

## Courses of Study

The conception of a liberal education has changed very radically within the last three-quarters of a century. When colleges were first established in Iowa, proficiency in Greek, Latin, and mathematics was regarded as the proper qualification of a Bachelor of Arts. No other non-professional degrees were conferred, for the age of specialization in types of culture, each with its own insignia, was still in the future. But after the Civil War the claims of science caused college curricula to be remodeled in accordance with the temper of a mechanical epoch. Gradually the number of subjects taught in college was increased, students were allowed more freedom in selecting their studies, and the courses were designed to be practical. A survey of college catalogues reveals these general trends, but also shows that each school developed in its own distinctive manner.

During the decade that Iowa College was located in Davenport ten young men were graduated. It is quite certain, of course, that the only degree conferred was the B. A., and none but young men could earn it. The first class consisting of two members, John and William Windsor, was graduated in 1854, after completing a course which included, during the Freshman year, algebra, a term of history, a

little elocution, "Legendre", and Latin — Livy, Ovid, Horace, Vergil, and Latin prose composition. During the second year they studied Horace, Demosthenes, Thucydides and Greek prose composition, German, surveying "with use of instruments", conic sections, botany, and the philosophy of English grammar. As Juniors, calculus, astronomy, zoology, mineralogy, physiology "with charts", philosophy, rhetoric, natural theology, Tacitus, selected Greek tragedies, and both Latin and Greek composition commanded their attention. When they became Seniors the only Greek and Latin required were Plato's *Republic* and Cicero on the immortality of the soul, chemistry and geology completed the scientific agendum, and whatever intellectual energy remained was devoted to logic, mental philosophy, Upham on the will, moral science, evidences of Christianity, Butler's *Analogy*, political economy, and Story on the Constitution.

Cornell College graduated its first class in 1858 but the degree conferred was not in arts. The class included two members, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Cavanagh. The gentleman of the class was honored with the degree of Bachelor of Science and the lady with that of Mistress of Science. No student was admitted to the Freshman class of the college until he passed a satisfactory examination in geography, English grammar, arithmetic, elements of algebra, and elementary Latin and Greek. Moreover, no student was eligible to the Freshman class under four-

teen years of age, nor to any of the higher classes under a corresponding age.

The course of study was almost the same as at Iowa College, but there was a little more flexibility. Though exercises in Latin and Greek prose composition were required through the entire course, students might pursue French, German, or Hebrew during the junior and senior years in place of certain of the prescribed studies. Students completing the whole college course received the degree of B. A. Those passing a satisfactory examination in all but the languages were entitled to the degree of B. S. Ladies were permitted to pursue the same studies, and receive the same honors as gentlemen. According to the catalogue this course of study, "prescribed in the best colleges and universities", was "thorough, extensive, and systematic".

Although it seems that a university was planned at Mount Pleasant, Iowa Wesleyan was no more than a college during the early years. But the announcements of 1869, outlined not less than seven departments. The preparatory department fitted the student for either the collegiate or scientific departments. For the classical or collegiate course a period of two years preparation was provided and for the scientific course one year. The regular college course for the B. A. degree required four years while the scientific course, for the degree of B. S., required but three. The latter included "an extensive course of Mathematics, Natural Science, and

English Literature''; and such as were unable to pursue a regular college course might, after completing the required examination, enter the briefer course from which a diploma was obtainable. This shorter or scientific course had been arranged to accommodate that "large and growing class who desire to prosecute all the studies of the Collegiate Course except Ancient Languages." Nevertheless, all subjects in the two departments were equally available to the students in either.

Besides these collegiate courses there was a department of theology in which the appropriate subjects were presented. In the law department the course required two terms in each of two years. The matter presented during the first term was declared to be not only essential for one who intended to become a practitioner of law but it would be of great value also to one who desired a liberal education. There were departments for the teaching of the French and the German languages and for the fine arts of music and painting which occupied an independent relation, it appears, in instruction and support.

It was not until 1865 that Luther College had in operation the full six years of the course later maintained. That is to say, in 1861-1862 (the first year in Iowa), there were only three classes, namely, quarta, quinta, and sexta; and hence a period of two or three years was necessary to bring classes to the advanced group before the entire course was pre-

sented. During this time sexta, or the lowest class, pursued the Latin, Norwegian, German, and the English languages, religion, arithmetic, and geography; quinta had practically the same subjects which, to be sure, were continued in advanced form; quarta retained the languages and the instruction in religion as before and added Greek, algebra, and history; tertia continued the five languages and likewise the other subjects of the previous year; except history the subjects for secunda remained as in the year before with the additions of Hebrew, music for two hours, and writing for one hour; and finally, prima continued the six languages, Latin, Norwegian, German, English, Greek, and Hebrew for which, besides religion, history, and geometry, the student was responsible during his senior year. About 1868, the hours were adjusted to cover six days of study. Latin was recited daily for the entire week, Greek for four hours, German for two, Norwegian for two or three, and English for three or four hours; mathematics, history, and geography each occupied two hours; and natural history, music, and drawing had one or two. Besides these subjects probably eight hours were devoted to religion.

It was about this time, probably due to the influence of the war, that military instruction was introduced at Iowa College. The drill work was compulsory for a half hour daily on four days in the week, while in the senior year lectures on military science were designed to supersede the drill. Among the

reasons advanced for this feature of college work were its effect on physical habits and health and for the discipline obtained in the use of arms, thereby fitting the student to fulfill his duties as a citizen to better advantage if called upon for service by the State.

Several important additions were made to the Cornell College curriculum during the seventies. Under the provisions of Federal law and on request of the president of the college an army officer was detailed for instruction in military tactics, which was compulsory in the institution for at least one hour daily. The cadet battalion officers were chosen according to "rank in College, military aptitude and general deportment."

Along with military training for the young men the physical education of young women was provided for through a system of light gymnastics. It was introduced with a view to the establishment of a gymnasium in the near future, while all the associated events reveal a new interest in the stimulation of healthful exercise. The subsequent regulations required daily instruction and exercise as a part of the college program in physical education from which none was exempted.

At Upper Iowa University in 1871 there were two college courses — the classical and the scientific — each of four years and each having its special two years of preparatory study. But some liberty was allowed in both. For example, French or German

might be offered in place of Greek or higher mathematics in the classical course, while in the scientific course the time assigned to both of the modern languages might be devoted to either one. Furthermore, full courses in natural history, chemistry, and engineering were to be introduced as soon as possible. Finally, a commercial course lent a new feature to the curriculum. In this last arrangement there were junior, middle, and senior sections, each in three divisions; while the time necessary to complete the whole would depend on the ability of the student—three to six months being the extremes named.

In this connection a noteworthy event, which has no counterpart in Iowa educational history, occurred. In 1876 the president of Griswold College proposed that the college be affiliated with the State University of Iowa, so that when students in the arts and sciences graduated from the college the appropriate degree could be conferred in accordance with terms prescribed by the University faculty. In the consummation of this plan Griswold College would hold a similar relation to the University of Iowa as the various colleges at Oxford or Cambridge held to "their respective universities". The report of the Commissioner of Education for 1876 contained the declaration that the movement "looks to a unification, much to be desired, of the whole collegiate education of the State; for, if one college thus conforms its standard to that of the university and receives

degrees for its students from that source, the other colleges must soon come into the same plan." The University regents considered the proposition but no definite recommendations were ever made.

The changing opinions regarding courses and degree values are not easily interpreted after the introduction of other features in addition to the early fixed courses. The B. A. stood for one conception of education, while the B. S. or Ph. B. stood for another. For example, in 1870, Simpson Centenary College graduated two men and four women all of whom received the B. A. degree, while the next year the same institution conferred also the B. S. degree. In 1872 both of these degrees as well as the honorary M. A. and M. S. were granted by the board of trustees; and to these four the D. D. was added in 1873.

The view of the conference committee which visited this college in 1877 reveals a dissatisfaction with the tendency of students to prefer courses other than the classical. This disposition was deprecated because the ranks of the ministry should be filled from such colleges and from among classical scholars. They recommended, therefore, that some strong inducement be brought to bear upon those entering the college in order to overcome this tendency; and it was suggested further that the published roster of graduates should indicate clearly the course which any one had completed. Simpson aimed to produce "liberal scholarship and many-sided culture, rather than special development in

any one direction." Nothing of importance in any of the usual departments of scholarship was omitted.

But where one institution declined another came into being about the same time, for instruction at Parsons College, at Fairfield, began in 1875 under a faculty of three. There was one student, a sophomore, in the classical collegiate course in 1875-1876, the remainder of the sixty-three being in the academy. The first courses of study, consisting of the classical of four years and the scientific of three years, were typical. Scientific courses were presented in order to provide for those who could not afford the time to "acquire Greek or a thorough knowledge of Latin", and yet were desirous of sharing in a college course by devoting themselves to the sciences.

As one of the earliest institutions to establish a distinctly pedagogical department, Cornell College set out to prepare teachers for the more important positions in public schools and hence in the advanced classes considerable attention was given to "school supervision, thereby making the course of great value to those who intend to become city or county superintendents." Furthermore, members of this class were "expected to examine and criticise some series of textbooks, and to prepare papers on the history of education, professional rights and duties, educational theories, and kindred topics."

It would be interesting enough to trace in all these

schools the slow evolution of separate chairs and the division of the work assigned. Obviously combinations were necessary when faculties were small, and specialization in certain subjects is very recent. For example, instruction in Latin and Greek was not separated at Cornell until 1881, the following year the physical and biological sciences were made independent groups, history and politics were made a department in 1886, while geology had its own head in 1890.

According to the custom at the time Coe College was organized in 1881, at least two courses — the classical and the scientific — were offered so that the student might come to graduation without having pursued Greek and only part of the Latin provided for the classical group. In 1883 the departments of instruction, namely, biblical, language, mathematics, biological sciences, physics, chemistry, normal and music, art, penmanship, and physical exercises, were first described. It is noteworthy that in 1885 special attention was called to the systematic drill in free gymnastics in addition to such exercises as walking, ball-playing, and wood-sawing.

By 1882 a "much more advanced class of students" had been attracted to some of the colleges, due probably to the increasing ability of the public high schools to prepare students while there may have been also other coöperating influences not readily apprehended. At all events, attention was called to the fact that the "four college classes were

all represented" in Central University at Pella. There were two in graduate study, thirty-six collegiate students, fifty in preparatory work, and thirty-six in the "English academic" course which, with fourteen in music, comprised the enrollment of one hundred and thirty-six. Although the relative numbers had not changed, the total two years later was one hundred and eighty-seven. But in 1886 there were only twenty-eight in college classes out of a total of one hundred and twenty-six, and the enrollment was even less by 1890.

In 1887 it was asserted that Central University was the only Baptist school in the Northwest which was doing "full college work" and it appears that the decision of the court which had prevented the change of "location, character or name" had encouraged the school authorities to make plans for extending its work. The courses were rearranged in order to provide a liberal culture rather than much "practical and professional training"; and this result was to be obtained by a curriculum properly graded, but which included "a protracted course in the classic languages, a severe drill in the pure and applied mathematics, a generous introduction to physical science, and at least a *resumé* of higher philosophy."

Next to such general statements may be placed the very definite outlines of work pursued at Luther College for the year 1881-1882, and doubtless throughout the decade following. The course for

prima included the English, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, German, and Norwegian languages, history, and religion; secunda did not take Hebrew but all the other languages were constants along with history, mathematics, and religion; tertia pursued the same languages and other subjects as secunda, but added geography; quarta omitted only the geography from the last-mentioned division, and probably substituted physiology; quinta studied all of those listed for tertia except Greek and added natural history and writing; while in sexta, the lowest class, only three languages, Latin, English, and Norwegian, were required, the other subjects being history, mathematics (elements of arithmetic), geography, and writing. In this college course the sciences are made conspicuous by their absence.

While it is true that the usual courses of the period were not dominated so fully by languages as at Luther, certain features of rigidity in requirements may be noted. For example, the courses at Parsons College in 1880-1881 were two — the classical and the scientific — in neither of which were there any electives until the junior and the senior years, and then but one. Moreover, throughout the four years three or four languages including English were available, three being required during the greater part of two years. Biblical instruction stood first as a one-hour course during the entire period.

Although several colleges had exhibited a ten-

dency to establish departments usually found only in a university organization, it was not until 1881, when the instructional force of Oskaloosa College withdrew to establish Drake University, that much success was attained by private means. At first a college of liberal arts, a college of the Bible, a conservatory of music, a school of art, a school of oratory, a commercial school, and an academy were established while a law college and a medical college were affiliated.

Ten years may comprehend the birth and the death of some colleges: the same period may test the stability of long-established and well-recognized schools which depend for sustenance and for students upon a limited territory. At the same time, while one institution feels the pressure of financial depression and experiences a loss in enrollment, another may not be particularly aware of any change. Such diversity seems to mark the decade of the nineties in the history of Iowa colleges. For example, during the year 1890-1891, Iowa Wesleyan University had an attendance of three hundred and seventy-eight in all departments with one hundred and eight classified as college students and two hundred and five in preparatory work. But in 1899, although the number of instructors was no less, the total published enrollment stood at one hundred and seventy-five, and it seems to have been even less the next year. If Iowa College at Grinnell suffered any peculiar trials during the period of financial distress

in the early nineties statistics are too limited to reveal it. Moreover, there seems to have been a consistent growth in faculty, students, and equipment.

In giving attention to the tendencies of the period, Iowa College, in 1895, established a "grouping system" which "permitted freedom of choice from many subjects under rational control" and allowed the student to satisfy his individual interests while preventing the abandonment of "established standards of liberal education." By this plan the rigidity of the old arrangement was corrected and yet there was no such loose choice as the unlimited elective system involved.

While some colleges may have profited by liberalizing the course of study, others found support for the established program. Yet Drake University, established on old lines, had no more students, after about twenty years of operation, than had Highland Park Normal College, organized with radically different views and located within sight of Drake, during its third year of existence. An explanation may be found in the catalogues of the newer institution, wherein attention is first called to the contrast between this school and others in the time required to complete the course. While the courses were declared to be standard in all respects, they were adjusted to the four-term schedule in each year of forty-four weeks so that a student might enter at any time and find beginning classes.

About 1904 Coe College "entered upon a new era

in her history" inasmuch as the growth during the years immediately preceding had not been equaled in any similar period. Within six years the faculty had been doubled, and although the entire attendance had only trebled the college classes showed an increase from fifty to one hundred and eighty. Among the new features of instruction were "seminar courses in the various departments". These were to be characterized by research work on the part of students whose qualifications would be established by the professor in charge. Such courses were not necessarily of an advanced grade; on the contrary they might be "more or less general and popular in character."

Other institutions have sought to shorten the preparation for general purposes by introducing special courses. For example, Central University at Pella announced such an arrangement through a "Citizenship Course", involving one, two, or three years, as the person pursuing it might elect, for those who could not take full college work. It was believed that this movement met a "positive need", and the plan seemed to present a "happy solution of this problem" in a way that no other college had attempted. Its importance rests entirely upon its design as a citizen's course, since to the ordinary business curriculum it added two years of study in law, agriculture, history, English, mathematics, and science.

Each institution seems to have some character-

istic which distinguishes it from all others, yet the adoption of uniform requirements for admission illustrates the disposition to coöperate. Moreover, considerable standardization has been effected without much concerted action. Without haste the colleges have reduced the number and variety of degrees offered. At the same time, arrangements have been made with other institutions having technical courses to combine the interests of both for the benefit of the student. At Morningside College only the B. A. is conferred at graduation, while pre-engineering courses, to be completed at the State University or the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, permit the candidate to obtain college and technical degrees in five years.

Comparison of college curricula during a period of more than eighty years reveals so many modifications due to the widening scope of instruction that the student who completed his course within the earliest sessions would scarcely recognize his Alma Mater now.

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