When James Bryce undertook to describe American higher education in his classic of the late nineteenth century, *The American Commonwealth*, he was clearly torn between the fact and the potentiality. Conceding that American colleges were more like European secondary schools than like European universities, he nevertheless believed that of all American institutions, they were making the greatest progress and had the brightest future. “The higher learning,” he bravely concluded, “is in no danger.”

Certainly the American academic scene was a lively one when this century opened. For one thing, the variety and number of institutions must have struck an Englishman with great force. Unlike the periodic reformers of Oxford and Cambridge, American educators had traditionally founded competitive institutions when confronted by problems in an older one. Thus, there were 977 institutions of higher education in America. Small wonder that 80 percent of the colleges founded before the Civil War had not survived and that in 1900 the nation was again peppered with colleges of slight value and still slighter financial support.

The number of undergraduates increased from 232,000 to 346,000 between 1900 and 1910, but neither this growth nor the variety of the institutions produced heterogeneous student bodies. One acute historian has described the undergraduate population of 1900 as “a parade of Anglo-Saxon names and pale freshly scrubbed faces.” Co-education, not democratization, accounted for the increase in students. Women, who had first gained admission to college at Oberlin in 1833, had made their way rapidly and by 1900 constituted about 40 percent of American college students—a level they were to maintain, with occasional fluctuations, thereafter. Catholics, Jews, and Negroes were much slower to appear in significant numbers.

Negroes, in particular, could seldom aspire to a higher education;
and when they did, they found themselves compelled to attend segregated institutions, principally Southern colleges founded by Northern philanthropic foundations. The education they received usually lacked as much in relevance to their needs as it did in quality. Requiring training to better his economic opportunities, the Negro normally received poor instruction in a heritage in which he had no part and little interest.

Discontent with even the best institutions in the country was apparent in 1900. Instruction, curriculum, and the goals of higher education all came under fire. Educators complained that a materialistic culture and an idolization of the self-made man, combined with an imbalance in individual and regional distributions of wealth, produced students with little incentive for education. Football, fraternities, and social life overshadowed academic pursuits. But, clearly, part of the difficulty lay with the instruction. Lecturing to large classes with little or no discussion was a fairly recent and exciting innovation in the more progressive colleges, while the more conservative ones retained the older “recitation” method. Under these conditions, even the traditional stimuli, the threat of low grades or the rewards of high honors, left the majority of students unmoved.

The introduction of the lecture was one of several results of the influence of German universities. By the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of innovative educators in the United States had had German training. The German universities had opened American eyes to an education responding to the needs of society, without the restrictions of the traditional curriculum. Freedom to learn anything, to teach anything, and to organize any body of knowledge into an academic discipline was a revelation to scholars trained in rigid emphasis on mathematics and the classical languages. It opened the door to professional education, to research supporting it, and to a substantial proliferation of disciplines and specialties. The amateur gentleman-scholar began to give way to the Ph.D., and the stronger American colleges began to reorganize themselves along German lines as universities with graduate schools.

Following the German precedent of flexibility, the Americans had discarded the rigidly prescribed curriculum. Gradually the elective system had filtered down from the senior to the freshman year. Under the powerful influence of President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, it had spread across the country and was now the common practice of most colleges. But something was lost in the translation. The Lehr-
freiheit of German students was not precisely equivalent to the elective system of American students. American undergraduates, with less rigorous secondary educations, choose courses at random, with no regard for a coherent program. The controversy which arose from this "cafe-teria style" curriculum was unquestionably the principal issue in American higher education in 1900.

If the elective system was the eye of the storm, its periphery was filled with flying charges about the relative merits of universities and colleges, professional and liberal education, research and teaching, lecturing and tutoring. In 1908, Abraham Flexner published a devastating attack on German influences on American colleges. Flexner drew a sharp line between undergraduate and graduate education, insisting that lower level instruction in colleges had become so specialized that students could no longer obtain a broad foundation. Teachers trained as specialists and promoted on the basis of research taught as if their students were budding specialists. And lecturing to classes, a mode of instruction eminently suitable for advanced students, deprived the undergraduate of the essential contact with the teacher. In Flexner's view, all these trends were transforming the college into a graduate school.7

Flexner's book appeared just as an era of reform began. Eliot retired from Harvard, and his successor, A. L. Lowell, immediately began to restrict the elective system. A movement towards "groups" from which students could select subjects, gaining both diversity and concentration, began to develop until the present-day "major-minor" system became common. Woodrow Wilson at Princeton, before his defeat over the eating clubs and the autonomy of the graduate school, introduced the "preceptorial system," a tutorial arrangement clearly derivative from English, not German, universities. Big lectures did not disappear, but instruction rested chiefly on student reading on the subject of the lecture, supplemented by regular conferences with a preceptor. Significantly, the new program was a success from the start.8

Leadership in this period thus came from the more celebrated colleges which had evolved into universities during the past generation. Even the more prestigious colleges waited upon the new universities for guidance, and the rank-and-file colleges often were unaware of the pioneering of others. The majority of college students attended small denominational institutions across the country, continuing to enjoy the social life and to labor under the educational primi-
tiveness which was meeting such strong and imaginative opposition in the Northeast.

Another salient characteristic of the period is the virtual absence of any discussion of libraries. Regrettably, this oversight is fairly typical of the literature on higher education in America in any period; but it is startling that in this era of questioning and reform, with its new insistence on student reading, there is no significant mention of academic libraries. The fact is symptomatic, and the neglect was visible in the meager collections of even the largest institutions in the country. In 1900, Yale's library had only 285,000 volumes and Columbia's, 295,000. Buildings were no better, designed as they were for impressiveness rather than for function. The attitude towards libraries of the time appears in its purest form in President Eliot's 1901 annual report which suggested that Harvard's library should avoid the expense of a new building by throwing away those books it could not house.

World War I brought a pause in experimentation in higher education, but its end brought a new spurt of energy. Lecturing to large classes had become almost universal. The controversy over the elective system had largely passed, and the universities, along with professional and graduate education, were firmly established. The student population had doubled since 1900 and now stood at more than 500,000, representing over six percent of the college age group. However, student bodies still contained few black faces, and those rare Negroes fortunate enough to attend college still had, for the most part, to seek out the all-Negro institutions.

This great expansion in undergraduate population raised again two basic problems posed by Flexner about the nature of collegiate education. The first was the place of the college between secondary and graduate schools. The second was the challenge of instructing students in a common heritage in spite of the progressive fragmentation of knowledge. How could the college provide such numbers of students the individual instruction that Flexner had described? And how could it assure the general education which should precede specialization when, as Flexner had said, undergraduates were taught by specialists bent on training more specialists?

One solution that gained support rapidly was the junior college. Two-year institutions had first appeared in 1902, but their increase was not dramatic until President William R. Harper of the University of Chicago began to advocate their establishment in universities. Seizing
on this idea, state systems like California and Michigan gradually began to provide widely dispersed junior colleges which were nearer the student’s home and thus cheaper to attend and which could feed students to the state universities for their last two years. In 1922, there were 207 junior colleges with 16,000 students. Five years later, there were 325 with nearly 36,000 students.\(^{13}\)

The idea of the junior college moved into the liberal arts college with the presidency of Alexander Meiklejohn at Amherst. To restore the community of studies, Meiklejohn installed a prescribed course for the first two years. After a successful examination on this “junior college” program, the student moved on to the “senior college” for his last two years, with a concentration in one area or subject, largely through independent reading.\(^{14}\) Writing of this last, Meiklejohn said the only question to be asked about a college graduate was “Does he in his living depend upon books and does he use them effectively? . . . Is he an intelligent reader?”\(^{15}\)

Meiklejohn became Amherst’s president on the eve of the war, but in 1923, the Board of Trustees, influenced more by local personalities and politics than by educational philosophy, removed him from office. He moved to Wisconsin as Dean of the College and continued to pursue his original idea, with some modifications. His “experimental college” there attempted to marry instruction in the Western heritage to instruction in contemporary problems while retaining the junior college concept. It had a required curriculum which consisted of the study of an entire civilization of the past in the first year and a similar study of a modern civilization in the second year. Without any explicit connections between them, these courses were to lead the student to think independently of similarities and differences in the two subjects.\(^{16}\)

Meiklejohn was certainly a seminal influence in the period, but he was by no means alone. A number of distinguished colleges began honors programs with an eye to developing more independence and seriousness in their students. Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Smith, Wellesley, and Reed, were leaders in this movement. But Frank Aydelotte established unquestionably the best known and most influential program at Swarthmore when he became president there in 1922. Students entered honors at the beginning of their junior year and took a series of eight seminars on which they stood examinations by visiting scholars before graduation. Significantly, the student “read” for honors, as the Oxonian “reads” for his degree. Aydelotte had taken the flood of new students
after the war as a threat to quality education in America, had seen the wide variety of their abilities, and had devised an education to salvage the dedicated and more able students from the slower pace of their fellows.  

The innovations of the 1920's, unlike those before the war, came from the presidents of the liberal arts colleges themselves, not from university leaders. Understandably, they stressed the individual attention which the small liberal arts college could give to the student and focused attention on encouraging student initiative. This last point, reflected in the approximately seventy-five programs of independent study which sprang up in colleges after 1920, was one more effort to make undergraduate education distinctive from secondary education. In 1928, Aydelotte confidently—and with some accuracy—predicted that colleges of the next generation would be still more distinctive from secondary schools and hence would “assume more maturity in the student, allow him more freedom and insist upon more serious work.”

Attention to the student’s self-education brought renewed attacks on the lecture as an instructional method—not, as Flexner suggested, because it was designed for advanced students, but because it was not sufficiently intensive. This attack, in turn, prompted a more direct emphasis on the use of the library as an instrument of self-instruction. In fact, Silas Evans, President of Ripon College, anticipated present-day ideas and terminology when he declared, “The library is the container of the three great factors of education—the teacher, the student and the book. It would be more to the point to speak of the library college than of the college library.”

In 1928, the Carnegie Corporation, dangling grants-in-aid before college administrations, launched a program to encourage the integration of the library into instruction in liberal arts colleges. The Carnegie program eventually produced a series of studies of college libraries, including Charles Shaw’s *List of Books for College Libraries*. One of the more informative of these studies, *The College Library* by William Randall, was an examination of the contemporary state of college libraries. Randall, then associate professor of Library Science at Chicago, began his study based on personal visits as well as questionnaires to 200 college libraries in 1930, and his book appeared in 1932.

The situation he described was scarcely encouraging. Despite the change from the “textbook education” which was supposed to have prompted the study, he discovered that students simply did not have
even a rudimentary knowledge of library use. The book collections were poor: over half of the two hundred colleges examined had less than 30,000 volumes, most had only forty to sixty volumes per student. Nor was there any evidence of rational, systematic plans for the development of book collections of the sort the "Shaw List" attempted to encourage. Finally, the amount of support was woefully inadequate. Even in an age when the average cost per acquisition was $2.54, an average total budget of $9,100 and an average expenditure on books, periodicals, and binding of $3,900 was not sufficient to provide appropriate services and collections.23

Randall found a wide variety in the size and quality of library staffs, which seemed to be determined more by the size of the book collection than by the number of students to be assisted. Inadequate staffing was apparently a matter of indifference to many college administrators, who made a practice of hiring librarians recently graduated from library school at a low, fixed salary, with the intention of replacing them by the same method when they moved on to more rewarding positions. Randall concluded that staff emphasis on books rather than students, reflected in fastidious concern for cataloging and classification and neglect of public services, was due to the library schools. He made the dire prediction that college libraries would fail, no matter how precise their technical skills, if they did not acquire the right books and did not assure contact between the student and those books.24

Half of the buildings visited had stack capacities of less than 30,000 volumes, and the average capacity was just under 50,000 volumes. Although there had been building spurts in the years from 1904 to 1908 and again from 1924 to 1928, almost all the buildings then in use, Randall reported, had the common fault of a single reading room which had to serve as reference room, study-hall, and periodical room. In many, the same room contained the circulation desk as well. Yet, for all this cramping of public spaces, Randall found that the buildings' provisions for cataloging and administration fell into two categories: inadequate and none. The one hopeful feature was that half the buildings now provided for open shelves, although most still retained the traditional stack block or room.25

In view of his findings, it is not surprising that Randall ended his book with a set of standards covering all phases of library work, followed by a peroration calling for more attention to and expenditure on college libraries. With these guidelines in mind, presumably, the
trustees of the Carnegie Corporation made grants to eighty-three colleges totalling $1,011,000 for the improvement of book collections in the lean year of 1933.28

In the disintegrating world of the depression, education split into factions over the old question of whether collegiate education should perpetuate traditional values to counterbalance the accelerating fragmentation of knowledge or address itself to urgent contemporary problems. The controversy polarized around the ideas of John Dewey, who had been an influence in American education since the beginning of the century, and Robert Hutchins, the young President of the University of Chicago. In brief, Dewey pressed the view that education was problem-solving—a part of life—and should address itself to the problems of the contemporary day and society. In contrast, Hutchins defined education as the study of the problems which had been analyzed since the beginning of history and the unchanging truths which he saw embodied in the “classics.”

Both men desired a reorganization of curricula. Hutchins implemented his ideas in the program at Chicago, where he reorganized the curriculum into four large blocks—biological sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Ordinarily, the student was to spend his first three years on these broad studies and his fourth in special tutorials, although he could advance through any stage by examination.27 Dewey called for the reorganization of the curriculum around problems or situations, a constant re-ordering of contemporary experience, instead of traditional classifications. With no administrative position, he had to rely largely on the experimental colleges of the 1930’s to implement his ideas. Several new colleges—Black Mountain, Bennington, Sarah Lawrence—clearly showed his influence, while two older ones, Goddard and Bard, reorganized along the lines of his ideas.

Ironically, Dewey’s own institution, Columbia, became closely associated with the general education which Hutchins was at pains to assure. During World War I, Columbia established a course in contemporary civilization which cut across departmental lines and engaged instructors from several disciplines. Later, in the Meiklejohn tradition, it became a two-year sequence, with the first year devoted to historical studies and the second to current problems. Still later, similar sequences were created for the natural sciences and humanities. Columbia thus became closely identified with the general education movement, and its program was widely copied.
The Hutchins-Dewey controversy was still very much alive when World War II broke out, and a wartime truce was declared as colleges struggled to survive the absence of male students, with the help of training programs by the armed services. A reconciliation of the conflict was hoped for in the study of Harvard's curriculum which appeared in 1944, but the results were disappointing. The famous "Red Book" was more eclectic than reconciling, and educators found themselves without a clear guide to the future in this regard.28

The extensive report of the Truman Commission on Higher Education in 1947 was no more helpful on curricular questions. Rather, it diverted attention to equally pressing but more concrete problems. By the time of its publication, institutions of higher education were facing the hordes of postwar students, including the veterans attending college on the G.I. Bill. There were 2,400,000 undergraduates in 1948, an increase of 1,000,000 over 1940.29 Even so, the Commission reported that one-third of the college age population was capable of doing college work and that the financial support necessary to eliminate the waste of those unable to attend could have only one possible source: the federal government.30

Liberal arts colleges constituted a sizeable portion of the total resources for higher education in the country. In 1948-49, there were 453 independent liberal arts colleges accredited. Of these, nine out of ten were under private control, and eight out of ten were church-affiliated. State colleges, which had formerly been exclusively teachers colleges, had been swelling the ranks of the public institutions during the 1940's, as they adopted four year liberal arts programs.31

The new demands on higher education inevitably put a strain on library resources. The war introduced a sharp increase in the demand for librarians, which has continued until the present. Supported by this unprecedented need for its services and recognizing the growing complexities of library work, the profession upgraded its professional education from the bachelor's degree to the master's. Moreover, cooperation between libraries for further exploitation of total resources increased, and librarians called on the technology of microreproduction to overcome deficiencies in collections at a minimum cost in space.

Innovations in building were perhaps most obvious. The long delays in building because of the depression and the war and the developments in construction techniques which occurred during the war made a natural prelude to a new era of library buildings. The most influential new idea of the period was modular construction, which first
JAMES F. GOVAN

became prominent around 1940. Flying in the face of the traditional belief that high vaulted ceilings were essential to large spaces, the modular building was based on uniform cubic units put together to form the whole structure. Its greatest advantage was that it permitted flexibility, since each of these units could be converted to other functions by simply moving partitions. Moreover, it provided convenient methods for ventilation, lighting, and heating, through its use of duct-work. The end of the war also brought fluorescent lighting and air conditioning, two features which had been used sparingly in the pre-war period, into much wider use in conjunction with modular construction.

The years since 1950 have been notable particularly for the changes in the undergraduate population. From the 1950 total of a little less than 2,000,000, this population had increased to an estimated 5,800,000 by 1967. Furthermore, the homogeneity which once was unmistakable has steadily declined. Catholics and Jews had found free admission to all institutions after World War I. Now a series of Supreme Court decisions, culminating in the outlawing of segregation in education in 1954, began to open the doors first of graduate and then of undergraduate schools to Negroes. However, the old problem of preparation for college, which white students gradually overcame in a half century, continued to plague the Negro student. As a result, half of the Negro undergraduates still attend all-Negro institutions, and the other half at present constitutes only 2.5 percent of the total student population, according to the best estimates.

These years also witnessed a renewed interest in school curricula and new methods of instruction; so that not only did more high school graduates enter college, but they were better prepared for college work. Advanced placement and advanced standing, with accompanying reductions in the undergraduate program, became normal practice. At the same time, it became apparent that the bachelor's degree was no longer terminal, and an increasing proportion of undergraduates planned to go on to professional or graduate school.

Challenged from below and above, college educators once again became concerned about the place of the undergraduate college and liberal studies in higher education. Once more it was suggested that liberal arts colleges were either high-powered secondary schools or merely preparatory schools for graduate schools. Nationally known scholars from universities did not hesitate to predict their virtual de-
College administrators themselves were quick to admit the almost insurmountable problems of competing for funds when graduate schools could so much more easily demonstrate a direct benefit to industry and government. Competition with larger institutions for faculty intensified. And perhaps in the cruelest blow of all, students began to complain that introductory and survey courses were simply repetitions of their high school work.

As in the past, the colleges have responded positively. In the last decade, they have introduced a wide variety of curricular innovations, most of which stress some form of independent study. These curricular reforms have had the effect of providing the student more stimulation, of fashioning his education more precisely to his individual needs, and, hopefully, of increasing the time students can spend in learning without faculty supervision. Programs in Monteith College, New College at Hofstra, Florida Presbyterian, Grand Valley State College, Florida Atlantic, Goddard, Colby, Macalester, Earlham, Bard, New College (Florida), and the University of California at Santa Cruz—to name a few prominent instances—have programs in which independent study is an essential ingredient.

No longer do only the better students have the opportunity for independent work, as in the honors programs of the 1920's and 1930's. Students of all levels of ability are now undertaking self-education successfully. Nor does independence today mean the simple attachment of a research project to the normal academic program. In addition to tutorials, student-directed seminars, and reading courses, colleges now are experimenting with optional class attendance and credit through examination.

Subject matter has changed no less than academic regulations. Interestingly enough, while the pressure for specialization continues to be great, the new, experimental colleges have clearly preserved the ideal of a broad, liberal education. But they have found new approaches to it. The traditional preoccupation with covering the entire subject field, however superficially, has given way to narrower studies in depth. Interdisciplinary majors have developed, and area studies have become common. In this second group, non-Western studies have now become as available on many college campuses as they once were only at the large universities. At the same time, colleges have admitted the study of situations closer to home, permitting students to use local communities as laboratories in an effort to expose them to education as a continuing experience outside the groves of Academe. These new
approaches may yet bring a resolution to the Hutchins-Dewey conflict. While all these innovations have been feasible because of the size of college student bodies, the advantages of smallness have always carried with them distinct disadvantages, as we have seen. To overcome these drawbacks, the idea of cluster colleges, first attempted at Claremont College in 1925, has gained much recent support. The cluster college consists of a group of small, virtually autonomous colleges in league to provide the benefits of a larger institution's faculty and facilities. This pattern has appealed particularly to large progressive state systems which must accommodate large student bodies. There are now at least fifty examples of this ingenious structure.86

Much the same sentiment has been behind the growing tendency for intercollegiate cooperation. Large regional organizations have grown up since World War II for the sharing of problems, suggested solutions, and, on a limited scale, facilities. Professional cooperation of various sorts has long been part of American academic life, but inter-institutional cooperation for common goals is now at a level never reached previously and is still growing. It is one of the most promising phenomena of the contemporary educational scene.

These recent changes certainly indicate a viable and active community of liberal arts colleges. And yet a recent contributor to the Journal of Higher Education complained that most colleges and universities adhere to the system of departments, credits, lectures, and examinations, devised around 1900 and pointed out the paradox of this conservatism in institutions which generate much of the knowledge that causes change.87 Both assertions seem valid. For American higher education continues to encompass a wide range of quality and structure. Furthermore, this variety will unquestionably be with us in the foreseeable future, if one authority's estimate that there will be 500 to 1000 new institutions by the end of the century proves true.88

It is fairly clear that, as the Truman Commission indicated, the federal government will have to play a significant role in the support of these colleges. Federal support in one form or another has been a part of American higher education since the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862. It has been particularly important since World War II and the passage of the G.I. Bill, and in the last decade, it has become a permanent feature. Beginning with the National Defense Education Act of 1958, there has been a flow of legislation supporting higher education which has reached new dimensions in the last five years. Whereas government support for higher education amounted to ap-
proximately $20,500,000 in 1930 and nearly $39,000,000 in 1940, it has been estimated that expenditures under the National Defense Education Act alone had reached $2,800,000,000 by June, 1968.89

Academic libraries have received substantial amounts of this support. In 1963, the Higher Education Facilities Act provided for federal grants and loans for construction of academic facilities, and it was estimated that libraries would account for $669,000,000 under this legislation by the end of 1966.40 In 1965, Congress passed the Higher Education Act, covering a wide variety of library concerns from buildings to collections, from cooperative projects to library education. Its most widely appreciated provision was Title IIA, under which grants for improving book collections were obtainable. In the first year, fiscal year 1966, the appropriation for these grants was $10,000,000, and, in the two subsequent years, was $25,000,000.

Certainly this expenditure was wise, for on the eve of the legislation, in 1963, seventy-five percent of the undergraduate libraries in the United States failed to meet minimum American Library Association standards.41 Librarians in liberal arts colleges, attempting to keep abreast of the expanding curricula and the new instructional methods of their institutions, have confronted a Scylla of rising book prices and a Charybdis of increased book production. The average book price in America rose approximately 50 percent in the decade following 1957, from $5.29 to $7.99. And the total book production more than trebled in the twenty years from 1947 to 1967, from slightly over 9,000 titles to slightly over 28,000 titles.42 In the light of these figures, it is not surprising that budgetary increases normally do not provide any expansion of coverage of subject matter, so that the addition of new subject areas like non-Western studies has put a severe strain on the acquisitions programs of most college libraries.

These pressures, among others, have inspired renewed interest in interlibrary cooperation. Cooperative efforts to spread the benefits of limited resources have been characteristic of the library profession from the beginning of the century when the interlibrary loan code and the Library of Congress printed cards were the two pillars on which it rested. Now with the report of the President's National Advisory Commission on Libraries (1968), there is hope that eventually a national mobilization of library resources through a bibliographic network will evolve.

Assistance from the federal government has probably had more effect in the construction of new libraries than in any other realm.
Marching hand-in-hand with technological advances, library architecture in the last decade has provided improved temperature and humidity control, better lighting, and greater individual seating. It is revealing that designs of new buildings, in contrast to the buildings in use and under construction when the century opened, reflect the emphasis on individual and independent study, placing the student as near the open-stack collection as possible and affording him relatively secluded space in which to work.

The library clearly has a vital role to play in the college of the future. In fact, the most experimental of the experimental colleges is the proposal of the library-college with its virtual merger of college and library. Here, if anywhere, the student would be the center of education, and the full development of his ability to teach himself as well as of his curiosity could become the actual, not merely the professed, goal of collegiate education. This idea, which was first advanced in the early 1930's, is now gaining more support than ever before and, with its essential consistency with the educational Zeitgeist, may now become a real force among the colleges.

Of late, the proponents of the library-college have put special stress on the use of new media and have begun to refer to the “learning center” or “multi-media center,” not the library. Librarians who remain contentedly centered in the Gutenberg Galaxy may find this thinking, as well as the phrasing, offensive. But one has to recognize that many of the new media not only provide an added dimension to learning but are peculiarly adaptable to independent study.

Twenty-five years ago, a college president remarked that the libraries had fought for forty years to get the college out of the library and would fight for the next forty years to get it back. The prophecy has turned out to be true, in large measure, although the basis on which the college returns will be presumably different from the previous basis. But this is not the only point on which we have come full circle. The old quarrel over electives and majors and minors is with us now in the form of disputes over class attendance, grades, and credits. Above all, the problem of general education versus specialization, of liberal arts versus professional education, that concerned Flexner and Eliot, Hutchins and Dewey, now concerns Arrowsmith and Barzun. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

The difference, perhaps, is that the age when dramatic change flowed from one leader’s ideas is over. The Wilsons and Lowells, the Aydelottes and Meiklejohns can no longer wield such wide influence.
Collegiate Education: Past and Present

The proper degree of order and design, if it is to come, will have to emerge from the consensus of the academic community. At the moment, while the variety and energy which Bryce praised is still very apparent, the design for a new educational order is still forming.

References

3. Ibid., pp. 210-211.
5. Ibid., p. 272.
16. Ibid., pp. 68-69.


