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Deans of Women in U.S. Higher Education

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DEANS OF WOMEN IN U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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B.S., University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, 2014

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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This paper traces the role of deans of women in institutions of higher education in the United States, spanning from the 1800s until the position's decline in the 1960s. Deans of women played a pivotal role in advocating for college women, helping them receive access to housing, student organizations, and academic programs originally open only to their male peers. As the position became a staple on campuses across the country, deans of women created organizations, conferences, and journals with the hope of sharing their experiences with other deans, and setting professional standards. After World War II, the role of deans of women declined due to a variety of reasons, including the increase of veterans on campus and the rise of the dean of men position. While deans of women disappeared from most campuses by the late 1960s, their professional organizations and standards created a foundation for the field of Student Affairs.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Elaine and Jerry, who have both taken advantage of every opportunity possible to communicate their love and support for me. Thank you for many years of guidance and encouragement. I am proud to be your daughter.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1800s, higher education in the United States found itself rapidly changing in response to shifting societal views, an emerging focus on public education, and new economic needs (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2004). As institutions created campuses, regulations, and coursework based off these needs, college and university administrators found themselves facing a challenging student population they felt unequipped and unwilling to serve-women. Armed with the newfound freedom to an education, women poured into the first women's institutions, referred to as seminaries, and eventually coeducational colleges and universities, many of them formerly men's institutions (Horowitz, 1984). Unable to turn these women away, due to a need for individuals who could both pay tuition and eventually work for low wages, colleges and universities reluctantly enrolled them, often denying them access to the full scope of the university, ignoring their need for housing, social activities, and support.

Women's entrance into higher education did not come easily, however, and sentiments against women's education and coeducation quickly rose. Some warned of racial suicide, fearing that white women's reproductive organs would shrivel under the stress of an education, preventing them from fulfilling their expected role of motherhood (Nidiffer, 2000; Peril, 2006). Others worried about the effects of leaving college women and men together unsupervised, fearing both premarital sex and the feminization of men, along with hesitations towards "wasting" resources viewed as rightfully belonging to male students (Clarke, 1873). Women's rights activists and early women's organizations were quick to refute these claims, citing potentially positive outcomes of admitting women into colleges and universities.

Unsure how to work with college women, seen as entirely different from college men, male administrators sought the help of their peers' wives, or women in the campus community to provide support and care for these students. Hired under a variety of titles, such as matron or preceptress, institutions began to seek out women who they believed could provide a sort of mothering role for both women students in need of guidance, and (at coeducational institutions) male students with a reputation for disobedience (Nidiffer, 2000). For male administrators, having a woman in this role at least gave the impression that he cared about the needs of college women. For nervous parents sending their daughters away to college for the first time in history, a dean of women's presence on campus comforted them, as the role provided the maternal guidance they felt college women required. As these roles grew to be a staple on campuses across the nation, their name changed to deans of women.

Originally hired to oversee women students, many deans of women found themselves working under the command of a president who had not thought about what her role would entail. Although she usually took on the kinds of tasks that male administrators did not care to complete—controlling college student sexuality, addressing student misconduct, and preserving traditional notions of marriage and motherhood—a dean of women's role quickly changed (Nidiffer, 2000; Tuttle, 1996). From creating buildings on campus for women and advising extracurricular groups, to rallying women to support war efforts and counseling students and faculty, deans of women proved their pinnacle role on campus as an advocate for the students they served (Bentley, 1948; Nidiffer, 2000; Tuttle, 1996). They demanded physical space for college women, in the form of residence halls or women's buildings, as well as intellectual space, in the form of academic programs and support from administrators, faculty, and college men.

Before long, these women recognized the needs for professional organizations, both to help them network with their peers across the country, and to create consistency in the profession (Gerda, 2004; Tuttle, 1996). What followed was the creation of professional organizations on the local, state, regional, and national level, conferences, publications, coursework, and a degree; all designed to assist emerging deans in having a smoother transition to the role than those pioneering the position had experienced. Deans of women used these avenues to share their experiences and their philosophies, many of which focused on similar themes of advocacy, support, self-government, and individualized approaches.

For many women, life as a dean provided them with a momentum that carried into their post-deaning lives (Gerda, 2004; Tuttle, 1996). After decades of service to their institutions, some deans founded their own, or became college and university presidents, while others worked with organizations both related to and not related to education (Gerda, 2004; Nidiffer, 2000). The 1940s and 1950s, however, showed a decline in deans of women on campus. During this decline came the short-lived career of deans of men, hired in response to deans of women to oversee college men. Armed with ideals born from their military experiences, and believing that their natural talents would result in success, deans of men crafted their own positions from scratch, similar to what deans of women had done (Schwartz, 1997, 2003).

In response to the student personnel movement and a desire for increased efficiency on campuses across the nation, the dean of women role began to change to a general dean of students position (typically filled by a man), combining with the dean of men position created decades after them (Schwartz; 1997, 2003; Tuttle, 1996). While most dean of women positions on campus disappeared by the 1960s and 1970s, some credit their professional organizations and guiding philosophies as the foundation for the field of Student Affairs, however their stories are

largely left out of the history of the field. Others draw parallels between deans of women and the women's centers and women's studies departments that emerged on campuses with similar goals to provide opportunities and support for college women (Nidiffer, 2000).

Deans of women undoubtedly played a pivotal role the history of women within higher education in the United States. From justifying women's education to naysayers, to butting heads with college and university presidents over resources, their fearless advocacy carved out a space for college women at institutions across the country. Reading their words-the way they narrate their struggles, successes, priorities, and approaches to developing students-provides insight to their legacies that forever changed the landscape of higher education and women's ability to access it.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

While women have arguably always been a part of institutions of higher education, even if they were not being formally admitted or granted degrees, women's access to higher education in the United States as students began in the early 1800s. Post-Revolution attitudes towards education, backed by President Thomas Jefferson, claimed that educated citizens were essential to upholding democracy (Gerda, 2004). Societal views at this time deemed education for women permissible, only if women used what they learned in accordance with traditional gender roles. One topic considered appropriate for women to learn was religion, since many believed that an educated mother in return, would be able to educate her own and others' children on the subject (Horowitz, 1984; Peril, 2006). The potential for this educated motherhood (commonly referred to as republican motherhood), and the belief that women had morals superior to that of men and children, were used as justification for women's access to knowledge about religion, modern languages, and a handful of other subjects (Horowitz, 1984; Palmieri, 1997).

Kerber (1976) elaborates on the idea of separate public and private spheres. The public sphere, viewed as belonging to men, included participation in education and politics. The private sphere, viewed as women's rightful place, included work within the home. The notion of republican motherhood "recognized women's choices and women's work did serve large social and political purposes, and that recognition was enough to draw the traditional women's 'sphere' somewhat closer to men's 'world'" (Kerber, 1988, p. 20).

Kerber (1976) points out the gendered beliefs that confined women to this private sphere, such as the belief that women who sought involvement in the public sphere, especially

politics, “deny their sexual identity” (p. 195). Kerber specifically highlights the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Henry Home, both 18th century philosophers, who expressed concern at the possibility of allowing women to participate in the public sphere, and claimed that this would masculinize women.

Palmieri (1997) details three periods that significantly influenced women’s access to higher education: the Romantic Period, the Reform Era, and the Progressive Era. During the Romantic period, lasting from 1820 until 1860, Puritan ideals of womanhood casting women as delicate and incapable of intellectualism began to shift. The romanticism of the era often worked in women’s favor, celebrating women who possessed an education as superior to those without. Romantic motherhood emerged as a new ideal in hopes that women would receive an education in order to educate children in religious teachings. Between 1860 and 1890, during the Reform era, demographic shifts in some areas resulted in more women than men and influenced societal attitudes towards singlehood. Single women with an education were more socially acceptable than their single, non-educated peers. The Progressive Era, lasting from 1890 to 1920, included heavy backlash against women’s education, with fears rising over women’s physical and mental capabilities, as well as racial superiority. The impact on women’s education experienced throughout these eras influenced attitudes towards, and women’s access to, colleges and universities.

Creation of and Resistance to Women’s Education

Early institutions of higher education, referred to as seminaries, aimed to prepare men for ministry roles. The creation of female seminaries occurred in a similar vein, focusing on preparing women for a lifetime of teaching within the classroom as well as the home (Horowitz, 1984; Palmieri, 1997; Peril, 2006). These institutions emerged primarily in the New England

states during the Revolutionary period, with financial support from a variety of sponsors including religious groups, private donors, and entire towns. Curriculum within these seminaries for women rarely offered courses in Greek, Latin, or the liberal arts—subjects only offered to those attending institutions for men. Instead, women typically studied “history, philosophy, modern languages, and the natural sciences” (Horowitz, 1984, p. 11). The year 1821 marked the opening of one of the first schools for women in the United States, the Troy Female Seminary, founded by Emma Willard with support from citizens of Troy, New York (Peril, 2006). Troy Female Seminary offered mathematics and science, in addition to the subjects offered by traditional male seminaries. In the decades following the opening of Troy Female Seminary came the founding of numerous additional seminaries, which evolved to become women’s colleges and coeducational institutions, such as the Hartford Female Seminary in 1823, Ipswich Female Seminary in 1828, and Mount Holyoke in 1837 (Horowitz, 1984; Peril, 2006). The structure of many of these seminaries mirrored that of asylums, with strict daily routines, mandatory chapel attendance, community meals, and designated times for rising in the morning and lights out in the evening (Horowitz, 1984).

Resistance to women’s education came in a variety of forms including fears of interference with traditional gender roles, reproductive health issues, coupling, feminization and race suicide. Edward H. Clarke’s book *Sex in Education: Or, a Fair Chance for the Girls* (1873) was widely used in arguments against educating women, as well as coeducation. He claimed that women’s brains were inferior to men’s, and that too much mental stimulation or physical activity would cause their reproductive systems to become underdeveloped, or shut down entirely (Clarke, 1873; Peril, 2006). Clarke, a retired medical professor from Harvard, based his claims on a study of only seven Vassar women, prompting speculation of the validity of his

statements (Gerda, 2004). While Clarke's research methods make his results seem unbelievable at best, his claims became the core of arguments against women's education and coeducation, creating real barriers for women looking to attend a college or university. With reproduction considered women's primary role in society, anything viewed as interfering with this became problematic, and believable, in the eyes of the public.

This focus on reproduction was accompanied by fears of race suicide, or the fear that educated white women would not marry or produce children, either as a result of malfunctioning reproductive systems predicted by Clarke (1873) or because they were attending universities instead of becoming mothers and wives. If a woman did attend a college or university, her family generally expected her to marry within three years of graduation, if not sooner (Solomon, 1985). For many women, graduating onto a career and singlehood was not an admirable option. Those opposed to women's education argued that this lack of procreation amongst white women would be akin to committing racial suicide, threatening white dominance over people of color, assumed to have higher rates of reproduction (Nidiffer, 2000).

Movement and Resistance to Co-Education

The movement from single sex institutions to coeducational colleges and universities occurred because of a few key factors that happened within a relatively short period, including women's rights activism, the Morrill Act of 1862, and changing economic needs. These factors encouraged newly formed colleges and universities to open their doors as coeducational institutions, and formerly single sex institutions to welcome a student population that they might be unprepared and unwilling to serve (Nidiffer, 2000; Tuttle, 1996). Just as opposition to women's education formed with a focus on upholding whiteness and male dominance, an opposition to coeducation with similar concerns emerged. As women's opportunities for

education expanded, they generally had three different options of institutions to attend: women's institutions, coeducational colleges and universities, or coordinate colleges.

Women's rights activists of the 1800s played a key role in the creation of women's education, as well as the national trend toward coeducation. Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, among others, viewed equal education for college men and women as a step towards equal rights (Eschbach, 1993). Middle-class feminists generally saw education as a stepping-stone to improving other conditions for women, in both the public and private sphere (Nidiffer, 2000). Using "the abolition of slavery as a metaphor for their own struggle" women's rights activists positioned women's education as the next big issue in the United States that needed addressing (Alemán & Renn, 2002). White male abolitionists, who deserted women's suffrage causes to focus on the mistreatment of Black men, viewed formal education for women as a reward for their contributions during the Civil War (Solomon, 1985). Women's rights activists additionally worried that maintaining separate institutions for the education of men and women would have disastrous consequences, for both college men and women.

First, women's rights activists thought that these separate spaces would prevent women from having access to an education that was comparable to that of their male peers. Their fears were not unfounded, given that many institutions had courses or degrees designed specifically to meet women's perceived needs. Van Doren's College for Young Ladies, for example, granted women a "Mistress of Polite Literature" (M.P.L) degree, which differed from the literature degrees granted to students at predominantly male institutions (Peril, 2006). Women's rights activists thought that coeducational institutions and courses would be a much-needed step towards equality, since both men and women would be receiving the same level of instruction

(Rosenberg, 1988). When Oberlin Collegiate Institute of Ohio became the first coeducational institution in 1833, however, it continued to push women onto a special degree track for female students that included less rigorous classes in topics such as sewing or drawing. Oberlin did not begin granting bachelor's degrees to women until 1841 (Alemán & Renn, 2002).

Women's rights activists during this time were also concerned with the effect that separate institutions had on students' attitudes towards sex. They claimed that single sex institutions and classrooms created a preoccupation with sex among students. Coeducation, in their opinion, would create healthier attitudes towards sex. Coeducational supporters suggested that women's presence, viewed as more morally sound than men's, would have a positive impact on male students. Some believed that coeducation would change the characteristically unruly behavior of college men-known for their violent brawls and intense competition between classes. Just as society viewed colonial women as morally superior to men, thus more capable of educating children, it viewed women students as possessing the unique power of controlling the behavior of their male peers (Horowitz, 1984; Peril, 2006).

The Morrill Act of 1862 transformed numerous aspects of higher education, one of the most notable being the profound growth of public higher education. This growth, along with increasing business opportunities for men, created a new need for teachers who would work for low wages. Those supporting coeducation used nineteenth century views depicting women as morally superior (the same views that allowed for the creation of female seminaries), as justification for the need for public schools to become coeducational. By the mid-1800s, numerous men's institutions began opening their doors to female students (Nidiffer, 2000; Tuttle, 1996).

In the decades following the Morrill Act of 1862, coeducation quickly grew to become the norm in the United States, primarily in the Midwest and West. By 1872, 97 colleges and universities began admitting women (Rosenberg, 1988). In 1870, 11,000 women in the United States attended institutions of higher education, 41.1% of them enrolled at coeducational institutions; 1890, these numbers grew to 56,300, with 70.1% of these women attending coeducational institutions (Newcomer, 1959). By 1920, college women made up approximately half of the entire population of undergraduate students in the United States (Bashaw, 1999). As women's enrollment numbers surpassed men's, those against coeducation worried that they would continue rising, and eventually force coeducational colleges and universities to become women's institutions. Institutions located in southern states, however, were generally less willing to become coeducational because of conservative values regarding sex and gender roles (Rosenberg, 1988). Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) generally supported coeducation earlier in their history because of low funding (Alemán & Renn, 2002).

Becoming coeducational was also a beneficial economic investment for men's institutions, since maintaining separate spaces for men and women was too costly. Institutions simply could not afford to turn away women students who could afford to pay tuition, especially if men's enrollment numbers were low as a result of the war (Alemán & Renn, 2002). During the Civil War, an increasing need both for teachers, and for individuals who were willing to work for low wages, necessitated that women have access to formerly men's colleges and universities (Nidiffer, 2000; Tuttle, 1996).

While a movement towards co-education allowed women to enroll in institutions only their male peers previously could attend, they did not have access to the full scope of the academy in the same ways. As Jana Nidiffer (2000) points out, when discussing women's

entrance into higher education, “There is a difference between *access*-simply getting in-and what I term *genuine access*-experiencing the full panoply of what the university has to offer on terms similar to those for the dominant population” (p. 3). While college women had basic access to colleges and universities, male peers and faculty did not fully accept them. As Nidiffer (2000) points out, this prevented college women from “genuine access” such as equal access to some academic programs and campus resources.

In addition to single-sex and coeducational institutions, coordinate colleges represented a third option for women students. Coordinate colleges-separate colleges that had a partnership with men’s institutions-created a “separate but equal” stance that allowed institutions to continue to collect money from women without abandoning their desire for single-sex education. One example of a coordinate college was The Annex, created by Harvard University in 1879. While the same faculty that taught these women educated their male peers at Harvard, the women’s degrees listed The Annex as their institution (Rudolph, 1990; Howells, 1978, in Gerda, 2004, p. 16).

Most colleges and universities failed to provide female students with the same resources, in addition to different academic experiences, including medical care, on campus housing, and exercise facilities (Nidiffer, 2000). Many state institutions modeled themselves after German universities (or at least how administrators perceived them to operate) by not providing housing on campus (Eisenmann, 1998). Between 1870 and 1880, most state universities lacked housing for women due to both financial constraints and an unwillingness to house them, forcing women to seek out boarding houses or host families within the campus community. Institutions without housing for women on campus generally did not hire deans of women, since the students they would serve did not reside on campus. Universities granted very few scholarships to women,

claiming that this would be a waste of resources viewed as belonging to male students (Nidiffer, 2000). This fueled the creation of women's clubs and partnerships with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), who raised money to support women's education.

In addition to financial and housing barriers, women also encountered barriers in the classroom when interacting with faculty possessing anti-coeducation sentiments. Male faculty members often showed resistance to women's presence in the classroom by referring to both male and female students as gentlemen, and addressing women students as "Mister" ignoring their gender entirely (Nidiffer, 2000). Women now had access to institutions that previously turned them away, but did not possess the genuine access (or acceptance) of which Nidiffer (2000) wrote. The support and resources women students (and deans of women) fought for were the same support and resources male students had come to expect.

Despite a campus climate that was chilly, to say the least, women students continued to pour into colleges and universities, recognizing that the opportunities available to them through an education were enormous in comparison to those accessible by their non-student peers. Male students were often unwelcoming to college women, and prevented women's participation in student activities, such as creation of the yearbook (Rosenberg, 1988). Women's presence on campus, because of economic need, often upset their male peers. Men saw women's attendance as a reminder of their own inability to afford to attend northeastern men's institutions-which had enough money to avoid becoming coeducational.

It is important to note that while many institutions reluctantly admitted women, some successfully included them by simultaneously maintaining coeducational and single-sex spaces. The University of Chicago, for example, expressed experiencing success by having coeducational classes, but social spaces separated by sex (Thelin, 2004). For many women

students, however, their transition to these colleges and universities was difficult. Without support of a dean of women, faculty, or the institution as a whole, women students needed to rely on each other when navigating the unfamiliar coeducational institution. Chapters of Women's Leagues popped up at various universities, providing entertainment opportunities for students, settings for them to network with their peers, and most importantly, support (Indiana University, 1897, in Nidiffer, 2000). Women's League chapter members typically met a new female student at the train station upon her arrival, to welcome her and help her find housing within the campus community.

Those against coeducation utilized views similar to those used in arguments against women's education. While mental and physical exertion could occur at both women's and coeducational institutions, Edward Clarke strongly believed that the latter would be the more likely culprit (Clarke, 1873). In 1873, he warned that the presence of males and females in the same academic space would fuel competition, making it possible that women would over exert themselves competing with their male peers. Interestingly enough, Clarke separated women's *education* from women's *rights*, claiming that what was most important was what was good for society as a whole, not for individual women (Clarke, 1873). In this case, Clarke considered women fulfilling their expectation of becoming wives and mothers to be best for society.

Similar to the parents of female students, Clarke worried about the possibility of sex occurring between male and female students (Clarke, 1873). Parents also worried that women would choose an unsuitable partner, or one with poor morals, while away from home and without the supervision of her family (Peril, 2006). Many of the duties later assigned to deans of women reflected these fears. Those in opposition to coeducation assumed that most women attended institutions of higher education to obtain a husband, and they argued that women who

married before finishing their degrees, who would likely drop out to fill the homemaker role, were a waste of resources that could be given to college men.

As women entered the institution, the traditional curriculum expanded to include domestic science courses (known more commonly as home economics), “child psychology, marriage and family studies, social work, settlement work, poverty, and charity” (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 27). Men began choosing areas of study that strayed from gendered expectations, feeding fears about the feminization of higher education that was occurring because of female students. Men flocked to science programs, which were just beginning to emerge, and women entered sociology and language programs (originally assumed as too advanced for them to comprehend).

With opinions against coeducation continuing to rise, the belief that female students required heightened supervision increased as well (Nidiffer, 2000). Facing an expanding and unwelcome student population, college and university administrators struggled to find a solution to heightened tensions on campus and in the community. Their solution was a new position—one that would address the needs of college women while also addressing the fears and anxieties towards coeducation and women’s presence in higher education.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORIGINS OF THE DEAN OF WOMEN

While women eagerly entered what were formerly men's institutions, faculty- and even university presidents-were reluctant to include them. This, in addition to growing expectations for faculty to produce research, created a general unwillingness amongst faculty and administrators to address student misconduct. Those against coeducation used the term "Woman Problem" to call attention to the number of women occupying courses originally meant for their male peers-a phrase representative of many men's feelings towards women students (Nidiffer, 2000, p.32).

College and university presidents hired deans of women for a variety of reasons, reflected in the qualifications decided upon when seeking out a dean. As Jana Nidiffer (2000) pointed out, "For the president, the dean could be both a tangible asset-actually solving some of the campus concerns regarding housing, health, and social habits of the women students-and a public relations ploy" (p. 32). Possessing a dean of women could certainly make a president look favorable in the eyes of female students and faculty, although whether he planned to support them or not was an entirely different matter. For presidents who felt unease towards women occupying what had originally been men's institutions, hiring a dean of women appeared to be an adequate solution. It allowed them to ensure that someone would address the conduct of women (and their relationships with male students) that possessed superior morals and judgement.

Creation of the Dean of Women Position

Early deans of women positions were referred to by a number of names, including "preceptress, matron, or lady principal" (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 16). Prior to the development of the

paid position of dean of women, the wives of university presidents, or local women, performed free labor by taking on similar tasks. Some universities had these matron-like positions, such as the Social Advisor position at Indiana University, until the late 1860s, before eventually evolving to a dean of women role. The wide variety of names and position responsibilities for deans of women, and similar roles at this time, make it difficult to determine who the first dean of women was. While historians typically celebrate Alice Freeman Palmer of the University of Chicago as the first dean of women (Nidiffer, 2000), others point to Elizabeth Powell Bond, dean of women at Swarthmore College in the 1890s (Drum, 1993; Gerda, 2004). It is possible that women serving in preceptress, matron, or lady principal roles, though not hired under the title of dean of women, performed work in a way that mirrored deans of women before Palmer or Bond.

When seeking candidates to fill dean of women positions who were not area women or their own wives, university presidents used a variety of criteria. One common factor included in the hiring (and firing) of deans of women was their age. Initially, presidents rarely hired women in their forties and fifties for dean positions, especially when they later became counselor or assistant dean positions (Tuttle, 1996). Other criteria depended on what a president envisioned a dean of women's role to be on campus once she arrived. Nidiffer (2000) quotes an advertisement seeking a dean of women:

Of our 1000 girls more than half live out of town, usually in small towns, and are having their first experience away from home. These girls do not need critical, meddling, supervision, but they would be much happier if they could get advice and help on all matters from the choice of a course of study or a boarding place, to questions of dress, etiquette, health, social duties, etc. A dean of women would be a member of the faculty, whose chief duty would be to consult with girls at all times, look out for their wellfare

[sic] and enjoyments, know each individual and bring the women of the university closer together. (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 87)

As exemplified in this particular advertisement are many of the expectations for incoming deans of women. Rather than serve as a strict matron, administrators hoped that a dean of women would provide guidance on a variety of issues that college women faced. College and university presidents expected deans of women to be available at all times to attend to the needs of the female students they worked with, and to potentially take on faculty responsibilities. While administrators often lacked specific strategies for how deans of women should carry out these duties, they possessed clear expectations of what she should strive to be.

William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, was not a supporter of coeducation himself yet sought a dean of women with scholastic achievements. Since the stereotype of deans of women cast them as strict and matronly, Harper desired to break this mold by finding a woman who was also an academic. He offered the position to Alice Freeman Palmer, and Palmer became widely accepted as the first dean of women in history (Nidiffer, 2000). Palmer, hired alongside her associate Marion Talbot, originally hired under the title of “lady principal,” which changed to “dean of women” in 1898. The University of Michigan was the first state university to hire a woman under the title dean of women when hiring Dr. Eliza Maria Mosher in 1896 (Holmes, 1939, in Nidiffer, 2000; Shaw, 2000).

While educational requirements for the position varied, Gerda (2004) identified 37 deans of women (about a quarter of those she examined in a study on conferences for deans of women) who had a doctoral degree. Thirty-nine had master’s degrees, and most had some form of advanced degree. In addition to their degree, many deans of women had long records of achievement as undergraduate students. Many, though not all, were involved in extracurricular

organizations, received scholarships, were members of Greek organizations, and sometimes studied abroad. When reading deans of women's first hand experiences, it is easy to see the ways in which their desire to be involved influenced their wishes for the women they oversaw.

Initial Student and Faculty Response

Response to a newly hired dean of women greatly varied among students, their parents, and faculty members. Student response to the dean of women at any given university and views on her role often differed greatly from a dean of women's own view of her responsibilities to students. Many students initially viewed her "as either matronly, curmudgeonly chaperones dedicated to scrutinizing boyfriends and conducting bed checks or innocuous mother figures who offer advice on hem length and proper fork choice at formal dinners" (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 1). They initially worried that she would treat them differently than the adults that they felt they were. Some male students largely rejected the idea of a dean of women, since they felt that she would disrupt the newfound dating freedom they had with female students in such close proximity and abundance. While some students detested the idea of a matron figure entering the university in the form of a Dean of Women, "the old corridor-spy" was exactly what comforted many parents' woes about sending their daughters off to college (Peril, 2006, p. 48). Faculty response to deans of women varied, with some opposing the position altogether. Some faculty feared that the position would coddle students, hindering them from developing into responsible adults (Peril, 2006; Rothenberger, 1942).

Deans of women demonstrated a heightened awareness of the stereotypes of their position, and showed a desire to contradict them. Many deans, like Lucy Diggs Slowe, believed that the dean of women's role should be as an educator, rather than a "watch dog" (Herdlein,

Cali, & Dina, 2008, p. 265). While discussing the ways that a dean of women is disadvantaged, Margaret Cuninggim (1946) explained:

The first of these handicaps is a hangover from early educational practices. It is the ghost of the policewoman in cap and gown who patrolled the campus and meted out punishment to problem children...‘Sssh, here comes the dean,’ is still whispered about the campus. (p. 218)

This imagery, of a strict matron punishing students for misconduct, is precisely what deans of women hoped to erase. While many institutions later showed overwhelming support for their deans of women and their legacies on campus, many deans strived to function outside of matron-like imagery. Articles written by deans, with titles such as “The Dean and Her Humor” (Allyn, 1940) and “The Human Side of the Dean of Women” (Cuninggim, 1946), suggest that combating stereotypes of emotional rigidity existed at the forefront of many deans’ minds. Deans of women eased into their positions, further defining their role as college and university presidents assigned them tasks, and as they became familiar with the needs of their students.

CHAPTER 4

THE LIFE OF A DEAN OF WOMEN

The perplexing variety of position titles and criteria used when seeking out deans of women were indicative of their initial role on campus. While the position became an administrative staple, many deans found themselves confused and frustrated with the lack of guidance they received. As Nidiffer (2000) commented, they “played an interesting historical role by being the first systemic, administrative response in higher education to cope with a new, and essentially unwelcome, population” (p. 4). From enforcing curfews and morals to controlling behavior and sexuality, deans of women found themselves managing tasks that their supervisors showed an unwillingness to complete. Deans of women also found themselves balancing these assigned tasks with emerging duties that neither they nor their superiors had foreseen.

Position Responsibilities of a Dean of Women

The presence of deans of women on campus quickly became the norm. A study of eight state institutions showed that while none had a dean of women in 1890, three had these positions filled by 1900, four by 1910, and all eight had a dean of women by 1930 (McGrath, 1936). Until the professionalization of the dean of women position, however, no two deans of women were alike in terms of job title, salary, or position responsibilities (Nidiffer, 2000). This flexibility, though frustrating to some, was especially apparent when deans of women had the opportunity to converse with their peers. At one of the first conferences for deans of women in 1916, where the theme was “What a Dean of Women Is-What Her Duties Are” Ella Gertrude Shorb Martin,

Advisor of Women at Cornell University (Gerda, 2004), shed light in her keynote speech on the variability amongst positions:

We are trying to *define* the dean. Some say the dean is just a chaperone-a nice, ladylike person. Others say the dean is a necessary evil, a concession...others say the dean is a sort of adjunct to the President, because the President usually lacks at least one of the qualifications for the dean.

The fact is the dean of women is unique! She is expected to teach and do a great many other things. She is preeminently a teacher of the *art of living*. She asks: How many of us are *artists of life* ourselves? (Klink, 2014, p. 13)

Just as no two deans of women were alike in terms of position responsibilities, no two deans of women viewed their roles in the same way. Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry, dean of women at the University of Wisconsin in the early 1900s, provided additional insight when describing her view on the position:

First of all, let us answer the question, Why have a dean of women at all? The answer is, to give to the women students individually and collectively the leadership and inspiration which the best kind of woman alone can give; to give to women students the example and guidance the best sort of president of the college or university gives to men students.

Young women do not look to a man for personal leadership, they look to a woman who not only represents in every way what they most admire, but is capable of leading them on to higher levels of achievement in their personal lives, to rouse in them ambitions which were latent or only half-developed. The capacity for outstanding leadership is then the first and greatest qualification of the woman you select for the position of dean of

women. The next thing is to make possible the conditions for such leadership.

(Rosenberry, 1927, in Nidiffer, 2000, p. 154)

Deans of women, hired by university presidents to oversee women students found themselves taking on a variety of tasks. Faculty responsibilities also fell onto the shoulders of some deans, many of whom desired the opportunity to teach (Klink, 2014). For example, Dr. Eliza Mosher, dean of women at the University of Michigan in 1896, additionally served as a Professor of Hygiene (McGuigan, 1970, in Nidiffer, 2000, p. 56). For a few deans of women with faculty responsibilities, the position served as a hopeful stepping-stone to a faculty position. Many institutions showed reluctance to hire women as faculty members, especially if their spouses taught at the same institution (Nidiffer, 2000). As many came to discover, however, the dean of women position provided very few, if any, opportunities for advancement. In the 1920s, as deans of women became a popular component of campus administration, fewer of these positions included faculty responsibilities. While the growing responsibilities of deans of women would have made balancing a faculty role difficult, some saw this shift as problematic and contributing to the dean of women's decline (Nidiffer, 2000; Tuttle, 1996).

In addition to faculty responsibilities assigned to early deans, these women also shared numerous other types of duties. In her article, "Unassigned Duties of a Dean of Women," Imogene Bentley (1948), dean of women at North Texas State Teachers College, listed many of the unexpected tasks that deans of women completed. Before doing so, she highlights two categories of assigned tasks: "The first of these duties is that she serve the women of the college as a counselor, guide, or wise friend. The second assigned duty for the Dean of Women is administrative; her work in policy-making is a well-recognized function" (Bentley, 1948, p. 86). Unassigned duties, however, made up a majority of a dean's responsibilities.

Bentley (1948) listed these unexpected tasks, such as serving as a liaison between students and faculty members, working with professional organizations, and conversing with faculty who either required help with students of concern, or who have issues of their own they wished to talk through. Self-improvement, another unassigned responsibility, required attending conferences, reading literature about the field, and participating in other professional development opportunities. Bentley best describes the nature of the dean of women position by stating that, "There is no way for her to be prepared for her day's work; the element of surprise, the unknown quantity in the human equation, makes it impossible for the Dean to anticipate her activity for any day" (Bentley, 1948, p. 90). Since a majority of a dean of women's responsibilities pertained to addressing the needs of female students, anticipating what each day would consist of was impossible.

In "Of a Dean of Women," M'Ledge Moffett (1937) narrated her day as a dean at Radford University, and highlighted the variety of tasks a dean might encounter. Moffett woke up to the sounds of a group of choral women leaving for a choir contest at 5:30 AM, and then met two students in her office at 8:00 AM. What followed was a conversation with a faculty member about a student of concern, a meeting with the local YWCA president, a conversation with two students wishing to move residence hall rooms, and then a guidance course (taught by Moffett herself), all before noon. Similar to Bentley's (1948) commentary on unassigned duties, Moffett reported that a majority of her day involved spontaneous meetings with students and faculty to discuss concerns.

In response to an administration that typically failed to allocate money to women's causes, many deans of women resorted to using their own resources to support campus women. Quite a few deans of women opened their private homes for one on one conversations, dinners,

meetings, and tea parties with their students. Carolyn Shoemaker, the first dean of women at Purdue University, even used her own salary to fund tuition for female students in need of financial assistance (Klink, 2014).

Addressing fears of pre-marital sex between students became the responsibility of deans of women in the early 1900s. Deans of women educated students on sexuality, referred to as “sexual hygiene” (Tuttle, 1996, p. 23). They sought to educate students while usually expected to promote rigid Victorian sexual expectations, though many recognized the double sexual standards affecting their women students. These courses shifted from a focus on basic anatomy to venereal disease (an early term for sexually transmitted diseases) because of the 1918 Chamberlain-Kahn Act, passed by Congress after World War I, which distributed over a half a million dollars to assist in the reshaping of sexual hygiene courses (Peril, 2006).

Additional efforts to control students’ sexuality were curfews and visiting hours, typically enforced by a dean of women. Many sorority houses and residence halls had designated rooms for women to receive male guests, which provided little to no privacy. Spelman College, for example, allowed women to have male visitors for 20 minutes, once a month. Since the rules permitted brothers to visit once a week, many women invited male suitors to visit, claiming them to be newly discovered siblings. These rules continued until 1920, when Spelman changed the rules to permit a guest for two hours every Sunday-though this visitation still took place in view of a dean (Read, 1961, in Peril, 2006, p. 283). Other institutions required women to return to their rooms by a curfew time, often making it difficult to for them to leave campus for social gatherings or dates and yet return on time.

In addition to monitoring sexual behavior, deans of women also found themselves in charge of student health while combatting smoking on campus. In 1922, the University of

Wisconsin did not have a rule against smoking, yet the dean of women openly condemned its presence at the university. In an interview with the *New York Times*, F. Louise Nardin said that smokers were “‘an idle, blasé, disappointed class.’ An intelligent woman, she declared, couldn't ‘see herself rocking a baby or making a pie with a cigarette in her mouth, flicking ashes in the baby's face or dropping them in the pie crust’” (“Frown on Smoking by Co-eds in West”, 1922, in Peril, 2006, p. 267). Goucher College enacted a smoking ban in 1924, after reports of students smoking in Baltimore tearooms generated bad publicity for the school. The *Times* noted that “If a student wanted to take her own reputation downtown and smoke it all up, that was her private affair. But to smoke up the fair name of Goucher was something different” (“Goucher College Girls Put Taboo on Tobacco”, 1924).

By the late 1920s, vocational guidance became an additional responsibility of deans of women, who hoped to assist women in application of their education to a career (Williamson, 1949). In reality, many women graduated to become wives and mothers, and if they did work, it was as teachers. After World War I, job opportunities for women expanded, creating an even greater need for deans to provide vocational guidance-especially to direct women to non-teaching careers. In the 1920s, as deans of women became a popular component of campus administration, fewer of these positions included faculty responsibilities.

Guiding Philosophies

Despite a lack of consistency between early dean of women positions, and a lack of support from many college and university presidents, these women developed unique philosophies that guided the way they approached their practice. For some, this meant fostering traditional values, while others utilized more progressive means of working with campus women. These philosophies, some influenced by a dean's own college experience, and some necessitated

by one's campus climate, affected women students, and influenced other professionals as deans of women shared them with one another.

One way that deans of women served women students utilized an individualistic approach—a method that transferred to the professional organizations they formed, as well as the field student affairs that later formed from these organizations. Many deans attempted to know their students on an individual basis, and pointed them towards opportunities that they were a good fit for, rather than opportunities dictated by gendered expectations.

Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry of the University of Wisconsin hoped to further women's participation in the work force through facilitating occupational conferences for campus women. During these conferences, Mathews invited career advisors to attend who worked with women students. It was her hope that these career advisors could help women choose careers other than teaching, the occupation into which many advisors funneled women. Slowe also focused on moving women from teaching careers to other opportunities. After finding that 90% of Howard University women enrolled in the teacher preparation program, Slowe and her colleagues worked to change this. A few years later, only 44% of Howard women occupied the same program (Herdlein, 2005, 2008; Ihle, 1994).

Ada Louise Comstock, Dean of Women at the University of Minnesota from 1907 to 1912, wrote personalized letters to her students, and hosted regular teas with them, seeking to learn more about their lives outside of academics (Gerda, 2004). She thought that college should first and foremost prepare women for the workforce, since young women attending college did not know for certain whether they would marry. Even if they became wives and mothers, Comstock believed that women could return to the workforce once their children had grown (Nidiffer, 2000).

Comstock also kept a detailed record of each of each student utilizing a notecard system in her office that later became common practice for many deans of women. She focused on the need for development of “the whole individual” through leadership opportunities and work that she believed created intelligent and productive young women (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 89). An environment that was both physically comfortable and provided opportunities for exercise and interaction with positive role models also drove her practice. At a faculty banquet, Comstock spoke to the needs of college training for creating what she described as social efficiency:

College training should do more than inform the mind. It should add to the student's usefulness in society. To be a useful member of society one must be aware of one's duty to the world, and must be able to work with other people to good ends. The quality which enables a man to be thus useful we call good citizenship. To the same quality in a woman we may give the name social efficiency. Social efficiency cannot be taught in the class room. College life, however, offers opportunity for the development of this quality. Every student organization offers training in good citizenship and in social efficiency. Fraternities, sororities, the Christian associations, the boards of control, the Women's League, the Student Government association-in all of these students are learning how to live in society. Such lessons are not forgotten. They mould the student's after life. It is of supreme importance, therefore, that all the activities of college life should be governed by high ideals. (“Co-ed dean has plans”, in Nidiffer, pp. 93-94)

Mary Bidwell Breed, dean of women at Indiana University, used a philosophy of self-government utilized by many other deans of women (Nidiffer, 2000). Instead of regulating student behavior through elaborate means, she encouraged students to act in alignment with established rules. Breed rewarded positive behavior by pushing for small benefits for students,

such as coffee in the women's parlor (Nidiffer, 2000). Owena Hunter Davis desired moving from a philosophy of *in loco parentis* to self-government, in the hope of the dean of women role evolving its focus on counseling and mentorship (Herdlein et al., 2008). In addition to Breed, numerous other deans encouraged self-government and desired to foster a sense of personal responsibility within their students. In utilizing this focus when creating policies and procedures, deans hoped to not only help their students mature, but to benefit the campus and the parents of students as well. While sharing examples of extraordinary women deans, Margaret Cuninggim mentioned:

I once knew a dean who always made it a policy to suggest that the student write facts concerning disciplinary measures to her parents before the letter went out from the dean's office. The parents were always glad to have the child confess the difficulty herself, rather than first being informed by the dean. The same individual often allowed the students to read letters sent from her office to the parents. This cards-on-the-table method with student and parent rarely brought unfavorable results. (Cuninggim, 1946, p. 217)

Dr. Emily Taylor, dean of women at the University of Kansas (KU) from 1956 to 1975, exemplified a belief of personal responsibility in her practice (Sartorius, 2010). One of the most notable contributions she made on KU's campus involved forcing senior women to accept dormitory keys, beginning in 1958, despite their hesitation. Taylor developed a system so that senior women could check out keys beginning at 5:00 PM, so long as they stated their estimated return time, and disclosed their plans for the evening. At 8:00 AM the following morning, the women counted the keys, and any missing keys resulted in immediate lock changes. If any keys did go missing, Taylor split the charges between all of the senior women. By giving senior

women access to these keys, Taylor not only made KU the second institution in the country to do so, but also contributed to the university's eventual elimination of curfews for women. When confronted by students and alumnae, Taylor defended her decision:

I remember one woman [advisor] who invited me to go out to lunch and she said she wanted to know if I could explain to her why I thought that [the key program] was progress. And I said I think this is progress because it requires people to grow up. It requires people to make their own decisions as to when it's time for them to be out and when it's time for them to be in [the sorority house], the same as anything else they do whether they are studying or eating or sleeping or what. Those decisions shouldn't be made by someone else. (Sartorius, 2010, pp. 17-18)

Encouraging her students to make their own decisions extended well beyond Taylor's decision to give senior women access to keys. When conversing with students, she used a Socratic method of working through issues, encouraging the women to talk through their problems, and gave candid advice. After a student asked Taylor what to do about a boyfriend treating her poorly, Taylor replied, "Well, I think you should get yourself another man" (Sartorius, 2010, p. 13). Sartorius (2010) shared another example of Taylor's direct yet encouraging way of assisting students through conflict:

In another case, Taylor advised a woman distraught over her Protestant parents' displeasure with her Catholic boyfriend. Taylor asked the woman her age, told the student that she was old enough to make up her mind, and that she was marrying the man and her parents were not. (p. 13)

While the philosophies of many notable deans of women share common themes of individualization, advocacy, equality, self-government, responsibility, and leadership, it is

important to recognize that not all deans shared these progressive values. While some deans of women supported a diverse range of students, including Black college women, others did not. For every dean of women who fought with college and university presidents for amenities for women, was the likelihood of a dean who instead wanted men and women to follow rigid gendered expectations.

Agnes Irwin, dean of women at Radcliffe College from 1894 to 1909, when future dean Lucy Sprague was a student, possessed core values in line with traditional gender roles: Irwin was opposed to women's athletics, wanted women to wear white gloves at all times, and prohibited close physical contact between women (Faragher & Howe, 1988). Emma Willard once stated that "Men were like oak trees...While women were like apple trees. Apple trees could never be oak trees (or vice versa), but each was beautiful and useful in its own way;" Willard also believed that, "Education did not 'mean that our sex should not seek to make themselves agreeable to' men" (Lutz, 1929, in Peril, 2006, p. 23).

Creating Space and Opportunity for College Women

For most deans of women, attempting to or succeeding in creation of a women's building was a hallmark of her years as a dean. Ada Louise Comstock referred to Alice Shevlin Hall, a residence hall created during her days as a dean, as an effective "tool" in solidifying women's place on campus. In reading of the histories of individual deans of women, it is clear that they saw creating space for this new student population as a top priority that demonstrated their loyalty to college women:

The belief that women needed a community on a coeducational campus to counteract the antagonism against them thrust deans into a new advocacy role. In this capacity, deans

defended competing for university resources for women's housing, women's buildings, and other projects designated to benefit women. (Nidiffer, 2004, p. 51)

Carolyn Shoemaker of Purdue University argued for a Women's Building on campus, drawing attention to the fact that the current women's building had crumbling walls, and leaky water pipes. Within the 1919 yearbook, accompanying a student written poem about the building's condition, Shoemaker pointed out that the number of women on campus had recently doubled, creating an increased need for modern space. Shoemaker had additionally utilized the university's support of World War I efforts to promote her cause. During the war, women sewed bandages and socks on sewing machines that moved around the city of Lafayette, since there was no women's building for them to stay in. Having a women's building, Shoemaker claimed, would solve this issue. The university eventually obliged, purchasing a local home that would become the Community House Association for local women.

Creating opportunities for college women outside of the classroom was an additional hallmark of many deans of women's years of service. As John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (1988) noted:

While the education of college women has been limited by discriminatory practices as well as the traditional ideology of separate spheres, the opportunities which colleges have provided for rigorous intellectual training and peer sociability have nevertheless helped foster women's independence, stimulate their ambitions, and develop their aspirations for leadership. (Faragher & Howe, 1988, p. 44)

Women's organizations became a method for students to receive financial support, access leadership opportunities, and build relationships with their peers. Two women-one from Ohio State and the other from Swarthmore College-formed Mortar Board, the first organization for

senior college women. The two women met each other at the University of Chicago, wearing identical mortarboard shaped pins, representing membership to organizations from their home institutions (Klink, 2014). The two organizations combined, and eventually became a national organization, which put on events to raise money for women's scholarships. Purdue University created a "Big Sister Movement," which later became known as "Green Guard," to help bridge the gap between upperclasswomen and first year women, also to provide a network of support (Klink, 2014, p. 9).

The Women's Self Government Association (WGSA) represented another campus opportunity for women to build upon their leadership skills (Nidiffer, 2000). Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry encouraged the women at the University of Wisconsin chapter of WGSA to host a conference open to women from similar organizations across the Midwest. It was her hope that this assignment would encourage the organization's women so that they would focus on being leaders and good students rather than on their sexual appeal. WGSA members wrote to deans of women across the Midwest, asking them to pass on news of the conference to women's self-government associations. The purpose of the conference, not unlike the benefits of attending early deans of women conferences, was to assist students in developing cooperation and public speaking skills (Nidiffer, 2000; Rosenberry, 1948).

The Associated Women Students (AWS) organization at the University of Kansas, a part of the Intercollegiate Association of Women Students (IAWS), created rules for campus women within the residence halls and sororities. Dean of Women Emily Taylor met with the president of AWS at her home every week to assist in meeting preparation. AWS implemented curfews, calling hours for male visitors in women's halls, and quiet hours, which deans of women

enforced (Sartorius, 2010, p. 10). Additionally, Taylor assisted the AWS chapter in the handling of both major and minor regulation violations.

Taylor formed a relationship with KU's AWS chapter in part to build a network of student allies to her causes. The extent to which she believed in inclusion of students when making decisions is a part of her legacy. Taylor wrote an article in 1955, "Use of Students on Faculty Committees," arguing that students needed to be involved in the creation of university policies (Sartorius, 2010, p. 11). Doing so not only gave students an opportunity to participate in decision-making, but also served as another space for them to work on the development of their leadership skills. Aligning with Taylor's personal philosophy of self-governance and personal responsibility, she delegated the handling of student misconduct to AWS, alongside an assistant dean, in an attempt to move away from the matron stereotype. AWS later attempted to give this power back to Taylor (Sartorius, 2010).

The Student-Government Association (SGA) served a similar purpose for women's leadership development on the University of Wisconsin campus. Ada Louise Comstock used SGA to assist in governing the newly built Alice Shevlin Hall for women students, and was an SGA member while attending Smith College (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 96-99). Every woman at an institution with a chapter of SGA automatically became a member, and paid no dues for continued membership. Comstock found that a small group of women took up a large number of leadership positions on campus, limiting the number of opportunities available to their peers. To counteract this issue, and yield a wider variety of women involved, she developed a point system in which women received points per position they held. Once they reached a certain number of points, they could not exceed it, preventing them from taking on too many leadership roles.

Conflicts with College and University Presidents

The relationship between a dean of women and the college or university president she reported to had a tremendous impact on what she was able to accomplish. In 1936, 86% of deans of women reported directly to the president (although this number shrunk to less than 30% by 1962) (Eisenmann, 1998). Despite the fact that many deans of women reported directly to institution presidents, they encountered numerous issues when attempting to implement changes for the better of women students, and when attempting to contribute to their own professional development. Attendance at national conferences, such as the National Association of Deans of Women (NADW) conference, were thus a valuable opportunity for deans of women to feel supported. This was especially true for deans in southern states, whose home institutions were typically isolated from the regions that housed prominent professional organizations. Many deans of women, however, found themselves unsupported by the presidents of their institutions, who failed to allocate any funding to them for conference attendance (Bashaw, 1999).

For Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry, conflict with University of Wisconsin president Charles Van Hise began before she was dean of women. Van Hise originally offered Mathews the position of “Advisor to Women and Instructor in the history department, in part since the faculty were resistant towards the idea of her being an associate professor” (Nidiffer, 2000, pp. 115-117). Mathews turned this offer down, claiming that the position title needed to be Dean of Women and Associate Professor before she would accept it. She recognized “the importance of title and status” turning down a second offer from Van Hise that was Dean of Women and Instructor. She had already been an instructor at Wellesley, and claimed that this position would be a step down from her previous role.

Mathews, an advocate for dean of women positions that included faculty responsibilities, turned down Van Hise's offer once again. After nearly two years of negotiating, Van Hise finally offered Mathews the position of Dean of Women and Associate Professor in 1911, with a salary of \$2,750 per year. She argued the ways that faculty responsibilities allowed her to come to know students in a different way than being a dean did, and claimed that it helped her become a better administrator. While her position included no supervision responsibilities, Mathews taught for six to nine hours per week and helped to supervise the theses of numerous students (Nidiffer, 2000).

Some deans of women, who reported directly to their university presidents, used annual reports to stress the need for things such as increased support and funding for women students, and to highlight the accomplishments of overlooked women faculty and students (Nidiffer, 2000). This was a tactic used by Marion Talbot, who served as the Dean of Undergraduate Women and Assistant Professor of Sanitary Science alongside Alice Freeman Palmer, until becoming dean of women at the University of Chicago in 1899. In her reports, she called attention to the ways that the university was failing its female students and faculty, showing the ways that their presence on campus was declining (Fitzpatrick, 1989).

Carolyn Shoemaker, Dean of Women at Purdue University, used her annual reports to the president to advocate for, "Scholarships, dormitory accommodations, and women's gymnasium" (Klink, 2014, p. 19). Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry also used her annual dean's reports to communicate with the president and board of regents while at the University of Wisconsin. In a 1914 report, she expressed three guiding principles that she adhered to: "(1) to do all she could to develop the potential of women's education; (2) to secure for women the

highest possible individual development; and (3) to develop in women the highest social responsibility” (Nidiffer, 2000, pp. 119-120).

Marion Talbot’s largest conflict with president William Rainey Harper occurred in 1900, when Harper proposed a junior college which would separate the first two years and the last two years of a student’s education. In doing so, Harper hoped that less serious students (he considered women to fall into this category) would leave the university after their first two years and settle for an associate’s degree or certificate (Alemán & Renn, 2002; Harper, 1900; Brint & Karabel, 198). Students and faculty at the institution who opposed the plan took action, signing petitions, with another handful of notable protests led by Talbot herself. While Harper implemented the plan despite the opposition, it did not come into fruition to the degree he had hoped, causing celebration among those who had protested the junior college (Nidiffer, 2000).

Another notable conflict took place between Northwestern University President Franklyn Bliss Snyder and Dean of Women Ruth O. McCarn in the 1940s over the institution’s African American students. McCarn, a supporter of Alpha Kappa Alpha (founded by fellow dean of women Lucy Diggs Slowe as a Greek organization for Black women), pushed for an on-campus housing option for Black students, in hopes of creating a more diverse student body (Tuttle, 1996). This created tension between McCarn and other campus administrators, who had differing views on attracting students of color to the university. After giving her a salary increase in 1941, President Snyder condemned McCarn, claiming she had spent too much time working towards racial tolerance and too little time attending to the needs of white students (Tuttle, 1996).

Lucy Diggs Slowe encountered discrimination when working alongside Mordecai W. Johnson, Howard University’s first African American president. While students and faculty

initially celebrated Johnson's presidency, he took numerous controversial actions against Slowe and women on campus. He removed Slowe from the board of deans, lessening the chance of women's concerns making their way to the ears of policy makers on campus, and he refused to grant Slowe an increase in salary, despite the fact that her salary was the lowest of all deans on campus (Tuttle, 1996). In addition, Johnson eliminated many women's resources on campus, and demanded that Slowe live on campus beginning in 1933. Slowe opposed this directive, feeling that it reinforced the matron stereotype, and pointed out that she often opened up her private off-campus home to students. At the time, Slowe lived with Mary Burrill, a local high school teacher, believed to have been her romantic partner (Tuttle, 1996). Slowe suspected that Johnson was attempting to separate her and Burrill based on this assumption. After Slowe's death in 1937, her family requested that Johnson not attend her funeral.

Deans of Women and Housing

One effort made by numerous deans of women focused on creating on campus housing options for college women. Those attending public universities typically had three housing options if they chose not to live with parents or family. These housing options included boardinghouses, sororities, and, if provided by the institution, residence halls (Nidiffer, 2000). Women who did not receive bids from sororities, which in some cases were their only method of securing on campus housing, tended to drop out. Without on campus housing, these women would have needed to walk long distances to area boarding houses, potentially (if they lived in the 1920s, for example) while wearing 25 pounds of clothing (Klink, 2014).

When deans of women did not receive support from presidents for the projects they hoped to accomplish, she may have resigned, or in the case of Mary Bidwell Breed, she left to work for another institution. Breed's vision of building a residence hall at Indiana University

exclusively for women never came into fruition, due to a lack of support from the university's president. In her resignation to President Bryan, Breed shared:

I wish to present my resignation of the position of Dean of Women in Indiana University, to take effect at the end of the current academic year. I have been elected to the corresponding position at the University of Missouri, and after long and careful consideration I have decided to accept their offer. The reasons for my decision it is unnecessary to give in detail, but I may say that that the University of Missouri offers me in salary, living, &c., the equivalent of about \$2200; and, what is more important, it owns a model hall of residence for women students, of which I shall be head. The hall is conducted by the University in an enlightened way, and is an invaluable tool in my profession. (Nidiffer, 2000)

Deans of Women and World War II

World War II brought about tremendous changes to higher education for women, such as increased access to fields they previously could not enter (Alemán & Renn, 2002; Solomon, 1985; Tuttle, 1996). With many college men off at war, some universities became more lenient in admitting women to various science programs. These were the same programs that, just decades before, those against coeducation worried institutions would waste on women by using resources meant for college men. The war dramatically shaped the position of deans of women, shifting their attention to garnering women's support for war efforts. After the war had ended, its negative effects on college women lingered, affecting their access to higher education and later influencing the dean of women role (Tuttle, 1996).

During this time, deans of women played an exceptional role in supporting war efforts. They assisted in the selection of women's corps directors, and sometimes served as directors

themselves (Tuttle, 1996). Mildred McAfee, President of Wellesley College, became the director of Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) in 1942. Dorothy Stratton, dean of women at Purdue University, also worked with a WAVES chapter in Wisconsin. Military officials sought out deans of women for these positions because of their relationships with college women (Tuttle, 1996). These relationships were valuable during recruitment, and for calming the fears of students' parents. Deans of women assisted in running women's military units similar to how they governed female students, by utilizing tactics used under *in loco parentis*.

While deans of women were impactful in finding women students to support war efforts, campuses during World War II were "a complicated tangle of restriction and opportunity" (Tuttle, 1996, p. 111). With many on-campus residence halls used for housing soldiers, institutions limited their enrollment of college women. A NADW survey in 1943 found that women's residence halls at the universities of Denver, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin completely occupied by the armed forces (Mueller, 1943, in Tuttle, 1996). After World War II, home economics programs expanded, as did nutrition and family studies programs, reflecting the lingering desire for women's education to prepare them for marriage and motherhood (Klink, 2014; Nerad, 1999; Sartorius, 2010). Deans of women's publications reflected this, often discussing how to assist women students in balancing the expectations of being a wife and mother, while simultaneously preparing for a career.

Home economics courses focused on teaching women the science behind efficiently running a household, and educators supporting these courses believed it would serve a few purposes (Nerad, 1999). Supporters of home economics, many of whom were members of the Young Women's Christian Association, thought that the opportunity to learn homemaking skills

would appeal to women of all social classes. They also believed that learning to be successful wives and mothers would drastically improve families and American society. With many college women choosing programs that aligned with gendered expectations of them, home economics supporters believed this justified higher education's role in preparing women for domesticity (Faehmel, 1970).

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the G.I. Bill, had disastrous consequences for women on campus. The G.I. Bill gave World War II veterans access to four years of free schooling at a college or university of their choice, including textbook fees and a stipend. State institutions and institutions with high levels of prestige, such as Cornell and the University of Wisconsin, found themselves with the highest number of veterans enrolling, forcing them to limit the number of women they could admit (Tuttle, 1996). Black veterans, however, often experienced resistance from institutions that historically excluded students of color (Eisenmann, 2006). Institutions that historically served women, such as Sarah Lawrence, Finch, and Vassar, opened their doors to male veterans as well (Alemán & Renn, 2002; Solomon, 1985; Tuttle, 1996). Institutions such as the University of Kansas, which found themselves with more veterans than they could house, chose to use campus spaces such as the football stadium, art museum, and gymnasium to house veterans (Horowitz, 1987).

University presidents welcomed veterans with little concern for female students, such as the University of Louisville president who directed dean of women Emily Taylor to "Just clear out those halls for the men!" (Tuttle, 1996, p. 169). Margaret Cuninggim, Dean of Women at the University of Tennessee and Vanderbilt University, reflected on being asked to clear a women's residence hall for veterans: "This meant practically a complete reorganization of the campus, and it had taken two weeks to ascertain roommate preferences and find the happiest

rooming situations for each student” (Cuninggim, 1946, p. 217). For many deans of women, like Cuninggim, male veterans arriving to campus took priority over the female students that deans of women served.

With deans of women across the country beginning to build a foundation for the profession at their home institutions, a desire for the professionalization of the role emerged. Deans of women felt that they needed not only settings to collaborate with other women deans, but also professional standards and opportunities for professional development. The push for professionalization in the form of organizations, journals, standards, and more signified a key time in the history of deans of women, helping to solidify the position within higher education and shape the practices of other deans.

CHAPTER 5

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE DEAN OF WOMEN POSITION

Between 1900 and 1918, the first cohort of deans of women began to push for professionalization of the role in a number of ways (Bashaw, 1999; Nidiffer, 2000). Using professional organizations and conferences, as well as opportunities for professional development and scholarship, deans of women created consistency among their positions, and solidified their role in the eyes of their home institutions. Efforts to professionalize began as early as 1881, almost 50 years before deans of men (Schwartz, 2003). While the University of Illinois is credited with hiring the first dean of men in 1909, there was no professional organization for deans of men until 1929, and no academic journal until 1963 (Schwartz, 1997; Schwartz, 2003; Tuttle, 1996). Conversely, the first organization for deans of women formed in 1921, and they published their first journal by 1923 (Gerda, 2004).

Deans of Women and Professional Organizations

Numerous professional organizations on the state, regional, and national level were formed that focused on deans of women and women's education, many of which (having overlapping membership) combined over time to form larger organizations. Two specific organizations, the Association of College Alumnae (ACA) and National Association of Deans of Women (NADW), provided tremendous opportunities for deans and other university women. While deans of women typically became members of one or both associations, they usually viewed AAUW (which evolved from ACA) as for any college woman, while viewing NADW as the main professional organization for the field (Tuttle, 1996).

In 1881, 17 women brought together by Marion Talbot met at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to discuss the formation of a new national organization for female college graduates (Levine, 1995). Emily Talbot, Marion's mother, had encouraged her to organize the meeting after hearing her daughter's thoughts on the need for an organization for college women. As a result, Marion Talbot, dean of women at the University of Chicago, and Ellen Swallow Richards, president of the American Home Economics Association and professor at MIT, co-founded ACA (Tuttle, 1996; Nidiffer, 2000). The ACA, the first organization of its kind, provided a space for the discussion of both women's education and the dean of women position (Nidiffer, 2000). They only accepted women from institutions that were ACA members, which required them to meet a certain set of criteria ensuring their dedication to and support for women on campus (Gerda, 2004).

One of the first projects completed by ACA was an 1884 survey of 1,300 female college students focused on assessing the impact of higher education on their health. ACA used the results of this survey, which contradicted the assumption that a college education negatively affected women's wellbeing, to dispute the claims made in Edward Clarke's *Sex in Education* (1873), and to convince the public that college women were just as healthy as their male peers. The organization also provided an atmosphere of support and numerous opportunities for women to develop as leaders. The ACA offered scholarships available only to women from institutions belonging to the organization, which required them to meet a certain number of criteria, and assisted college women in becoming more competitive applicants to graduate school. In 1897, ACA combined with the Western Association of College Alumnae-mirroring many early regional organizations for deans of women and college women that combined with other organizations, both out of financial necessity and to expand their membership.

In 1911, ACA conferences opened to non-members, though the only women who would have access to announcements about conference dates and locations were members, many of whom were deans. Additionally, ACA aimed to aid female college graduates in forming relationships with other academic women, and to assist them in utilizing their education. Their two main purposes were “offering encouragement to young women wanting to go to college and expanding the opportunities for women graduates” (Rosenberg, 1982, in Nidiffer, 2000, p. 39).

While en route to the next conference in 1911, deans of women traveling together via train decided that the conference should include formal sessions for the profession, instead of the majority of professional development being done while sharing information about one’s role and institution (Nidiffer, 2000). While the 1910 convention had included an impromptu Conference of Deans of Women (CDW), 1911 marked the beginning of the CDW as a regular component of the conference. Deans of women met every year at the ACA conference, and then every two years at the CDW.

The 1917 ACA meeting marked the last convention with a specific side conference for deans, as the founding for a new organization was on the horizon. ACA formed a partnership with the British Federation of University Women sometime between 1919 and 1921, when the organization contacted ACA leaders. ACA then combined with the Southern Association of College Women in 1921, becoming the American Association of University Women (AAUW) (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931).

At the 1916 conference of the National Education Association, attendees discussed the need for an additional professional organization (Bashaw, 1999). While ACA existed at this time, deans from the Northeast and Midwest comprised 70% of members (Bashaw, 1999). As a result of the 1916 NEA conference, deans from these regions formed the National

Association of Deans of Women (NADW) (Nidiffer, 2000). Some scholars credit Kathryn Sisson McLean, the first president of NADW, with the founding of this organization (Gerda, 2004). For five dollars (three dollars for students), deans of women could become members (Field, 1938). The NADW became a National Education Association (NEA) department the following year. NADW conferences, and all meetings of deans of women, provided a unique opportunity for deans to connect with their peers. An article on an upcoming conference in a *National Association of Deans of Women* journal states:

You will find colleagues eager to discuss their work, comrades glad of relaxation, excellent speakers full of ideas to impart, opportunities to share your own opinions with others, and the heartening encouragement of association with those who are doing the same big piece of work to which you are giving your own best thought and life. (Allyn, 1938, p. 88)

As the NADW became a solidified professional organization, they created a journal in 1923, and had an office in Washington, D.C. by 1926 at the headquarters of AAUW. This headquarters, fully furnished by members' furniture and books, provided a space for NADW members to enjoy access to private networking and social opportunities (Levine, 1995). NADW went through three name changes: becoming the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors (NAWDC) in 1956; the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors (NAWDAC) in 1973; and the National Association for Women in Education (NAWE) in 1991. The organization disbanded after 2000, partly due to the societal shift away from supporting single-sex organizations (Klink, 2014).

While ACA (AAUW) and NADW are the organizations most often credited with providing opportunities for professional development, plenty of conferences and organizations

existed outside of these, based on institution type or organizational affiliation. Gerda's (2004) in-depth study of conferences and professional organization for deans of women found at least 20 meetings of deans of women outside of NADW conferences. She identified seven different conferences, usually beginning with "conference of deans of women" or "conference of deans." These conferences included those for the Middle West, for state universities, with the Religious Education Association, for private institutions, with the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, with the Southern Association of Collegiate Alumnae, with the Southern Association of College Women, and with the National Education Association (Gerda, 2004).

State and regional organizations provided additional opportunities for deans of women, especially those in more isolated cities in the south, to connect with their peers. Kentucky, Maryland, and Alabama were home to three of the oldest state professional organizations, some of which evolved to become larger regional organizations (Bashaw, 1999). In addition to deans working in southern states, deans of women at private institutions also found themselves segregated from larger conferences. Between 1903 and 1909, only one conference occurred that welcomed deans of women at private institutions: the Conference of Deans of Women of Private Institutions in 1909 in Chicago, Illinois. This likely created barriers that prevented them from learning about the ways in which the position was changing nationally (Gerda, 2004).

The first Conference of Deans of Women of the Middle West, hosted by the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, met in November of 1903. The conference eventually changed its name to become the Conference of Deans and Advisors of Women in State Universities (CDAWSU). Other CDAWSU conferences focused on a variety of topics within and outside of the academy. The third CDAWSU conference met in December of 1907 in Chicago. While discussing experiences and job responsibilities, the deans of women focused on

salary differences, noting that the average dean of women made between \$1,200 and \$2,000 (Nidiffer, 2000). Some deans of women positions included room and board, while others had to pay for housing. The fourth meeting of the conference in 1909 focused on methods for supporting women's genuine interests, and encouraging female students to consider careers other than teaching.

Deans of Women and Professional Conferences

The work of Nidiffer (2000) and Gerda (2004) shed new light on conferences for deans of women, and the role they played in professionalization of the position. According to Nidiffer (2000), conferences for deans of women served three primary purposes. The first was to provide deans with a network of support, as well as a space to learn about the work of their peers. Prior to the professionalization of the position, there was little consistency, causing many deans to worry that they were developing the role day by day, and possibly failing in the process. By sharing their experiences and suggestions for their peers, deans of women were able to fulfill the second purpose of these conferences, by creating professional standards. The third purpose of deans of women conferences was to develop a professional organization, to uphold these newly formed professional standards (Nidiffer, 2000). Since women's education rose out of contributions from women's rights activists, it is not surprising that deans often discussed the same topics at conferences discussed by feminists (Nidiffer, 2000). Temple claimed that "AAUW strove to develop a mainstream feminism that combined equal rights with intellectual achievement and public service" (Temple, 1995, pp. 39-40).

While some conference records were incredibly thorough, (records of a 1905 conference, for example, are 41 pages long, single-spaced) others were not, making it difficult to decipher who attended or what was discussed (Gerda, 2004). While there was likely overlap in

conference attendance, poor or lost records of some conferences make it a challenge to determine whether some organizations were separate or included the same members as other organizations. Well-kept records, when available, illuminate a great deal about the inner workings of these meetings, and their creation. Aside from those of the NADW, none of the minutes from conferences of deans of women examined by Gerda (2004) mention a conference treasurer. Organizations typically found a parent organization when desiring to host a conference, such as the Southern Education Association and Religious Education Association, to both secure locations for meeting and to garner support (Gerda, 2004).

Topics for discussion at conferences, as expected, were a reflection of the prominent issues facing women at the time. Attendees presented papers, attended presentations, and discussed their experiences with peers. Records indicate some common topics were housing for women students, the value of sororities, sexual hygiene, and home economics' place in academia (Gerda, 2004). At a February 1938 meeting of NADW, presentation topics included "Excessive Outside Student Employment" "The Relation of the Dean of Women to the University Personnel Office" and "The Integration of Dormitory Life with the Main Objectives of the University" (Stratton, 1938, p. 6).

During these conferences, deans of women often created carefully constructed rules around the recording and sharing of information. At some conferences, members received typed copies of the minutes, though conversations occurred over when and how to share this information with non-members. Typically, deans of women prohibited members of the press from attending, so that non-members would not have access to topics discussed. Lucile Dora, however, dean of women at the University of Oklahoma, learned the hard way that this level of

secrecy was not always realistic. After negative comments she made about a student made their way back to her institution, administrators fired her (Cross, 1981).

One thing that is clear regarding attendance at conferences for deans of women is that they typically expanded to include non-members and those outside of the profession. NADW began to invite outside speakers around 1915, including architects who discussed the construction process for new residence halls, and faculty members from the newly formed Columbia Teachers College program for deans. A 1919 conference included professors and trustees on campus, reflected by the change in topics examined. Instead of focusing solely on deans of women, these topics now included “grading systems, the value of a liberal arts education, expectations of a degree, the usefulness of literature and drama, good teaching, the utility of academics in war, research, and salaries of tenured professors” (Gerda, 2004, p. 122). NADW also began inviting men in hopes of attracting college presidents and other male administrators towards supports their causes.

Racial Tensions within Professional Organizations

While deans of women were almost exclusively white until the 1920s, deans of women of color set the tone for serving marginalized student populations, and called attention to the discrimination occurring in deans’ professional organizations. While historians recognize Lucy Diggs Slowe as the first Black dean of women in 1922 at Howard University, Owena Hunter Davis of Johnson C. Smith University in 1956, and Jewel B. Long of Hampton University in 1988 have equally important legacies of supporting Black college women (Herdlein et al., 2008). Slowe recognized the unique position of Black college women as marginalized by both race and gender. She believed that they required unique career guidance because of the marginalization they historically faced.

Slowe had a long history of involvement with various student and professional organizations. She helped to found Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first sorority for African American women (Nidiffer, 2000). In addition to Alpha Kappa Alpha, she assisted in the creation of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and the Association of Deans of Women and Advisors to Girls in Negro Schools (Perkins, 1996,). Slowe later became the first president of the National Association of College Women (NACW), an organization for African American women, which evolved to become the National Association of University Women (NAUW). She was also the first Black woman to become a member of the NADW (Herdlein et al., 2008).

Like other organizations for deans of women, AAUW struggled to address racial tensions (Bashaw, 1999). While they did not have policies preventing qualified Black professionals from applying for membership, the organization was almost exclusively white, speaking volumes to its unwelcoming climate. While the NADW did not outwardly discriminate against Black professionals, the hotels utilized for conferences typically would not allow Black guests. Consequently, Black Deans of Women represented only 0.4% of members (Bashaw, 1999). Slowe unsuccessfully advocated for more inclusive conference venues, so instead held a separate conference at Howard University in 1929. These conferences eventually led to the formation of the Association of Deans of Women and Advisers to Girls in Negro Schools (ADWAGNS). Other professional associations for Black professionals, such as Deans of Women and Advisers to Girls in Colored Schools (DOWA) founded in 1929, and the 1935 founding of the National Association of the Deans of Men in Negro Educational Institutions (Komives & Woodard Jr., 2003). It took until 1954, after the *Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* ruling, for the NADW to utilize conference venues that complied with integration laws, selecting locations for conferences that would house Black professionals.

Publications and Coursework

In addition to the creation of professional organizations and conferences, deans of women utilized publications, such as journals or books, to share their experiences with other deans of women and discuss current issues. University of Wisconsin dean of women Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry's *The Dean of Women* (1915) was the first book written about the dean of women profession (Nidiffer, 2000). Mathews began by pointing out the need for standardization of the position, expressing frustration with the constant reinventing of the wheel that occurred in the field. She claimed that a dean of women's responsibilities "fell into three categories: administrative, academic, and social" (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 124). Numerous deans of women later published books on the profession, such as Anna Pierce's *Deans and Advisers of Women and Girls* (1928), Esther Lloyd-Jones' *Student Personnel Work at Northwestern University* (1929), and Sarah M. Sturtevant and Harriet Hayes' *Deans at Work: Discussions by Eight Women Deans of Various Phrases of Their Work* (1930).

The solidifying of the dean of women position as a career created a new need for academic coursework to prepare women for a life of deaning. In 1914, Teachers College at Columbia University began offering a Master of Arts and diploma of Dean of Women (Williamson, 1949). The college previously offered summer sessions open to deans of women, but did not include specific deans of women's courses (Bashaw, 1999). Courses taken to earn this degree included "hygiene of the childhood and adolescence, biology of sex education, educational psychology, history of the family, sociology, philosophy of education, management of the corporate life of the school, problems of administrative work, psychology of religion," and other classes aimed to prepare potential deans (Williamson, 1949, pp. 262-263). Deans of

women at other institutions created other opportunities for study, such as the course on the profession created at Howard University by Lucy Diggs Slowe (Tuttle, 1996).

Despite a long history of service to college women, and the advances made to professionalize the role, deans of women began to face numerous challenges that would eventually result in a decline of their position on campus. One of these challenges included the rise of deans of men-a position mirroring the dean of women role in order to meet the needs of college men. As the dean of men and dean of women role eventually combined to form a general dean of students position, many institutions awarded this position to their current dean of men, erasing deans of women from their campuses. Many deans of women, after retiring from their role or being forced to leave, moved on to other opportunities such as becoming college or university presidents, or founding their own institutions.

CHAPTER 6

THE DECLINE OF DEANS OF WOMEN

Deans of women often had long histories of service at the institutions where they worked, making the eventual decline of the position seem harsh when contrasted with their accomplishments and contributions. In a study of deans of women known to have attended conferences, Gerda (2004) credits 48 deans with 15 or more years of service. There are, however, numerous examples of university women whose service extended well beyond 15 years. Eugénie Galloo spent 49 years at the University of Kansas as a professor and department head, Elizabeth Hamilton served 40 years at Miami University, Irma Voigt worked for 36 years at the University of Ohio, and Jobelle Holcombe spent 35 years at the University of Arkansas. Additionally, Margaret Evan spent 34 years at Carleton College, Marion Talbot 33 years at the University of Chicago, and Laura Carnell 32 years at Temple University.

The tremendous length of service of these women, and others, is evident in the ways that their institutions commemorated their legacies. Despite initial reactions to the position, many students and faculty celebrated their deans of women, presenting them with gifts upon retiring. Some deans of women received honorary degrees, and had residence halls, resource centers, or scholarships named in their honor (Gerda, 2004). Some received gifts, such as Helen M. Smith, who received a radio-phonograph and \$100 towards the purchase of records of her choosing. Lucy Diggs Slowe's name adorns a Washington, D.C. public school, a Howard University chapel, and a residence hall (Gerda, 2004, p. 115; Herdlein et al., 2008). Mary Alma Sawyer had commencement dedicated to her when she retired, and was given an all expense covered trip around the world. Sawyer stopped in China, deciding to work for the Ming Deh School before

finishing her trip. Apparently, despite a legacy worthy of a free trip around the world, she was not quite ready to retire (Gerda, 2004).

Deans of Women and Life Post-Deaning

For some women, holding a dean of women position later resulted in moving on to a presidency, such as Sara Gibson Blanding, who became president of Vassar; Ada Comstock Notestein, who served as Radcliffe's president; and Martha Peterson, president at Barnard (Tuttle, 1996). Gerda (2004) identified 12 additional deans of women who went on to become college presidents. This list includes Jane Sherzer (Oxford College for Women), Mary Alma Sawyer (Western College for Women), Laura Drake Gill (Woman's College of Sewanee), Cora H. Coolidge (Pennsylvania College for Women), Emilie Watts McVea (Sweet Briar College), Sister Mary Margaret Henretty (Emmanuel College) and Anstice Harris (Elimira College). Marion Talbot and Kathryn Adams both worked after retirement with the Constantinople Woman's College, located in Istanbul, Turkey (Gerda, 2004).

Other deans of women, such as Lucy Sprague Mitchell, the first dean of women at the University of California, left their positions to pursue non-dean roles. Sprague sought to serve women on campus by “developing housing and vocational possibilities for female students, encouraging the formation of female organizations, and creating an all-women pageant on the subject of women's contributions to history” (Faragher & Howe, 1988, p. 54). Despite her success, she left the position in 1912. After six years as dean of women, as she found the role too removed from the lives of her students. Instead, she desired to become a dean of women at a secondary school, to give women access to information on sexuality, love, marriage, and childbearing (Faragher & Howe, 1988). Other deans of women followed suit to become

principals at secondary or vocational schools, such as Evelyn Wight Allan and Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry (Gerda, 2004).

Some deans of women even moved on from deaning positions to create their own institutions. Blanche G. Loveridge created the Elizabeth Mather College of Liberal, Fine, and Practice Arts; Martha C. Weaver founded the Martha Weaver School; Antoinette Bigelow created a school in Kentucky; and Margaret Stratton created courses for Black students in the South after the Civil War. Abby Shaw Mayhew traveled overseas to Asia, creating the Physical Training School for Chinese Women. Even if deans of women did not go on to become presidents or principals, they typically continued to be involved in one way or another (Gerda, 2004). Some continued involvement with the YWCA, which had played an important role in supporting the college women they worked with during the rise of coeducation, and other performed work with a variety of associations both related and not related to education (Gerda, 2004).

Many deans of women, in contradiction with expectations of the eras in which they worked, did not marry. Gerda (2004) found that out of 130 deans of women, 28 married and 11 had children. If a dean of women did marry, she typically waited until after she had retired, fearing the impact it would have on her professional career. Ada Louise Comstock, engaged to Wallace Notestein, broke off the engagement until marrying him 31 years later, after she retired from being president of Radcliffe College (Solomon, 1993, in Nidiffer, 2000, p. 105).

Some deans of women mentioned the important role that family and close female friendships played in their lives. It is problematic to speculate that some of these intimate relationships between deans of women were romantic since they occurred before the creation of terms to describe same-sex romantic attraction (Gerda, 2004). Deans of women whom might

now be identified as lesbian if more were about their personal lives would not necessarily have identified themselves as such then.

Deans of Men and the Student Personnel Movement

In order to understand the factors influencing the decline of the dean of women, it is important to understand the brief history of deans of men. The eventual creation of a dean of men position on campuses across the nation signaled a change in the dean of women position as well as the emergence of the student personnel movement. Hired with less urgency than deans of women, institutions sought deans of men to deal primarily with the misconduct of male students, which commonly included skipping class, cheating on exams, consuming alcohol, gambling, and fights (Horowitz, 1984; Schwartz, 2003). Student discipline became a popular topic of the meetings of deans of men, and was the most publically recognized aspect of their role. In addition to addressing student misconduct, institutions also expected deans of men to uphold notions of muscular Christianity, in contrast to the expectation for deans of women to instill Victorian ideals of womanhood in female students. This brand of masculinity supported roughness and strict discipline in order to develop college men to become better leaders (Clark, 2010; Norwood, 1994).

Unlike early deans of women—who valued professional standards and training—deans of men believed that their ability to be successful in the role came from natural talent. Few saw a need for formal training or graduate studies, since they believed a deans' personality would assist him in his new role. Similar to deans of women, deans of men had very little guidance from their superiors, who asked them to create their role as they pleased. Though they often inherited the unwanted tasks of college presidents, deans of men had the power to do what they wanted in the role, especially since their superiors believed in their natural deaning ability. Schwartz

(2003) credits Thomas Arkle Clark as one of the first deans of men, serving at the University of Illinois beginning in 1909, with others following primarily in Midwestern schools.

Since deans of men largely believed their natural talents that prepared them for their role, it is not surprising that the first conference for deans of men occurred in 1919, decades after Marion Talbot first called a meeting to establish the ACA. During this initial conference, five deans from Iowa, Minnesota, Syracuse, Iowa State Teachers College, and Wisconsin met in Madison, Wisconsin (Schwartz, 2003). Professional organizations for deans of men, such as the National Association of Deans of Men (NADM), continued to meet, attracting male deans from across the country. These meetings carried a less formal tone, instead involving a lot of socializing amongst deans. Rather than being based in research, such as the conferences for deans of women, deans of men spent most of their time sharing stories from their home institutions and enjoying local activities (Schwartz, 1997).

Deans of men soon took issue with the rise of the personnel movement, which favored the use of psychological tests and personality inventories to categorize students. They criticized these new approaches, which contrasted with their philosophy of deans of men's' natural talent for the position, claiming them to be ineffective and insensitive. Similar to their hands on approach to navigating their positions, deans of men celebrated one-on-one interactions with students as more successful than those based on test results (Schwartz, 2003). Some deans of women supported these new ideals, hoping that an emphasis on skill rather than physical ability would further gender equality. They believed that this new emphasis would be a more effective way of guiding women into careers, unlike other methods that herded them into caretaking jobs (Schwartz, 1997).

Other deans of women and deans of men openly resisted the personnel movement that occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s, relying heavily on psychology to categorize students and guide them into appropriate careers (Williamson, 1949). Some of the tests introduced to higher education originated in the military, such as the rating scale of Walter Dill Scott, used to guide military personnel into occupations (Schwartz, 1997). After World War II, attendance at NADAM conferences hit an all-time high, with 217 attendees at the 1949 conference in Highland Park, Illinois. By 1951, the organization had changed its name to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), reflecting the changes brought on by the student personnel movement.

What Became of Deans of Women?

After World War I, admissions and counseling offices solidified themselves on campuses across the nation, along with a rise in techniques for working with students that were based in modern psychology. Psychologists had long disproved notions of women's mental inferiority, changing the institutions' focus from being on men and women to the student as a whole. These changing attitudes, along with an increased focus on intelligence and personality tests, caused institutions to question the need for separate services for men and women. A decade later, during the Great Depression, dean positions became vulnerable, especially at small institutions whose dwindling budgets could not support a dean's salary. Salaries for administrators and faculty at institutions who decided to keep them dropped as much as 25% during 1932 and 1933 (Gerda, 2004, pp. 81-82).

The Great Depression also had an effect on professional organizations for deans of women, such as the NADW, which faced shrinking attendance at national conferences and a decrease in membership, as many institutions could no longer support the professional

development of those on their campus (Tuttle, 1996). In 1932, NADW announced a decrease in membership, losing 200 members, leaving a mere 907 remaining members. At their 1933 conference, the organization recorded their lowest attendance in nearly 10 years, and announced a nearly 30% reduction of their budget.

During this time, the U.S. number of women receiving degrees fell dramatically, and did not return to prewar numbers until 1947, when women's enrollment slowly began to rise. Women's enrollment dropped during 1940, when women received 17.7% of all degrees, and was still at only 12% in 1950 (Hartmann, 1982). This limiting of female enrollment not only affected the number of women on campus as students, but also influenced the number of female administrators. NADW and AAUW journals of the period both drew attention to the G.I. Bill's effects and highlighted the shrinking number of opportunities on campus for women. These and other organizations took a strong stance against limiting women's enrollment, worrying that it was pushing women away from the academic and leadership opportunities they had access to during the war. Administrators applied procedures originating from the personnel movement to higher education, many of them familiar to the soldiers infiltrating institutions across the country (Schwartz, 2003).

In 1946, President Harry Truman founded the President's Commission on Higher Education, which released *Higher Education for American Democracy* between 1947 and 1948 (Tuttle, 1996). This six volume report discussed the role of colleges and universities, and demanded institutional change-one of these changes calling for a centralized dean role, rather than a dean of men and dean of women. These proposed changes were subsequently included in the 1948 *Student Personnel Point of View*, reiterating the need for more centralized administrative positions. Additionally, during the 1940s and 1950s, self-studies became a

popular way for institutions to assess their organizational structures. In alignment with these new ideals, many colleges and universities created dean's offices after a self-study in an attempt to increase efficiency.

While some institutions maintained a dean of women position until the 1960s and 1970s, most institutions disposed of the role between the late 1940s and early 1950s. The decline of deans of women symbolized a decrease in female administrators on campus that went unchallenged until "Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, and affirmative action" (Tuttle, 1996, p. 7). Kathryn Nemeth Tuttle, in her dissertation on deans of women, cited numerous reasons for the change:

Gender relations; professionalization, including the rise of the student personnel movement; governmental and quasi-governmental directives and those of accrediting agencies and the self-study process; sexual, racial, and religious discrimination; World War Two and the Cold War; the postwar expansion of higher education and student services; institutional and organizational power structures; changes in students' legal status and the decline of *in loco parentis*; civil rights legislations; the women's movement; and the authority and influence of individual deans. (Tuttle, 1996, p. 7)

Once again, organizations such as the NADW and AUUW were concerned with decline of dean of women on campuses (Tuttle, 1996). In a survey of 218 institutions, 165 of which were coeducational, only 98 had "favorable" conditions for deans of women, meaning that women in the position had faculty responsibilities and opportunities to play a large role in campus decision making. Sixty-nine institutions were found to have no female administrators on campus with access to decision making. The AAUW attempted to inspire change by including possession of a dean of women as a requirement for accreditation, reflected in Standard IV of

their accreditation survey, in hopes of encouraging institutions to maintain or reinstate the position.

Professional organizations also changed in response to the changing nature of deans of women. As the position began to decline, many organizations decided to combine, such as the American Council of Guidance of Personnel Associations (ACGPA), which formed in 1934 from the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and NADW. Deans of women often feared these combinations, worrying that it would result in a similar centralization than the one that occurred during the disappearing of their position.

During a 1947 convention, NADW president Dorothy Gebauer and University of Pennsylvania dean of women Althea K. Hottel discussed the centralization of the dean position and agreed that institutions with one should still be able to receive accreditation (Tuttle, 1996). University presidents put pressure on AAUW to shorten their accreditation process and to remove the presence of a dean of women as a requirement. AAUW complied, changing Standard IV to no longer include the presence of a dean of women as mandatory to receive accreditation, and shortened the number of questions on their application.

Deans of women themselves saw a number of factors as contributing to their decline, though there was no unanimous opinion on which factors were more salient. Some deans were disgruntled with the deteriorating academic requirements and faculty responsibilities of the position, identifying certain degrees or graduate programs as capable of preparing deans of women for the profession. This perspective differed from the view of deans of men, viewing some men as a natural fit for the role, and requiring no additional schooling. Others criticized their peers, claiming that they focused too much on providing social opportunities for students, as contributing to the decline.

Tensions rose between AAUW and NADW at this time over each organization's response to the decline of dean of women: AAUW criticized NADW members for not being active enough in trying to protect the position. The NADW stepped in and revised *The Dean of Women in the Institution of Higher Learning*, and sent copies of the pamphlet to institutions who had eliminated deans of women on their campus, as well as institutions home to NADW members who felt their position was in danger (Tuttle, 1996). The NADW included organizations such as the National Panhellenic Conference, Businesses and Professional Women, and the Federation of Women's Clubs, to assist them in encouraging colleges and universities to retain female administrators.

The Legacy of Deans of Women

Despite the best efforts of professional organizations and deans of women themselves, the position "dean of women" ultimately disappeared from colleges and universities. While the title certainly phased out of the institution, scholars dispute where exactly the decades of momentum created by these women went. Some draw commonalities between deans of women and university women's centers or women's studies departments, while others credit deans of women as the beginning of the field of Student Affairs (Williamson, 1949).

Nidiffer (2000) examined the creation of the deans of men position, and its contribution to the decline of female administrators. While the responsibilities of a dean of men resembled that of deans of women, deans of men rarely approached their positions with the same student-centered philosophies as their female peers had utilized. She drew parallels between the decline of the dean of women position and the creation of women's centers and women's studies departments created on college campuses. Nidiffer (2000) claimed that the missions of these departments and resources compared to the philosophies of deans of women show a strikingly

similar commitment to women students. She also claimed that despite the absence of a dean of women, many student affairs professionals perform work that resembles that of early deans, serving as advocates for students and using similar tactics to connect with students.

Gerda (2004) defines the field of Student Affairs, also known as College Student Personnel as “the group of professional educators who work to achieve the mission of a college or university primarily through the intentional enhancement of co-curricular learning and development of students in higher education” (p. 11). While “most scholars who have written about the history of student affairs agree that the field reaches back at least to the end of the 19th century” very few historians write about the early years of Student Affairs work (Gerda, 2004, p. 11). Additionally, Gerda quotes Appleton, Briggs, and Rhatigan (1978) as saying, “We must understand that, in substantial ways, professional identity is rooted in the past. We cannot afford to continue a legacy of indifference” (Appleton, Briggs, & Rhatigan, 1978, in Gerda, 2004, p. 3).

The National Association of Deans of Men (NADM) evolved to become the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in 1951, the first national professional organization for the field (Komives & Woodard Jr., 2003). Women did not hold office positions within the organization until 1966, although women began attending NASPA conferences in 1926. In 1976, over two decades after the founding of the organization, NASPA elected Alice Manicur of Frostburg State University as its first female president (Komives & Woodard Jr., 2003). The American College Personnel Association (ACPA), an additional national professional organization, evolved from the National Association of Appointment Secretaries (NAAS) in 1992, which held its first meeting in conjunction with NADW in 1924 (Komives & Woodard Jr., 2003). NAAS collaborated with numerous professional organizations before

becoming ACPA, including the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD).

Gerda (2004) points out that while the National Association of Deans of Men (NADM) evolved to become NASPA in 1951, the first national professional organization for the field, that scholars should avoid crediting deans of men with building a foundation created by the work of deans of women. In the opening pages of her dissertation, she criticizes scholars who write about the field without a desire to unearth its origins. She draws attention to numerous Student Affairs texts on the history of the field, pointing out the ways that they each fail to recognize the work of deans of women. Others, such as Sartorius (2010), contribute to the devaluing of deans of women when equating the work of deans of men with that of deans of women, referring to them as “the counterpart to deans of men” (p. 7).

Despite the ways that Student Affairs professionals may neglect to recognize the contributions of deans of women, or the importance of acknowledging the history of higher education, numerous ties exist between the philosophies of deans of women and the practice of modern professionals in the field. Some theories on student development have focused specifically on social identities, such as gender, and the ways that those identities influence students’ experiences within higher education (Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A., 2010). Just as deans of women focused on the development of college women, numerous scholars have studied differences between the experiences of college men and college women, as well as the ways that sex might affect development over time (Constantinople, 1969; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979; Orlofsky, 1978; Waterman & Nevid, 1977).

The individualized approach to working with students exhibited by some early deans continued long after the decline of the dean of women position. Early deans of women used methods such as a notecard system to organize student information, or guiding college women in careers based on interest rather than into traditional fields for women such as teaching. These individualized approaches focused on the student as a whole, rather than pressuring them into gendered opportunities or career paths. The “Student Personnel Point of View” (SPPV) report released in 1949, revised from a 1937 version, included a focus on the same individualized approaches utilized by deans of women in the early 1900s, encouraging professionals to recognize differences among the students they served (American Council on Education, 1949).

“Student Housing as Personnel Work” comments on the role that student housing plays in Student Affairs, and discusses the importance of group dynamics within living environments, as well as the role of addressing misconduct (Borrseon, B. J., 1949). While early college women did not have access to on campus housing before deans of women, an early role of the dean eventually became to live among students and tend to any issues that may arise, in addition to enforcing policies. Although modern housing work is performed by a Student Affairs professional and not a dean of women, many of the roles discussed in “Student Housing as Personnel Work” (Borrseon, B. J., 1949).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Deans of women, and the women before them hired under a variety of titles, played a crucial role in the lives of college women. While their positions were initially vague, deans hollowed out a space at their institutions for the students they worked with, serving as an “entering wedge” for women looking to receive an education (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 2). They demanded the respect and support of college and university presidents, which came easier for some than others, influencing the public’s perception of the “Woman Problem” (Nidiffer, 2000, p. 32). Deans of women found space for their students in the form of housing, organizations, and leadership opportunities, and helped them achieve access to institutions that were parallel to that experienced by their male peers.

The role of a dean of women on campus shifted dramatically over 75 years, requiring deans to show tremendous flexibility as the world around them changed. During World War I and World War II, deans stepped forward to support war efforts on their campuses. When individuals attempted to justify banning women from institutions, deans stepped in to defend them. If institutions were unwelcoming, deans protected their students, opening up their homes and savings to support them. As women gained and lost access to various fields over time, deans reworked their guidance to give their students the best possible chance at a fulfilling career.

While the position of dean of women was short lived, these extraordinary women changed the landscape of higher education in the United States. Deans of women, though rarely acknowledged, played an important role in the formation of the field of Student Affairs, as pointed out by Tuttle (1996) and Gerda (2004), and in the formation of women’s centers and

women's studies departments on campuses across the country (Nidiffer, 2000). In reading their own words, it is easy to draw parallels between their core philosophies, and the goals of these campus professionals and resources.

It is difficult, however, to say whether early deans of women recognized the ways in which their work would endure on college campuses, or on the other hand, if they knew that their names, once celebrated by their beloved students and peers, would soon be forgotten. It is difficult to imagine the modern campus without the work performed by deans of women, and impossible to speculate what degree of access women would have to higher education, had deans not worked tirelessly to ensure institutions included them. Though the first cohort of deans has long since passed, the tremendous amount of work performed by them has continued to provide a foundation for college women and campus professionals, and will continue to impact higher education for years to come.

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