Out with the Old, What is the New? Administrative Decisions and Student Reaction at Carnegie Mellon University 1966-1970

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Introduction

Between the years of 1966 and 1970 Carnegie Tech underwent two major changes that served to reshape and redefine the university. The creation a new undergraduate college, Humanities and Social Sciences, broadened the scope of CMU from a technically based university focused on professional training to a research university capable of incorporating technical knowledge and liberal thought. The new college called for a new type of student with broader goals and a wide range of interests. It was different from the traditional liberal arts school because of the mix of technical and liberal courses and was, therefore, more interesting and compelling to the student of the 1960's.

Secondly Margaret Morrison Carnegie College, the women's college on campus, accepted its last class in 1969. The all women's college offered majors that were professionally based including Home Economics and Business and Resource Management. Their demise reflected and added to the Universities restructured image as a broad based research university; more concerned with education and less concerned with Andrew Carnegie's initial goal of practical training.

These decisions affected not only the general outlook of the university and its reputation, but also the students attending and applying for the school. Women, specifically, were affected by both decisions. The change from Margaret Morrison's vocationally based education to Humanities and Social Sciences' liberal arts curriculum resulted in a change of the educational goals of the women entering the university. While opening doors for more men to enter the university, the new college (after the closing of MMCC) simply provided a different type of education for the women of Carnegie-Mellon. It provided an education which former MMCC students previously focused on liberal arts would take on enthusiastically but, simultaneously, an
education which would alienate all students in the Home Economics and Business and Resource Management Departments of MMCC (essentially one third of the female population on the campus).

The following discussion addresses the two actions of C-MU in light of the trends in women's education throughout the 1960's and early 1970's. The first section lays a framework for the trends and theories about women's education by addressing two major debates prominent during the time period. Secondly, the administration's decisions about Carnegie-Mellon are analyzed in light of the contemporary debate. Did the administration and faculty consider the questions of women's education when it made decisions directly affecting the women in the university? Were the decisions made in line with the educational trends of the time? If so, was this intentional? And finally, the roles and reactions of female students attending Carnegie-Mellon at the time will be analyzed. Did their actions and reactions reflect what the contemporary literature said about what students wanted and needed? What were their actions and reactions regarding the decisions made by the administration and faculty?

Theories and Trends in Women's Education

Discussion of women's education increased in the late 1950's and throughout the early 1970's. Studies were conducted at most major universities regarding the status of women, the future of women, and the responsibilities of the university in providing education for women. Debate centered around whether or not women needed education that was specifically geared toward them (i.e. the education found in many women's colleges) or if a more integrated and broad range of subjects was more advantageous to women (i.e. that found in co-educational liberal arts programs). Proponents of an education that was segregated felt that women developed a better sense of themselves if they were not placed immediately in competition with men. At the Conference on the Present Status and Prospective Trends of Research on the Education of Women in 1957 Harold Taylor, President of Sarah Lawrence College said "one of the most important contributions the women's colleges have made to the theory and practice of education [is their] insight that in order to be oneself, it is necessary to be allowed to develop one's own potential character, one's own intelligence and personal qualities without inhibiting relationships with other groups, in this case the pressures of a male society." He, and others sharing his views believed that courses geared toward and offered to women were beneficial and necessary to the development of the female as a student. They believed that courses should be equal but not always coeducational. "... Not only is it necessary for women's education to be of a quality equal to that of men, but it must be of such a character that women may have an opportunity to grow to their stature as
women without the psychological handicap of taking secondary roles in relation to men." Proponents of a segregated but equal education were perhaps reacting to the growing trend of increased coeducational courses.

Leaders on the other side of the debate were in favor of coeducational courses. This trend became more and more popular in the 1960's. Experts on Higher Education discussed urging women to enter fields of study typically dominated by males. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education submitted a report in 1973 which stated "Especially important in colleges and universities are policies aimed at encouraging women to enter fields of study that have been regarded as traditionally male. Our data suggest a special need for such changes in policies in this respect in leading research universities." Most proponents of coeducational courses based their beliefs on the idea that education should be equal and the best way to guarantee equality was to place men and women in the same classes. Even Harold Taylor agreed that trends were moving towards coeducation, "We find at Sarah Lawrence, ... that the notion of a segregated existence within a women's college has become less appropriate to the new situation for the contemporary woman." Most believed that women were at a point that they certainly could handle competition with men and thus would not be disadvantaged within the classroom. "Most educated women now accept psychologically a sense of equality with men." Discussion was rarely geared toward opening all female courses to the male population. Disadvantages stemmed from segregated classes and a lack of encouragement for women to enter various fields previously considered taboo for women. Universities were faulted for this lack of motivation. The Carnegie Commission stated "It is particularly important for colleges and universities to adjust their resources to changing student choices of fields in the next few years while enrollment continues to grow." A similar debate centered around the best type of education for women; a curriculum which trained women for professional careers that could be used in the home and later in the workforce, or a more liberal education that allowed for intellectual stimulation and advancement later in life. Both sides of this debate assumed that women were living longer lives and that, after having fulfilled their main duty as a homemaker (raising the children) they would desire to use their education to either get a job or continue into a graduate program. At a conference on women's education and employment Betty Jane Lloyd, the Assistant Dean of Margaret Morrison Carnegie College at Carnegie Tech stated "Successful synthesis of family and job can be achieved only with early awareness by the undergraduate of the shape of her life. If she realizes that the rearing of children will consume less than half the years ahead, she can plan intelligently for the various phases of her life." Both sides of the debate agreed that greater efforts at counseling and guidance for women were essential.

Those in favor of professional education felt that gearing studies toward a specific end would better prepare the woman to enter the work force
immediately after college and re-enter it with skills after she had raised her children.

"She must plan her college education phase with an awareness of her future need for meaningful employment; for graduate work immediately after college if this is necessary to her area of professional interest; for work in that area during the period before children, so that on-the-job experience may complement training and indicate new or specialized directions that may be followed later; for continuing education, on the campus or at home, so that during the family years she may fill educational gaps, stay abreast of her field, and provide the foundations for advancement; for returning to work in a position consonant with her professional interests and family responsibilities."\(^{8}\)

The number of state schools offering professional training had increased during this time period indicating that professional majors were increasing in popularity and importance. However, students within these professional programs often commented that they would prefer some classes that were more liberal arts based. "University of Colorado [Home Economics] graduates listed courses in American government, world affairs, psychology, art appreciation, and music appreciation as courses they wished they had taken." Iowa State College alumni responded similarly.\(^{9}\) Professions suggested to young women entering college included teaching, social work, health occupations, doctors, nurses, medical and dental technicians, science, engineering and mathematics, personnel work, and writing.\(^{10}\)

It is evident that while professional majors were popular, and believed to be important, there was also a call for a more liberal education which prepared women not for a specific career, but for the ability to find a career at some point in her life. Many studies presented a balance between the two as the best solution. Mary Bunting, Dean of Douglas College at Rutgers stated "There is no conflict, in my mind, between vocational and general education. Both are aspects of good education, and both must be carried on continuously if the able individual is to fulfill her potential abilities."\(^{11}\) Liberal arts programs were believed to be better because they inspired "a wide range of interests with a resultant enrichment of cultural values, deepening of aesthetic appreciation, and development in understanding of self and one’s environment beyond the household."\(^{12}\) Many felt that liberal arts provided even better training for the woman entering the work force because professional training became outdated quickly; a liberal arts education was more generalizable in the future. Proponents of both professional and liberal arts educations stressed the need for women to be allowed more choice in their curriculum. "The depth of insight which this younger generation has about
its own education is extremely encouraging. Although they are not rebelling, they quietly know what they want and what they are doing. They are arguing for more independent study. They are arguing for more content in the curriculum which meets individual interests and needs."13

**Administrative Action**

The decisions made by the administration of Carnegie Tech from 1966–1970 reflected many of the trends in women’s education, however, it was a matter of coincidence that they did. The administration did not make decisions with women’s education specifically in mind. The university was in the process of redefining (in many cases reiterating) its goals because of the upcoming merger with Mellon Institute. L.F. Schaefer stated in *Evolution of a National Research University* that “the merger was a step of utmost importance in the future evolution of the institution. The school had a new image and new potential.”14 While carrying over President Doherty’s idea of a “liberal professional education” and Warner’s Carnegie Plan for Professional Education, the administration hoped to change with “societal currents in the United States.”15 President Stever stated in his inaugural address on October 22, 1965 that “the highest standards for research and scholarship we inherit from our past. Our problem is to continue the evolution, recognizing the importance of the newly emergent, and discontinuing the areas which have served their purpose.”16 His statement was somewhat prophetic of the changes that took place. Stever’s ‘newly emergent’ became the new college of Humanities and Social Sciences. The decision to open a new college of Humanities and Social Science took place as a result of the merger which “provided a ‘window of opportunity’ to take advantage of current societal tides by establishing a coeducational liberal arts college.”17 The area which Stever’s administration replaced was Margaret Morrison Carnegie College. “Coincidental with the opening of the New College, Margaret Morrison Carnegie College matriculated its last class in the fall of 1969. These two events, independent of each other, were nonetheless related.”18 The goals of the administration were to develop a new type of liberal arts education based on the professional attributes already established at Carnegie Tech. The goals of faculty members organizing the new programs tended to lean away from ideas of professional education. No goals concerning the education of women on the campus were formed. Opening a coeducational liberal arts college and phasing out the women’s professional college appears to be a statement from the university on its stance in the national debate. However, an examination of the proposal papers and articles concerning the decisions made by the administration reveal that little discussion focused on the betterment of women’s education and therefore the “stance” taken by the university on these issues was purely coincidental.
Opening H&SS

A coeducational college was formed at Carnegie Tech, but was not formed for the purpose of specifically improving female education. The proposal to open the new College of Humanities and Social Sciences originated as an attempt to enlarge the existing Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, which had been initiated in order to provide broad based, liberal arts courses for men in the Engineering and Science majors. The call for expansion of the division into a college came in 1966 when Mellon Institute and Carnegie Tech were proposing a merger. The prospect of additional funds coupled with the increasing desire of students to study a broader base of subjects led to the discussion of expanding the division into a department. “The administration was persuaded from the beginning that establishing a college of humanities and social sciences was critical to creating a university of excellence.” At the time women in Margaret Morrison were able to major in liberal arts courses offered through the Humanities and Natural Sciences department of MMCC. An article printed in the Tartan concerning the first proposals for H&SS stated that “Carnegie Tech now has a college of liberal arts and social science for women only, Margaret Morrison, and a non-degree granting Division of Humanities and Social Sciences for Engineering and Science students. The structures and purposes of both Margaret Morrison and the Division of H&SS will have to be redefined when a coeducational, degree granting liberal arts college is instituted at Carnegie University.” The goals of the university were less centered on creating a coeducational liberal arts program and more centered on increasing the number of humanities courses that could be offered to the men since the women had already established their own program for liberal arts. In fact in some of the Tartan articles the new college was referred to as the liberal arts school for men.

Had coeducation been a driving goal of the Administrators, perhaps in addition to the opening of the new college, MMCC’s business management majors would have been opened to men. Merging the Humanities and Social Sciences options into MMCC and opening the college to men was not mentioned in either the position papers for the change or in Tartan articles covering the subject. The 1971 Report On the Status of Women at C-MU comments that “the reversal by the Supreme Court in 1954 of Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896) showed that the wider society perceived separate education to be inherently unequal. The response at Carnegie was not, as it might have been, to open the professional and non-professional courses in MMCC to men, but to terminate professional courses for women, to transfer non-professional courses to other colleges, and to close MMCC altogether.” Women were to be accepted into the new college and the status of MMCC was to remain the same. This decision was treated as a matter of course, in fact the faculty committee in charge of designing the framework and official proposal for the school suggested that the pioneer class be taken from “twenty-five
women from among those admitted to MMCC who express their wish to enter the experimental program, and twenty five men specifically recruited for this pilot class. This indicates that the faculty felt that women in MMCC were already getting a liberal arts education and that the new program would simply expand the number of choices they had in their given major. The points of national debate that centered around the effects of coeducation on women were not mentioned in the position papers of either Cyert or Steinberg, nor in articles regarding the opening of the college in the Tartan. Richard Schoenwald, one of the founders of the original program for Humanities and Social Sciences stated that women's education was not mentioned when plans were being drawn for the new college. The goal was not to create a better education for women through a liberal arts program. The administration clearly did not see the new college as any special program in the creation of coeducation.

The nationwide debate on the merits of professional versus liberal arts education certainly carried over into the decision making of the administration and faculty, however, the debate was not centered specifically on issues of women's education, but on education as a whole. The administration hoped to open a liberal arts college that was ahead of its time in its structure yet which followed from and built upon Carnegie Tech’s existing Division of Humanities and Social Sciences. Questions raised by the English Department in a November 1966 Tartan article about the opening of the New College included “What emphasis is to be placed on professional education? What is meant by a liberal-professional education? Is the traditional departmental major the best way of achieving a liberal education?” Even a year after the college was formed the questions were still unanswered. A committee of faculty and students “spent long hours attempting to deal with the perceived dichotomy between professional and liberal education, a dialogue that struck at the heart of what H&SS should contribute to a campus imbued with the concept of ‘problem solving.’ Liberal education basically seeks to provide a foundation to continue the growth process over a lifetime; professional education aims at preparing students to solve problems, not in the limited, technical sense but problems that the professional has a role in defining as well as solving. The difficulty rests in finding ways of integration.” Both Dean Richard M. Cyert and Dean Erwin Steinberg’s position papers on the New College addressed these issues. Both men favored a new outlook on the liberal arts education that combined the Professional Technical strengths of Carnegie Tech with liberal arts courses, allowing students a more practical, yet well rounded education. Cyert stated in his position papers that “a focal objective in this school that would distinguish it from most liberal arts curricula is training students to be citizens who can actively participate in the policy discussions relevant to their society and who can function effectively in the world.” The liberal arts school of the 1960’s had perhaps a different connotation than Carnegie Tech Administrators wanted. In opening the new
college they hoped to redefine for themselves the meanings of the liberal arts education. "We must look hard at the meaning of 'liberal.' It is not at all clear that the traditional meaning of liberal is the right one for the world in which we are currently living. We clearly should not give up or ignore the humanities, but rather they should be radically up-dated so that they bear specifically on the problem for turning out citizens for the world of tomorrow." Faculty members believed that students who planned on entering graduate school needed a more broadly based education because their focus on one field would take place in graduate school. Stever noted in his position papers "We might, then, have two tracks: professionally oriented curricula for those who will seek jobs immediately upon graduation, and less specialized curricula for those who will go on to graduate school." The actual goals for the New College were unclear. Though it is evident that issues of women's education specifically were not discussed, the debate between liberal and professional education for all students was. No clear position was ever reached. "The ambivalence of affect attached to the term 'professional' [revealed] a strain between the institution's aspirations to rise in the academic world, and its commitment to a particular kind of education." Steinberg stated in his position papers that "given the traditions of this campus, a professional flavor or even thrust to the various majors seems thoroughly appropriate." Similarly, in a March 1967 Tartan article President Stever is quoted as saying "he did not think a strong professional focus is harmful to students. It creates a degree of intensity about undergraduate life, and this is good." He also stated in his State of the University address in September of 1967 that "the planning committee does not want the new college to mimic a liberal arts college. It is hoped that the college will have a strong impact from the University's professional strength." However, in the final proposition for the new college, Building From Strength, written by "a committee of senior faculty ... charged with developing a design for the New College" professional education is not considered as a desired strength for H&SS. "Carnegie has long served the function of training professionals. The new college must be guided by broader more flexible notions of utility than in the past, a wider and more tolerant acceptance of what may prove survival values." H&SS Professor Richard Schoenwald commented that professional education was never an intention for the New College. It was "a liberal arts school" designed to "educate engineers and scientists." The goals of the "liberal professional" education were not the goals for H&SS. The stance of the faculty who wrote Building From Strength, the proposal for H&SS, contradicted the statements of the faculty and administrators who had hoped to build upon the University's professional strengths. "Indeed the program ... reflected general liberal thinking of the time on what an ideal education should be." The fact that the University's position on professional vs. liberal education was never clarified caused problems in the decision to close Margaret Morrison Carnegie College.
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The Future of MMCC

With the proposals for the new college of H&SS came questions as to the future of Margaret Morrison Carnegie College. The University had phased out the College’s programs in social work and library science by 1953. The coeducational H&SS would replace the college’s Humanities and Natural Sciences Department, leaving the entire college with one department, Business and Resource Management. In a September 1966 Tartan article various faculty and administrators responded to questions about the new college and MMCC. Dean of Margaret Morrison Erwin Steinberg stated that “MMCC will continue to offer liberal professional education for women.” Dr. Hugh Young, Head of MMCC’s Natural Sciences pointed out that “MMCC may head more towards education studies, since many of the courses needed for MMCC women will be taught in other colleges.” All official responses to the question of Margaret Morrison’s future stated that the relation between MMCC and H&SS was not clear. No one mentioned closing Margaret Morrison as an option until the official announcement to close the college was made in October of 1969.

The administration’s initial decisions to keep MMCC alive after opening H&SS indicate that the administration’s goals were not to improve women’s education by switching to a better system (i.e. the coeducational liberal arts program praised in national debate on higher education for women). In fact the initial decisions were an indication that women’s education was not a facet in the goals of the administration. “No cohesive thought seems to have been given the question of what [opening H&SS] would mean for the future of MMCC.” The next logical step would have been either to close the college, open the college to men and add new majors, or keep the college all female but, again, add new majors. The administration did not attempt to put MMCC back on its feet by adding majors and extending the college in any way. The professional nature of the remaining courses was mentioned as a negative aspect and it was suggested that the name of the Home Economics major may change in order not to connote an applied course.

The motivations for closing MMCC were for the most part financial. The first public announcement of the decision to phase out the majors in MMCC appeared in the Tartan October 17, 1969. The proposal was presented by the University’s Faculty Senate Educational Policy Council, made up of faculty, administrators, and students. The primary reasons for the proposal included lack of finances to keep the college open, a decline in enrollment, and impending retirement within the college. These three explanations resound in every Tartan article and position paper on the subject. Erwin Steinberg drafted the first position papers on the proposal. He stated that “the falling enrollment and the impending retirements suggest, . . . that September of 1969 is the last time we should accept entering students in business studies, foods and nutrition, textiles and clothing, and home economics
education." A study conducted in 1971 on the Status of Woman at Carnegie-Mellon University stated “it is obvious that C-MU never had a formal policy of eliminating programs simply because they were more attractive to women than to men. Each decision to abandon a predominantly female program was defended on educational and financial grounds.” The decisions made were not made either in the interest or disinterest of women on the campus.

The University, by eliminating its all female college, was certainly in line with many Universities throughout the United States. The needs and status of women on campus were discussed after the initial decision was made to close MMCC. Administrators and faculty addressed the issues of women’s education in Tartan articles explaining and responding to the Faculty Senate’s decision to phase out MMCC. In the initial Tartan announcement Dean Steinberg stated “we have a commitment to women’s education, but we have been seeking a meaningful function for the college to serve.” In an attempt to further the educational needs of women on the campus, Steinberg suggested that MMCC could continue “its modest but very meaningful research program [in the role of the Educated Woman in American Society] and... [provide] counseling and other kinds of support for women who come or return to C-MU for further education” Steinberg’s suggestion was never used. Trends in women’s education that were cited as explanations for the decision included the fact that the government was supporting the type of courses (home economics, textiles and clothing, etc.) offered by MMCC and therefore they were available more and more in state colleges and less and less in private institutions like C-MU. “The faculty representative from Mellon Institute said that given the limited resources and high goals of the University, the task was to decide what was the best way to prepare women. He felt that the best placement of resources to achieve the University’s goals in educating women was to put this money and effort in the college of liberal arts and humanities.” The debate among the faculty centered around C-MU’s stance on the national questions. One question around which the faculty senate’s discussion centered was “where does C-MU stand in providing professional education for women, and is this the best program for this particular institution?” Faculty opposed to the final decision felt that C-MU was the only university in Pittsburgh offering professional women’s courses and therefore, considering the importance of such fields, C-MU should, as a service to the community, continue to offer them.

Although no official statements were made, the University’s actions dictated its positions on the issues. The results of the University’s actions regarding MMCC were more in line with trends in women’s education than were the actual motivations. “The transfer of courses out of MMCC assured women students of an integrated education with men.” Certainly the closing of MMCC finalized C-MU’s position in favor of coeducation. Its eventual termination of all women’s professional majors can also be viewed as a statement for liberal arts education and against professional training for women. However, it cannot be said that the decisions were made directly in
the consideration of trends in women's education or that the needs of women as students were a main concern when the decisions were being made. Evidence of this is found in the decreasing number of female students enrolled at C-MU and the lack of an increase in the percentage of women students graduating from co-educational programs.50

The administration appears to have been aware of national trends in women's higher education and, while many of their actions reflected those trends, it is not evident that they acted specifically in the interest of those trends. The decision to open the New College came at a time when funds were available to expand into a University. The administration felt strongly that to have a University of merit they should have a strong liberal arts school. The expansion of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences had been in the schools plans since the early 1960's. While opening the coeducational school did provide women with more liberal arts courses, the administrations motivations were not to improve upon women's education. The decision to close MMCC was also adopted without consideration for the education of women. The administration closed the school for financial reasons, not to take a stand against professional education for women. Steps were not taken to either improve upon and update the majors offered in MMCC in order to increase enrollment or to persuade women that a liberal arts education was more beneficial. Therefore, while the University's actions reflected trends in higher education for women, the administration failed to understand or communicate why or how to either themselves or the students and faculty, thus creating rough transitions which led to heated student reaction.

Student Reaction

By the time the administration began to make the crucial decisions that would reshape the university, students were ready and calling for change. Students expressed discontent with the administration, the faculty, and the quality of their courses. Although they did not use terms typical of debate on higher education, they expressed many of the relevant concerns of the time. Jerome Kirk conducted a study of the students of Carnegie Tech in 1965. The final report, entitled Cultural Diversity and Character Change at Carnegie Tech, quoted the grievances of many of the students interviewed in his study. One of the concerns he found was in the structured, professionally based course load. He stated that "many students feel that the contents of their courses have little to do with the game they will be qualified to play in the 'real world' by their diploma."51 A female E&S Senior stated, "My professional goal is there, but it's not really there, because it conflicts with a personal goal I have; being a wife and mother."52 Students were beginning to want a more liberal education that involved "thinking" instead of just "doing." An MMCC Senior decried "Nobody here thinks about anything, much less talks about it, beyond
his own little momentary world.” Kirk found that students did not feel either comfortable or satisfied with the faculty. “The teachers are pretty distant, so you never really express yourself in class—things around here are so routine you just don’t get much intellectual freedom.” Women and men alike wanted a freer, more liberal structure. While they could not always explain what they wanted, they certainly expressed what they did not want. A student expressed discontent in a letter to Dean Steinberg, “I expected college to be the most vital and stimulating time of my life. It is a disappointment.” It was, in part, these opinions and grievances that led to the opening of H&SS. While it is questionable if these grievances effected decisions about MMCC, it is clear that students in every department were calling for change and reform.

Opening of H&SS

Student reaction to the opening of H&SS was uncharacteristically high. The student population at C-MU had judged itself (in numerous Tartan articles and editorials) as apathetic. Student involvement in decision making had not been high in the years preceding the decision to open a new college. Previous unrest had centered around cafeteria food and the size of the Bookstore. The idea of a new school stirred excitement among many of the students. “Public announcement of the new college had painted a glowing picture of a novel campus environment, where education would be a cooperative venture between students and faculty, where students would help shape the institution, and where independence was the ultimate intent.” Certainly the reaction of the students falls in line with what education researchers had believed was the trend in student interests. Students wanted a broader education, based on ideals of learning for the sake of wisdom instead of being trained for a profession. An editorial by Len Wanetik, editor in chief of the Tartan, stated “we believe that this proposal is striking in its re-establishment of Carnegie as a source of new educational developments.” The majority of the students who expressed excitement and opinions about the school were men in the technical majors. Those who proposed the addition of the school had thought they would recruit MMCC women but would have to pull new males into the college because their interests would differ. Perhaps the faculty committee proposing the new program got the males and females mixed up when they decided who they would have to recruit from outside.

Women’s reactions to the opening of the New College were positive, but not especially pronounced. Trends in thinking about female education may have dictated that the women on campus would be very excited about extending coeducation but, on the whole, this was not the case. “I enjoyed being a part of an all women’s college,” stated an MMCC alumnus. “Many of my classmates went on to other schools” instead of entering the coeducational college. Many women did switch to the humanities college, especially
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those in MMCC whose majors were phased into H&SS, however, most of the women in MMCC had chosen to go to an all female college, and thus were happy with it. The reaction of MMCC women was concern for the future of their college and complaints about the lack of publicity their college received.  

Women’s reactions were mixed about the choice between liberal and professional education. Carol Farrar, an alumnus of H&SS, stated that she switched from Chemistry to History because of the influence of two professors within H&SS. She was interested in the “liberal arts slant.” MMCC women saw the New College as something new and exciting, but while the occasional course interested them, they were for the most part content with their majors within their own college. An MMCC Alumnus stated that “by the time they made the change I was past those courses, they were nothing new.” MMCC offered a liberal arts major, so those who wanted this type of education had it. They were content to remain within MMCC and were more disturbed that the major would be moving out of their college than they were excited that their major would have room to expand. While MMCC students did not see the New College as a threat, it did not offer anything they wanted to pursue. Most MMCC alumni interviewed stated that they would have gone to another professionally based college rather than switching to H&SS if they had to.

Many students felt that the new college would add a new “type” of student to the University that was not apathetic and who would be active in student government. “Students want to affect decisions; not just be affected by them. We have not had a ‘Berkeley’ [student riot] because we do not have that kind of students. We’ll get them in the New College.” Schaefer described the students as a “generation which saw the humanities as a liberation from a technologically and power-dominated society.” Certainly the type of student attracted to H&SS differed from those in the engineering and sciences as well as those in MMCC. A Tartan Editorial stated “Perhaps the biggest difference between the Class of 1973 and previous classes is that they want to institute changes in their school before it is embedded in tradition.” Professor Richard Schoenwald commented that the “good students—the more 60’s oriented students—didn’t want to be told” what classes to take. The new H&SS students were certainly active; their arrival culminated in C-MU’s first Civil Rights protest of the 1960’s. While the protest cannot be directly attributed to the new students “a higher proportion of activist leaders may well have been drawn from the liberal arts elements . . . than from the more professionally oriented student population”.

While the new H&SS students were given the stereotype of the 1960’s activist, women within MMCC began to be concerned with their own stereotype. “The ‘Maggie Murph’ perhaps a ‘Home-Ec Major,’ is a somewhat more diffuse and variable stereotype, but is probably flighty, naive, ‘boy crazy,’ and not very bright.” A student committee on campus felt that “on this campus women are ‘written off’ as secondary human beings who are not
quite as capable of concrete thought as men, not as capable of handling freedom and 'The girls' will be content as soon as they receive a BA or BS or MRS.' 69 While most women in MMCC did not view the H&SS women as very different, they became concerned about the schools images of themselves. 70 MMCC students stated in a Tartan article, "the attitude of students in Fine Arts and CIT is that business and human resource studies are for Dodo's and are not as worthy of studying as the professions in other colleges." 71 It was concerns about both the administration's and the rest of the campus' view of the students and their majors in MMCC that caused the greatest turmoil at the decision to close the college.

The Future of MMCC

Student reaction to the closing of MMCC was less wide spread than reaction to the opening of H&SS but was far more negative. MMCC Women were the majority of students who expressed opinions on the administration's decision to phase out the majors within MMCC. They did not think that their peers or the administration understood or appreciated their majors and their relevance in the world. "The professions offered in business and human resource studies are expanding and becoming more important every year." 72 Women began to defend themselves and their majors in Letters to the Editor, "MMCC definitely has a place within the confines of a technical school due to its technical nature." 73 Hillary Kruzwell responded to talk of the H&SS liberal arts program with "We [Margaret Morrison students] get out of here with a fine liberal arts education AND we are able to get very good jobs." 74 Alumnus Janice Janowitz stated that the administration's decision to close the college made her "question the validity of [her] major down the road." 75

MMCC students faulted both the faculty and the administration for the need to close their college. Many students within MMCC were disturbed by the fact that Dean Steinberg did not consult a student group of Margaret Morrison students when drafting his position papers. Students complained in a Tartan article that "Not until September of this year were the students permitted to know of Dean Steinberg's actions." 76 Alumnus Martha Nass commented that the administration "did not pay much attention to what people were thinking at the time." 77 Similarly Totney Benson recalled "feeling that the students were never approached ... they never talked to the women about their needs." 78

Students within MMCC recognized that the decisions of the administration were for the most part financial. They recognized that enrollment was dropping. Both H&SS and MMCC women felt that perhaps there were just less women interested in the majors offered in MMCC, thus the decision was justified. 79 However, many women felt that the drop in enrollment was due to a lack of promotion not a lack of interest. "We feel that the problems of 'decreasing' enrollment in the business and human resource studies is due to
the lack of information available to persons desiring these studies in a private school." C-MU was known as a school for engineers and artists, students felt that no attempt was made to let women know that another option was available.

Students noted that the majors were outdated and not in keeping with modern trends. Their plea was for the University to make plans to revamp the majors, not close them down. "The argument has been made that timely allocation of resources could have turned the situation around. Margaret Morrison Carnegie College could have been a leader, for example, in the area of biochemistry and nutrition on the cutting edge of science." Women felt that no attempt had been made to save the majors within MMCC before it was too late. Women expressed concerns about the quality of student allowed into MMCC in a Tartan article, "Is it true that standards for admissions are sometimes lowered for MMCC students? If so, why is this policy practiced?" Similarly they complained that courses from other departments had been unnecessarily simplified when offered to MMCC students. There were men who responded to the closing of MMCC negatively by suggesting that the majors offered in MMCC should have been opened to them; then perhaps they would have flourished. Numerous pleas were made by students in faculty senate meetings and Tartan articles, but the action was too late. While the women felt abandoned by the administration, they knew the decision was inevitable. By the semester following the announcement, the uproar had settled down.

Education researchers stated that students were advocating change toward coeducation and liberal arts programs over professional programs. The students at C-MU were cheering the new liberal arts school while at the same time rallying against ending one of C-MU's last archaic programs. Students suggested ways of updating the college which were in line with modern trends in education. They were thrilled with the innovation created by the administration's decisions to start a new school, but shocked and bewildered at the loss of both an old tradition and what they felt could have been an excellent program if updated. Women within MMCC were not alerted to the closing of MMCC when the New College opened, but when the decisions were made to close their college, many said, in retrospect, that they saw it coming. Perhaps the largest grievance about both decisions was that the administration did not involve the students enough in the decision making. The varying goals and undefined stances of the administration on liberal vs. professional and coeducation vs. the women's college led to bewildered students and in many cases great dissatisfaction.

Conclusion

Examination of the decisions of Carnegie-Mellon University's Administration from 1966–1970 reveals a lack of concern for trends in women's educa-
tion. The results of the decisions reflect those trends, but within the decision making process there is no evidence of specific concern in the area of women's education. On the national issue of liberal vs. profession the administration waivers. While standing on a tradition of professional education, the introduction of a liberal arts college and the closing of the women's professional college are evidence of a change in administrative goals. Both decisions were made for financial reasons, however, not in the interest of furthering and updating women's education. The national issue concerning coeducation vs. segregated education was, similarly, not addressed. Although C-MU closed its only remaining segregated college, the reasons were financial. It was not a decision to abolish segregated education, but the failure to attract students who wanted a segregated education. Students were affected by the administration's decisions and lack of consideration of the national trends. While H&SS was a welcome addition, students entering the college questioned their role in a primarily professional university. Students were ready for options in a liberal arts college, but the administration failed to define clearly how that college would relate to the rest of the university. Similarly the women of MMCC were bewildered by the decision to close a college which, they felt, best matched the goals of a professional university. The changing nature of the era coupled with Carnegie-Mellon's change from a training school to a research university created a rough transition for the administration, the faculty, and the students, however, the results were a university which matched the trends in women's education.

Bibliography

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Notes


2. Ibid.


4. Taylor, “Liberal Thought and the Women’s College,” p. 84.

5. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 21, p. 7.
16. Ibid., p. 7.
17. Ibid., p. 43.
18. Ibid., p. 34.
19. Ibid., p. 19.
28. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
34. Hayes et al., Building From Strength, p. 39.
36. Schaefer, Evolution of a National Research University, p. 25.
38. In Tartan articles from 1966–1969 and position papers of Steinberg and Cyert I found no mention of closing MMCC, thus I have concluded that, at least officially, this option was not discussed until Steinberg presented his papers on closing MMCC.
39. Schaefer, Evolution of a National Research University, p. 43.
40. The Tartan, "MMCC Meeting Explains Faculty Student Opinions," 16 Nov. 1966.
43. The Tartan, "MMCC To Die?," 17 Oct. 1969.
44. Steinberg, "The Future of Margaret Morrison Carnegie College."
46. The Tartan, "Faculty Senate Backs Policy to End MMCC," 21 Nov. 1969.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
50. Ibid., p. 15.
52. Ibid., p. 53.
53. Ibid., p. 135.
54. Ibid., p. 57. Statement by an MMCC Freshman.
55. Hayes et al., Building From Strength, p. 2.
56. Schaefer, Evolution of a National Research University, p. 29.
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60. The Tartan, "MMCC Meeting Explains Faculty, Student Opinions," 16 Nov. 1966.

61. Carol Farrar, Alumnus Humanities and Social Sciences, C-MU, personal phone interview, 12 Nov. 1993.


64. Schaefer, Evolution of a National Research University, p. 29.


67. Schaefer, Evolution of a National Research University, p. 79.


70. Martha Nass, Janice Janowitz, Totney Benson, MMCC Alumni, personal interview 12 and 15 Nov. 1993. Note: Martha Nass did recall that the H&SS students were very different from the MMCC students, she stated that they had varying backgrounds and were very interesting but "not a threat."


72. Ibid.


81. Schaefer, Evolution of a National Research University, p. 43.


