

APPENDIX A

Renewal Commission for Antioch College
Final Report to Board of Trustees
June 4, 2004

An Abbreviated History of Antioch College

By Daniel Fallon

The Founding Years

In 1852, extending a distinguished career as a national educational leader, Horace Mann accepted an invitation from representatives of the Christian Church to serve as the founding president of Antioch College. The College admitted its first class of students in the fall of 1853. A strong secularist, renowned as a champion and developer of public schooling in the United States, Mann was attracted in part by the trustees' decision for the College to become the first institution of higher learning in the nation to admit women as degree candidates on the same footing and to the same degree curricula as men. Mann was skillful in negotiating a painful division among the founding trustees, who reflected an imminent schism in the recently founded Church between relatively formal doctrinal "Christians" and more expansive thinking "Unitarians." In his commencement address of 1859 Mann, whose health was failing, issued a ringing appeal to the graduates, "I beseech you to treasure up in your hearts these my parting words: Be ashamed to die until you have earned some victory for humanity!" He died only a few months later, and was buried on the college campus, although disinterred later by his widow, an unreconstructed Easterner, and transferred to a cemetery in Providence, Rhode Island.

The trustees appointed a distinguished educator to succeed Mann, Thomas Hill, who left in 1862 to assume the presidency of Harvard, where he preceded C. W. Eliot. During this period the College was continually distracted by the doctrinal conflict among the trustees, which was finally resolved in 1862 when the Unitarian faction won control of the College and its finances. The now unquestionably nonsectarian College proceeded to develop a good academic reputation and enjoyed modest success. In 1865, trustee Edward Everett Hale, who served on the Board until his resignation in 1899, announced that the Unitarians had secured an endowment for the College of \$100,000. Although minimally endowed, the College possessed a handsome ensemble of buildings designed and built by one of the trustees, Alpheus Marshall Merrifield, "the master builder from Massachusetts," who borrowed directly from the then recent prize-winning design for the Smithsonian Castle by James Renwick, Jr. In the tiny bucolic village of Yellow Springs, Ohio (current population ~ 4500 citizens), the College's principal asset, then as now, is the land it possesses. A magnificent 1000 acre nature preserve, now called Glen Helen, which is home to the famous yellow springs, is adjacent to the campus and currently owned by the trustees of Antioch University.

Struggling with low enrollments (between 1857 and 1924 there were never more than 500 students enrolled in any academic year) and insufficient financial resources, the College ultimately succumbed to the harsh environment for liberal arts colleges at the turn of the twentieth century, in the shadow of the rise of the research university and the growing availability of public higher education. During the Civil War the College suspended operation between 1862 and 1865 partly because of the disruption caused by the national calamity, but also because of the search for endowment funds that were entangled in a dispute among factions on the Board of Trustees. Since then, having suspended operations once more for lack of funds in 1881-82, the College was about to close its doors forever and liquidate its assets in 1919 when a new trustee, an engineer named Arthur Morgan, proposed a radical redesign of the College curriculum that he felt could save it and benefit the nation. The other trustees responded by electing him president.

Morgan's Antioch

Arthur Morgan, a committed lay leader of the Unitarian church, was already a famous local figure when he joined the Board of Antioch College. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and raised in St. Cloud, Minnesota, Morgan apprenticed in his father's engineering company. Having participated in several water management projects on his own time in Colorado, he specialized in hydraulic engineering and formed the Morgan Engineering Company, which was hired to design and manage the Miami River Flood Control Project following a disastrous flood that devastated the city of Dayton. His brilliant success at managing the river water in 1915 gained for him a reputation as the leading hydraulic engineer of his time. He was also a Utopian advocate, who spoke freely of a vision he had at age seventeen while walking in the woods of an ideal community based upon mutual respect and individual labor for the common good. At the height of his career, in the mid 1930's, he finished writing a biography that had occupied him off and on since his youth of Edward Bellamy, the nineteenth century author of the Utopian novel *Erewhon*. Morgan followed this work with another book entitled *Nowhere was Somewhere*. Morgan called his plan for Antioch College "practical industrial education," and its components were to be ten-week alternating periods of work and study, called cooperative education, and rigorous high-standards of general education aimed at developing versatile competence and ability rather than highly specialized technique.

Reorganized and reopened in 1920 under the cooperative education plan, Antioch College grew steadily in size, reputation and impact for the next half century. Morgan's communitarian philosophy required treating students as adults and involving them fully in the life of the College. Morgan's successor as President, Algo D. Henderson, significantly expanded the role of students and faculty in the government of the Antioch Community. Academic governance was shared by the Community Council (six students and three faculty), with its center of gravity in student affairs, and the Administrative Council (six faculty and three students), which dealt with academic curricula and faculty affairs, including recommendations for hiring, promotion, and tenure. These institutions continue to govern

College life today, as does the tradition of frequent community discussion of issues affecting the life of the College. Students voted in the 1920's to bar intercollegiate athletics, in favor of community intramural sports, and to ban national fraternities and sororities (including Phi Beta Kappa), in favor of dormitory organizations.

Arthur Morgan was a friend of Charles F. Kettering, a Dayton engineer who made a fortune from his invention of the automobile electric self-starter. Kettering's confidence in Morgan, and his observation of the development of Antioch College, made him a generous supporter of the College. From the decade of the 1920's through the decade of the 1950's, Kettering invested heavily in the physical plant, providing a science building, research laboratories, a dormitory, and other amenities. In the 1930's Kettering offered to provide a substantial endowment for the College, but Morgan declined, maintaining that the College needed to be lean to be successful, and should always be striving to make ends meet rather than relying on the largesse of others. This anecdote, confirmed by the Kettering family, is remembered with regret by the subsequent stewards of the College.

Morgan's original emphasis on "co-op jobs" was for the work to take place within the Village of Yellow Springs, and to benefit the Village and the College. Therefore, during the early life of the College students founded several local industries, many of which persist today, such as the Yellow Springs Instrument Company, The Morris Bean Company, and the Antioch Bookplate Company (now a multi-national firm renamed Antioch Publishing), which produces more than 90% of all commercially produced bookplates in the United States. Gradually, however, co-op placements extended to cover locations throughout the United States and, beginning in the 1950's, to other countries as well. In little more than a decade, Morgan's vision had more than fulfilled the hopes of the trustees who appointed him.

In 1933, Morgan was appointed by President Roosevelt to direct the newly authorized Tennessee Valley Authority, and he took a leave of absence to assume this responsibility. His technical execution of TVA design and construction was widely hailed, but his communitarian philosophy led to a vision of incorporating this massive public-works project into local rural economic development in ways that upset business interests and constituted a political liability, causing President Roosevelt to relieve him of his post in 1938. In the meantime, Antioch College flourished, being named in a 1935 study of higher education by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as one of the top three colleges in the United States in terms of academic quality. It was at this time that Clark Kerr served during the 1936-37 academic year as Instructor of Economics at Antioch, before moving on to California. Morgan resigned the presidency of Antioch College in 1936, but returned to the Village of Yellow Springs to live and work, dying there in 1975.

After World War II

Antioch College was perfectly positioned to benefit from the remarkable expansion of higher education that occurred in the United States following 1945. The astonishing catalytic

effect of publication of *General Education in a Free Society*, the so-called Harvard Redbook, on most colleges and universities in the United States only reinforced the strong tradition of general education well-rooted at Antioch, leading to a long period of growth from the end of World War II through the early 1970's.

Faculty included such representative luminaries as Robert Metcalf and Gertrude Metcalf in Art; Robert Bieri, Stanley Goldberg, Oliver Loud, Robert McDowell, and Albert Stewart in Biological and Physical Sciences; Samuel Baskin in Education; Harry Steinhauer in German; Milton Goldberg, Judson Jerome, Albert Liddle, and Nolan Miller in Literature; Walter Anderson, David Epstein, and Donald Keats in Music; Al Denman, George Geiger, and Morris Keeton in Philosophy; Ruth Churchill, Stanley Garn, Harry J. Jerison, and Jerome Kagan in Psychology; Irwin Abrams, Victor Ayoub, Manmatha Nath Chatterjee, Heinz Eulau, Louis Filler, Robert S. Fogarty, Barrett Hollister, and John Sparks in Social Science; Meredith Dallas, Asaad Kelada, Arthur Lithgow, and Paul Treichler in Theatre; and many others.

Students attracted to the College included Peter Adair, Virginia Hamilton Adoff, David Apter, John David Bellamy, Warren Bennis, Larry Block, Mario Capecechi, Leland Clark, Eleanor Clark, LaDoris Hazzard Cordell, Gerry Cunningham, Lisa Delpit, Matt Denman, Wendy Ewald, David C. Farrell, Ed Fisher, William A. Gamson, Herb Gardner, Clifford Geertz, Steven Jay Gould, Fred Greenstein, John Hammond, Meg Hansson, A. Leon Higginbotham, Frances D. Horowitz, Peter Irons, Richard Kaplan, Arno Karlen, Jorma Kaukonen, Coretta Scott King, John Korty, Sylvia Law, Ted Levitt, Roy London, Deborah Meier, Miriam Meisler, Nell Merlino, Sylvia Nasar, Cary Nelson, Prexy Nesbitt, Nicholas Noxon, Margaret Gethman Nicols, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Charles M. Schuff, Rod Serling, Michael Spock, Joan Argetsinger Steitz, and Mark Strand.

The College campus was also a focus for national attention in artistic and cultural activity. Especially prominent was "Shakespeare Under the Stars," a repertory theatre conducted in a replica of the Globe Theatre constructed on the steps of Antioch Hall. It was the first repertory theatre in the United States to perform every play known to be written by William Shakespeare, and attracted New York Times critic Brooks Atkinson, as well as resident thespians Jack Bittner, Pauline Flanagan, David Hooks, Earl Hyman, and Ellis Raab.

Although finances were always precarious, with the permanent endowment hovering around \$5 million dollars by 1960, the enrollment was healthy and the cash flow positive. The basic curriculum implemented in the 1920's, which required five years of alternating work and study to complete requirements for a B.A. or B.S. degree, was fine-tuned to suit the times, but with each revision was strengthened and reinforced rather than reformed or altered. One major addition was the establishment in 1957 of Antioch Education Abroad, which located co-op jobs for students in a variety of overseas settings, and established formal facilitating offices in Guanajuato, Mexico; Besançon, France; Exeter, England; and Tübingen, Germany. Enrollment in the late 1950's was a little more than 1000 students, with about 600 on campus at any one time. By the mid 1960's the enrollment had risen to more than 1700 students, and in 1972 enrollment peaked at 3400 students.

The Troubled 1970's

The late 1960's contained elements of promise and peril for Antioch College. In addition to its traditional success at educating students, the College had become popular as well, allowing it to be more discriminating in its admissions. Other institutions of higher learning began to copy many of Antioch's distinctive innovations, including cooperative education, service learning, study abroad that was genuinely academic, and community government. The President of Antioch College, James P. Dixon, M.D., was approached by fledgling (or in some cases struggling) institutions with proposals to affiliate with the College, based upon affinity with its educational philosophy.

Proclaiming that "the Antioch idea is too big to be confined to Yellow Springs," President Dixon encouraged the development of "Antioch College field centers" located in various sites around the country, and serving primarily nontraditional students. No strategy or plan was developed, but rather the acquisition of centers occurred on an opportunistic basis. At the same time, competition for high-quality faculty became intense in the national market, tempting successful faculty at Antioch College in Yellow Springs to leave for positions offering better compensation within comparable or better academic programs. With hardly any endowment to cushion its investment, the College found itself forced to subsidize its "off-campus" centers, and thus unable to compete for quality faculty in Yellow Springs. Faculty in the off-campus centers were overwhelmingly adjunct instructors on short-term contracts rather than full-time faculty well grounded in academic traditions and scholarship.

Faculty in Yellow Springs grew increasingly impatient and frustrated, arguing that the poorly planned expansion was destroying the strong academic reputation that had been built over the past half century, and that the College was squandering resources it badly needed to maintain its quality in Yellow Springs. Supporters of the expansion saw it as a visionary move into the future, and considered the local criticism to be reactionary small mindedness. The rapidly changing dynamics fostered a dialectical polarization of advocacy to two extremes: an established Antioch College, based in Yellow Springs; and a future as yet undefined Antioch, embracing the world at large.

With the structure of Antioch College evolving in a radical and seemingly uncontrolled way, the Antioch College community, in keeping with the spirit of the late 1960's, embraced an agenda of admitting substantial numbers of disadvantaged students, primarily urban students of color. These students, who were offered full financial aid comprised of support from the Rockefeller Foundation, federal, state, and locally endowed funding sources, began arriving in the late 1960's. Many of these specially admitted students were not content with the College curriculum, finding general education less persuasively compatible with their ambitions than specific skills tailored to entry in the marketplace. Some were loudly critical of Antioch's requirements for graduation. The special

circumstances of selection for admission and financial support for these students created grounds for intellectual debate about the purposes of the program. Many of the specially admitted students tended to act and to be perceived as a group.

In 1972 the president of the United States, Richard Nixon, proposed to restructure financial aid to college students, removing institutions of higher education as the means by which funds were distributed. This threatened to eliminate Antioch's ability to secure aid that it could then channel to "exceptionally needy" students, one of the mainstays of financial support for the specially admitted Antioch students. These students, who depended upon this support for their cost-free education, thus demanded that the administration of the College provide guarantees that their costs would not increase if the President were successful in implementing his proposed policy. As uncomfortable as this scenario appears, it was not uncommon on college campuses in the early 1970's, and Antioch's tradition as a leader in the civil rights struggle and as seedbed for Utopian communitarian possibilities of human organization ought to have made it possible to find compromise, seek intellectual resolution, and ease the tension.

The political capital sustaining the Antioch community spirit had been severely depleted, however, by the expansion into off-campus centers and the growing resentment of campus faculty toward the administration. The result was a disaster rivaling any tragedy imagined by Aeschylus. The President of Antioch College and his administration awkwardly pointed to a low endowment and lack of financial resources, maintaining that any reasonable person could see that the College could not provide the guarantee that the specially admitted students were seeking. Some of the students, in turn, perceived this response as insensitive to their demand and raised the stakes by occupying the administrative offices and classrooms. Faculty and other students, demoralized by a situation they saw as threatening to the College and spinning out of control, refused to "cross the picket line."

The situation quickly escalated into an ugly and widely publicized student and faculty strike, in which all grievances, large and small, were publicly aired. The strike was put down after six weeks, when an African-American student leader petitioned a local court to end the strike and a large contingent of Greene County police officers then peaceably removed the occupying strikers. The wounds had been opened, however. Morale was low, tempers were high, a faculty tribunal was established to try faculty who had violated community rules, an expulsion committee was formed to decide penalties for students, and the College administration was both attacked and defended. As it turned out, political compromise prevailed in Washington. The new configuration for financial aid contained elements of the President's proposal (that first were called "Basic Educational Opportunity Grants" and later became known as "Pell grants"), while leaving the prior programs intact (later called "Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants").

By the time moderate voices at Antioch gained the upper hand and the College resumed its teaching program, the damage to the College's reputation was beyond immediate

repair. Enrollment dropped the following year by more than one thousand to 2300 students, in 1975 it was 1600 students, in 1977 it was 1100, and by 1981 it was 500 students, where it has hovered from that day to this. In the same period the permanent faculty shrank from more than 150 to about 60 instructional staff.

The Recent Past

In 1975, the trustees relieved President Dixon of his responsibilities, the first time in the more than 120-year history of the College that a president had been thus removed. There were more than 30 off-campus centers of Antioch College at that time. The trustees then entered an era of cautious but vigilant direct oversight aimed at restoring fiscal stability, strengthening the academic program, and enhancing modern management. Despite numerous changes in personnel and organization, the recent history of Antioch College can reasonably be interpreted as incremental steps taken by courageous, imaginative, and thoughtful faculty, administrators, and students, and by leadership exercised by individual board members, supported by the board as a whole, and moving steadily towards these goals.

The Board approved a process and secured an outcome that resulted in the closure of all but four of the “off-campus centers,” using as principal criteria that the program be academically excellent and financially healthy. An administrative reorganization resulted in the establishment of a Chancellor for Antioch University with a President at each of five constituent units: Antioch College in Yellow Springs; Antioch University McGregor, located in Yellow Springs, but serving local and Dayton area nontraditional students; Antioch New England Graduate School, a graduate-only campus located in Keene, NH; Antioch Southern California with campuses in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles; and Antioch Seattle.

Present Situation

Despite the trauma of a precipitous reduction in size, Antioch College continues to attract and graduate extraordinary students of unusual character and ability. The College excels annually in benchmark data supplied by the National Survey of Student Engagement, routinely scoring in the 99th percentile on “Enriching Educational Experiences,” and above the 90th percentile on such dimensions as “Active and Collaborative Learning,” and “Student-Faculty Interaction.” In the most recent NSSE survey, conducted in 2003, Antioch was cited as an exemplar for receiving highest scores in the nation in two benchmark categories, enriching educational experiences for first-year students and for seniors, and ranked in the top ten percent of seven of the other ten measures.

In a study conducted periodically by Franklin and Marshall College tracking the baccalaureate origins of Ph.D. holders (a cumulative analysis of all Ph.D. holders from 1920 through 1995) ranked Antioch 20th among 498 Baccalaureate institutions in the number of Ph.D. degrees awarded to its graduates. Antioch alumni earned 1363 Ph.D. degrees in that period, where the range was 4400 for the top ranked institution, Oberlin College, and 149 for

the lowest ranked institution. Of even greater interest is a recent survey by Franklin and Marshall covering only the years from 1986 to 1995, a time when the number of students at Antioch College rarely exceeded 600 students in any given year, and the College was continually struggling administratively and financially. In that ranking, Antioch placed 32nd among 498 Baccalaureate institutions in the number of Ph.D. degrees awarded to its graduates. Antioch alumni earned 249 Ph.D. degrees in that period, where the range was 959 for the top ranked institution, again Oberlin College, and 41 for the lowest ranked institution. If these numbers were adjusted for the size of the graduating class, Antioch's ranking would be among the very highest in the nation.

Graduates of the College continue to excel in a variety of professions and enterprises, justifying the assessment made by Loren Pope, former education editor for the New York Times, in his current website and in his book, *Colleges that Change Lives*, in which he asserts about Antioch, "There is no college or university in the country that makes a more profound difference in a young person's life, or that creates more effective adults." That this extraordinary American educational institution continues to succeed at very high levels is a tribute to the enduring strength of a special mixture of academic and intellectual influences and especially to a hard-working talented and committed faculty that persists in its dedication to the development of students.

Antioch College is a singular presence among liberal arts colleges. There is no other institution that systematically combines off-campus formal work experience with rigorous liberal education. It is an especially American form of higher education, combining the constructivism of John Dewey, the pragmatism of William James, the inventiveness of Thomas Edison, and the Utopian ideals of Edward Bellamy, while also maintaining the classical heritage of the colonial college tradition that Horace Mann built upon as its founding president. The loss of Antioch College would leave a vacuum in American higher education that simply could not be filled and would be remembered with lingering regret.