DePaul University’s Lincoln Park campus looking north from the corner of Webster and Sheffield Avenues.

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http://libservices.org/contentdm/index.php
Exterior of the Lewis Center from Wabash Avenue, ca. 1990. The building was acquired in 1955 through a gift from Mr. Frank J. Lewis and is the center for the College of Law.

Identifier dpubldg-200907-023, Les Boschke Photography
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Portrait of (from left to right) John T. Richardson, C.M., and John R. Cortelyou, C.M.
DePaul University Special Collections and Archives, Chicago, IL
John R. Cortelyou, C.M., president of DePaul University, and Benjamin J. Gingiss examine part of the Lincoln Collection. Photo ca. 1965.


http://libservices.org/contentdm/index.php
Students and faculty line the windows of the College of Liberal Arts, Levan Center, Lincoln Park campus, in a photo dated 1964.

Identifier CampusShots_1960’s_008
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The exterior of the Merle Reskin Theatre. Built in 1910, the former Blackstone Theatre was acquired by DePaul in 1988, and renamed in 1992. The venue featured performances by the Theater School as well as the School of Music.

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Students studying in the Lewis Center library in the 1960s.
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The groundbreaking ceremony for the Richardson Library, 1 June 1990, Fr. Richardson standing at far right; early 90s architect’s rendering of plans for the Richardson Library and Lincoln Park campus; and a view of the library’s construction underway in 1991 [Les Boschke Photography].

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Aerial views of the Lincoln Park campus from the 1950s, early 1970s, and 1990s reveal the growth and development of DePaul University over the last half of the twentieth century.

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A 1951 photograph captures Comerford J. O'Malley, C.M., seated at left, and a fellow priest examining a book.

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The site clearing ceremony held 1 April 1965 in preparation for construction of the Arthur J. Schmitt Academic Center. John T. Richardson, C.M., stands at far left, John R. Cortelyou, C.M., fourth from right, Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley second from right, and Comerford J. O'Malley, C.M., at far right.

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