

WATAUGA COLLEGE AND THE PROFESSIONIALIZIZATION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS,  
A CASE STUDY

A Thesis  
by  
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## **Abstract**

### **WATAUGA COLLEGE AND THE PROFESSIONIALIZATION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS, A CASE STUDY**

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This thesis examines the recent emergence of the profession of student affairs and its effects on Watauga College, a residential college within Appalachian State University. Watauga College will be used as a historical case study of the impact the rise of student affairs departments had on American universities and their residential colleges from 1970 to the early 2000s. The first chapter examines the concepts behind both student affairs and American cluster colleges (commonly called residential colleges) formed between 1950 and 1980, along with an overview of American residential college history. The second chapter introduces the case study through a narrative history of Watauga College from 1972 to 1980, when Watauga College was founded and Appalachian State University's Department of Student Affairs (now Student Development) began to solidify its influence on campus. The third chapter analyzes the conflicts and compromises that emerged between the

strengthening Student Development department and Watauga College between the years of 1980 to the early 2000s, when Watauga College struggled to retain its unique identity and remain relevant despite Student Development's attempts to exert control. Through an analysis of academic writings, college records, and recent interviews with longtime faculty of Watauga College, this thesis concludes that while specific decisions made by significant individuals at Appalachian State University shaped the evolution of Watauga College, it was the rise of the new profession of student affairs that best explains the current state of the University and its residential college.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **CONCEPTS AND HISTORIES**

Between the 1960s and 1980s, higher education in the United States entered into a period of great experimentation, reform, and freedom. With little public or government oversight, universities responded to the social movements of the time and to a new kind of student. One such response was that universities gave more autonomy to faculty and departments to assist in their students' growth and education. Beginning in the late 1970s, however, and carrying into the 90s, much of that autonomy and authority began to erode as Student Affairs Departments, once wholly administrative, started on a path towards professionalization.<sup>1</sup> This new path ended up changing many university structures and altering their balance of power.

From the 1950s to 1975, cluster colleges, more often referred to as residential colleges, became a popular choice for universities. In 1972, Appalachian State University (ASU) created Watauga College (now Watauga Residential College). Watauga College was designed as an independent entity within the larger University. Its purpose was to both challenge and support the traditional educational methods of the time. The College experimented with various aspects of higher education such as class setting and structure, dorm life, and grade scales. Over its forty plus years (and ongoing) Watauga College has

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Student Affairs (capitalized) refers to a department within a university while student affairs (not capitalized) refers to the profession of student affairs. Additionally, Student Development (capitalized) refers to ASU's department while student development (not capitalized) refers to a theory that the development of the whole student, not just their academics, needs to be a university's focus, which was popular within the student affairs profession.

continued to experiment and evolve with society and its students. Beginning in the 1980s, however, it was faced with many difficulties that slowly caused it to lose its independent nature and almost cease to exist. One such difficulty was the professionalization of student affairs, which had a direct impact on Watauga College.

Watauga Residential College (WRC), formerly Watauga College, is different today from what was originally envisioned and created. The story of how WRC was founded in 1972 is well known within the ASU community, but the second part of the story, from 1972 to the present, is less clear. Since its inception, the majority of WRC's evolution was in response to, and reflected, trends and reforms that were going on in higher education at the time. Initially created as an organization to both challenge and support traditional educational methods, the residential college was given almost 100 percent autonomy from the larger ASU community and it took the form of a micro university. Compared to other universities, ASU took a unique route in giving significant autonomy to an internally created institution which drew from the larger faculty of the University. Then, during the 1980s, as many universities accepted the professionalization of student affairs, much of that autonomy disappeared. The changes WRC experienced became a common theme and problem for many American residential colleges and universities.

This transition in higher education will be chronicled within this thesis. No argument will be made as to whether student affairs is, or should be, a profession. Instead, this history of Watauga College analyzes how American higher education changed due to the emergence of student affairs as a new profession. This new wrinkle, while being recent history, is no less important than any other part of higher education history. Currently there is not a tremendous amount of literature on student affairs' rise to professionalization, which is

somewhat surprising since that development and the resulting changes have led to significant shifts in the structure of higher education. This thesis will help to rectify that issue by analyzing Watauga College as a case study.

WRC has a rich history that contributes to both the histories of higher education and Appalachian State. The primary sources that support this history include the physical records of WRC dating back to its founding in 1972, and the records of the initial plan that became the College, which date back to 1970. Many of the records are located in the ASU Records Department and in the Living Learning Administration building.<sup>2</sup> Comprising these records are memos, letters, articles, faculty interviews, student interviews, meeting minutes, agendas, reflections, and student works.

Because WRC had three directors in its first three years, there is a large amount of early documentation showing how it was created as a residential college. The documents also show many of the early struggles from its experiments such as its coeducational dormitory, informal relationships between students and instructors, discussion style classes, modified grade scales, and increased student involvement in the program. As directors began to stay for multiple years, starting with Peter Petschauer in 1975 (1975-1980), the documents show more of the development of WRC and the changes that it underwent. However, it is important to note that some of the documents illustrate biases towards the larger University, especially when it acted in conflict to WRC. Some documents indicate the possibility that the longer an instructor stayed in Watauga College the more their opinions favored WRC and became negative towards the larger University. Internal documents from Watauga College

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<sup>2</sup> Note: None of the current records are located in the University Archives. They are either in the University Records department or at the Living Learning Administration building itself. Currently they have not been processed, or moved over to the archives for processing, and can only be obtained either through Special Collections at ASU, or through Watauga Residential College itself. The citations, both footnote and bibliography, indicate that.

are often more open and liberal than documents written by individuals outside of the College, which tend to be more formal. Taken together, the documents help to establish a clear timeline of the development and change to the College. Regretfully, the sources begin to dry up in the late 1980s with a shift to electronic methods of record keeping, making things a bit more difficult. In addition, there were not always standard practices of archiving the electronic records. To compensate, this thesis analyzed the interviews of many long-time faculty and former directors to supplement the thinner documentary record.

Shortly after World War II ended, many universities throughout the United States saw an increase in student applications as men and women began readjusting to a time of peace, which allowed them to focus on an education. This sudden crush in students enrolling in universities was one of the primary reasons, according to Alex Duke in *Importing Oxbridge*, for the resurgence in popularity and development of residential colleges in American higher education from 1950 to its decline beginning in 1980.<sup>3</sup> Considering its founding date in 1972, it can be logically argued that Watauga College is a byproduct of this after World War II period. Similarly, the Vietnam War and the immediate years following also led to a spike in university enrollments. The increased enrollment during the Vietnam War was most likely due to draft deferments; the increase following the war was likely because the returning soldiers had access to the G.I. Bill.<sup>4</sup> The Vietnam War, and the decades following, also saw fundamental changes in student culture, such as conservative political trends in the 1980s ushered in partly by Ronald Reagan's presidency. Coinciding with Reagan's presidency was the rising emphasis on material culture and jobs of the yuppie generation occurring in the

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<sup>3</sup> Alex Duke, *Importing Oxbridge: English Residential Colleges and American Universities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 91.

<sup>4</sup> "College Enrollment Linked to Vietnam War," *New York Times*, September 2, 1984, accessed August 13, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/09/02/us/college-enrollment-linked-to-vietnam-war.html>.

mid-to-late 1980s.<sup>5</sup> Considering its founding date of foundation of 1972, it can be logically argued that Watauga College is a byproduct of this after World War II and the height of Vietnam period.<sup>6</sup> Despite all the influxes in student enrollment caused by wars and the constantly changing trends in student culture, Watauga College persevered, making sure to record the changes and evolutions it undertook and experienced. It can also be noted that the College can be partially defined as a byproduct of these post-WWII eras.

### **Literature Review**

Student Affairs as a professional department was developed as, and is, a uniquely American concept within higher education. It stems from an idea that even though students are eighteen years of age and legally adults, they are still not developed enough to be a responsible or productive members of society. This philosophy seems to belong mainly to larger universities, as many trade schools and community colleges do not emphasize student development nearly as much. Instead these technical and community colleges still focus primarily on almost skills-based learning. In the post-World War II era, society refined the idea of student development and caused universities to begin to add onto the previous traditional academic-only approach. Thus, an emphasis on catering to every need of their students became paramount in American universities as a means to assist in the student's development. Universities began to offer collegiate sports, clubs (sport and non-sport), fitness centers, health centers, and more under the umbrella of student development. This took away the responsibilities from the towns and cities that used to provide non-academic

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<sup>5</sup> Joe Watts, interviewed by Barbara Daye, personal interview, June 28, 1962, Watauga Residential College Collection, unprocessed, Living Learning Center, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina (hereby cited as "LLC Records"); Virginia Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College at Appalachian State University" PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1985, 59.

<sup>6</sup> "College Enrollment Linked to Vietnam War," New York Times.

options to students. Instead, universities became small and nearly self-contained cities in their own right. Some universities even had a larger population than the city where they were located. This professionalization of student affairs, while beginning prior to WWII, escalated in the later 1970s and hit full steam in the 1980s and 1990s. It eventually culminated in universities often focusing on student development over academics in many cases.<sup>7</sup>

Within the following literature analysis three main terms will be used: liberal education, general education, and interdisciplinary studies. In the context of this thesis the term liberal education has two meanings, based on whether it is used in a historical frame or a post-World War II frame. Prior to WWII, a liberal education had more in common with what is called a general education today in that it was supposed to be an education based on the idea of producing gentlemen and contributing members of society. The students took a wide variety of subjects from manners to the humanities, sciences, and religion in order to make them productive when they reintegrated into normal society.<sup>8</sup> In more modern times (post-WWII), a liberal education is a broad education comprising of a wide variety of subjects (sometimes with specific focuses worked in) whose goal is to give students a broader idea of the world around them along with teaching them to analyze it critically. It is somewhat contradictory to a general education but still forms the basis for much of American higher education.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cynthia Wood, interview by author, personal interview, December 4, 2016, Boone, NC, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>8</sup> See: John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011); John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016); Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge: Belknap Pr. of Harvard Univ., 1963).

<sup>9</sup> See: Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain College: An Exploration in Community* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009); Derek Bok, *Higher Education in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

General education is the idea that all students should take a set of required classes as a means to give them a foundational education upon which their specialty is based. It can also often be used to make sure students have at least a passing knowledge of other disciplines and how they interact. Additionally, it is the new form of the pre-WWII liberal education which was meant to prepare students to be more productive individuals after college thanks to a forced basic understanding of other disciplines. A modern general education is used to make sure students gain a passing knowledge of the wider world through required electives with cultural or other labels designed to broaden students' global views.<sup>10</sup>

The earliest mission of American universities was to provide a liberal education that was based on the classical education model in Europe. This educational ideology involved students becoming well versed in classic literary works, philosophy, foreign languages, rhetoric, and logic; it also stressed the importance of a broad base of education as a means to gain problem solving skills, appreciation of knowledge, and a desire to improve society. A liberal education was, by nature, very broad and lacked much focus on specifics and structure.<sup>11</sup> However, following WWII, many universities began adopting a general education approach, with its earliest adoption largely attributed to Harvard in 1949.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to liberal education, general education's purpose was to provide a focused survey of courses that developed critical thinking, student's awareness of the world around them, and helped them see beyond their chosen discipline. In most modern universities, its purpose is

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<sup>10</sup> See: James Axtell, *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Andrew Delbanco, *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> "General Education in Higher Education - the Difference between Liberal Education and General Education, the Goals of General Education," Education Encyclopedia, accessed August 13, 2017, <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2006/General-Education-in-Higher-Education.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Josephson, "Before the Core: The History of General Education at Harvard," *The Crimson*, February 17, 1978, accessed August 13, 2017, <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2006/General-Education-in-Higher-Education.html>.

to serve as a foundation for technical or vocational training, helping students think beyond their areas of specialization.<sup>13</sup> As a result of these differences, many in modern American higher education still debate the merits of a general education and how much influence it should have on a student's education versus the freedom allowed by a traditional liberal education.

Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) is an approach to education that gives students much more freedom in choosing their path. Usually an IDS approach allows students to be more active in determining their educational path in higher education. In many universities, students are able to major in interdisciplinary studies as a Bachelor of Arts degree which allows them to incorporate the subjects they want. The idea is that such an education path allows the student to help define their own career based on a desired and unique make up of subjects and possibly allow them to fill a more unique role in society.<sup>14</sup>

In *Importing Oxbridge*, Alex Duke discusses American residential colleges in two eras, 1900-1945 and 1945-1990. He primarily focuses on residential colleges prior to World War II where the primary purpose of the Colleges was to control their student's daily lives while also helping to increase academic rigor and values. These residential colleges that were born prior to WWII were designed as direct imports from the systems already in place at Oxford University and Cambridge University in England. Many faculty members viewed those systems as an effective blueprint to both control the students and their education. This view came, in part, from what some individuals saw as the negative effects brought upon American universities by following the German educational system too closely. The German

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<sup>13</sup> "General Education in Higher Education - the Difference between Liberal Education and General Education, the Goals of General Education," Education Encyclopedia.

<sup>14</sup> See: Derek Bok, *Higher Education in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Andrew Delbanco, *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Clark Kerr, *The Great Transformation in Higher Education, 1960-1980* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

higher education systems focused on the complete freedom of a student to choose their education path with only a final exam to earn their degrees. This method led to many students going to the classes they wanted to attend, but skipping others that were less desirable. It should be noted, though, that many early residential colleges did not always live up to their founder's expectations and lacked the control over students and education that was desired.<sup>15</sup>

However, as detailed by Duke, as more students began attending college following WWII, the residential colleges shifted their efforts from just serving as a means to control the students and their education to one of fighting against rapid college growth. Faculty members began to note a dangerous trend with the growing student population of many students becoming alienated among the new masses of incoming students. In an effort to fight this trend, residential colleges post-WWII began to be seen as a means of experimenting with new education methods. Such residential colleges began to appeal to students who were going to universities but wanted an educational setting that was nontraditional and fostered a sense of community. The new system of residential colleges was seen as a means to counteract the increasing focus of universities on research over teaching. Compared to the idea of residential colleges prior to World War II, Duke details a fundamental shift between two different eras. The first era was about control of both students and their education while the second was about experimentation and combating negative trends in higher education.<sup>16</sup>

In *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University*, James Axtell discusses residential colleges that occurred in both America prior to WWII and their initial beginnings in Europe. He begins his discussion with the creation of residence halls in European

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<sup>15</sup> Duke, *Importing Oxbridge: English Residential Colleges and American Universities*, 91.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 135.

universities, which were populated with older graduate students. These residence halls were viewed as a means to govern, protect, and feed the older graduate students, though eventually the younger students were allowed into those residential halls. From those residence halls, the European residential colleges were created at Cambridge and Oxford University, which were self-contained housing situations for students by discipline, and loosely associated with each other under the larger University structure. From Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard University and Yale University created their own models of residential colleges based on Oxford. As with the European residence halls and residential colleges, these models were self-contained and were meant to internally provide most student necessities during their studies. Residential colleges in America never took hold as the standard structure of universities, though they increased in popularity following WWII.<sup>17</sup>

Derek Bok's *Higher Education in America* talks about the residential college concept being one part of the puzzle that American universities adopted in the creation of their own unique system. He notes that the majority of universities are not structured as residential colleges, but instead some use the residential college concept to create a unique internal community of students that share a common interest. In fact, students that have experienced a true residential college experience are in the minority now in the 2000s. This is mostly due to the change in student culture where students began living off campus and started commuting to school more often. Bok does discuss the sense of community created by residential colleges in America and how those communities have increased graduation rates significantly for their students when compared to those who live off campus. Furthermore, residential colleges create unique experiences for their students that they remember.

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<sup>17</sup> Axtell, *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University*, xiv, 115.

American universities took pieces from the European ones in order to create a unique system with one of the most lasting feature being residential colleges.<sup>18</sup>

Part of the residential college concept is grounded in a liberal education which can be traced back before the concept of modern universities at the turn of the twentieth century. Its primary goal, when it was more theory than model, was to give a broad education to young men in order to turn them into productive citizens. Within this model these young men took classes in the sciences, arts, religion, and manners in their pursuit of becoming productive citizens. This model is more closely related to what today's universities termed as a general education. A liberal education is something that has taken on new meaning in the modern university with it even becoming a descriptor for a university as a "liberal arts college/university."<sup>19</sup>

The first point that Andrew Delbanco makes in his book *College: What It Was, Is and Should Be*, is that liberal education is the ability to learn freely without many restrictions placed on students. It allows the student to explore their own education and world without too much oversight while encompassing both the sciences and humanities within higher education.<sup>20</sup> However, according to Delbanco, liberal education is at risk in modern American higher education. Currently, students are trained to simply move from task to task and to take a constant stream of tests until the top performers are the only ones allowed to continue in their educational pursuits. This current method is the opposite of what a liberal education is supposed to be. The current task-based and testing-enforced framework has created a system where a liberal education is becoming marginalized and, in some cases

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<sup>18</sup> Bok, *Higher Education in America*, 183.

<sup>19</sup> Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

ornamental, in many universities, if indeed a liberal education is even being offered anymore.<sup>21</sup>

By comparison, Samuel Elliot Morrison claims in his book *Three Centuries of Harvard* that the concept of liberal education was what Harvard University specifically was founded upon for the young men of New England. The purpose of a liberal education was to give the young men of Harvard a well-rounded education consisting of the literature arts, and sciences, in conjunction with a social education designed to produce gentlemen; essentially the goal was to produce productive members of society. The religious spirit of Harvard was also considered an integral part of liberal education. For Harvard, a liberal education was considered necessary to the proper development of the student intellect and was so central to the founding of Harvard that it was given to all students regardless of their individual ambition. This view contrasts sharply to the modern ideas of a liberal education where the focus is on freedom of learning. A liberal education at Harvard was to instruct students on a wide variety of topics from arts and sciences to religion and etiquette in order to produce more informed and capable citizens.<sup>22</sup>

In *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University*, James Axtell describes a more modern liberal education that can be seen as an extension of the original idea of a liberal education. That original idea allowed students to take a multitude of subjects without fear of being held back. To Axtell, liberal education is the process of an individual's intellectual development and is a form of education where little to no distinction is made between disciplines. According to Axtell, liberal education dictates that the search and studying of all forms of knowledge is prioritized over almost all. The individual must search

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 200.

<sup>22</sup> Morrison, *Three Centuries of Harvard*, 73, 83.

for truth on their own and avoid any sense of utilitarian applications.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, a liberal education is meant to have freedom which allows the individual to seek out what they want to learn on an individual basis. However, Axtell does acknowledge that a liberal education has inherent biases, for it tends to favor those who have the time and money to pursue the cultivation of their intellect and personality.<sup>24</sup>

Martin Duberman in *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community*, describes a liberal education that is similar in nature to the previous authors' yet is a definition that would be considered extreme by today's standards. Founded in 1933 by John Andrew Rice, Theodore Dreier, Frederick Georgia, and Ralph Lounsbury, Black Mountain College was a liberal arts school located in Black Mountain, North Carolina. The founders' goal was to create a college built around ideas of liberal arts discipline that was growing out of the progressive education movement of the 1930s, and took that emerging concept further by experimenting freely with educational pedagogy, ideologies, and even the relationship between student and instructor. Black Mountain College ceased operation in 1957 due to a declining student enrollment and inability to cover its debts.<sup>25</sup> At Black Mountain College, the idea of a liberal education was a fusion of those presented by previous authors. It was equal parts individuals searching for their own truths unfettered and an education system producing effective citizens. In this system, it is believed that a student should never have to choose one specific path in their education because only the individual can make a decision on their education. Nonetheless, the system does concede that a student should still be assisted in their search for truth through advising and instruction by faculty members. In a

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<sup>23</sup> Axtell, *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University*, 46.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>25</sup> "History," Black Mountain College Museum & Arts Center, accessed August 13, 2017, <http://www.blackmountaincollege.org/history/>.

liberal education as presented in Duberman's book, the instructors are present to guide the students in their journey but should not tell them where to go and what to study. This idea of a liberal education was the foundation of Black Mountain College for its entire history (1933-1957) and was never changed.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to a liberal education, many residential colleges had to incorporate the idea of general education into their structure. General education is largely a product of the post-WWII, higher education system. As a massive influx of students began entering universities following WWII, universities began to diversify as a means to cater to them. But that diversification led to fracturing and many students being unfamiliar with some of the basic disciplines. From there the modern concept of general education was born with the main idea that students take a set of required classes to create a foundation from which their major was built on. The basic idea behind a general education, though, is as old as public education. The earliest ideas were simple in their goal, which was to allow students to be productive members of society. The modern concept of general education is still a hotly debated topic in today's evolving higher education system.<sup>27</sup>

In his book, *The Idea of University*, John Newman described a concept of a liberal education that has evolved more into what individuals today consider more similar to general education. He believed that the purpose of a liberal education was to cultivate the mind, formation, and intellect of the students, thereby allowing the university to produce more intelligent members of society that were able to attain what he called "universal knowledge." This outcome was reached by students studying various disciplines, allowing them to see how each branch of knowledge relied upon the other, were connected, and eventually came

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<sup>26</sup> Duberman, *Black Mountain College: An Exploration in Community*, 64.

<sup>27</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 90, 148.

together as a whole. At that point, according to Newman, the student had obtained their “universal knowledge.”<sup>28</sup> By helping students attain that knowledge, universities were able to produce citizens who were better able to understand that world they live in. More or less, the idea put forth by Newman allowed higher education institutions to turn children into functioning and productive adult members of society. Simply put, Newman believed the purpose of the liberal education concept, that became general education, was to make us better humans.<sup>29</sup>

In *Importing Oxbridge*, Duke defines general education as having the purpose of growing the intellect of the students while simultaneously creating a sense of community. This definition is similar to the concept of Newman’s liberal education (that eventually evolved into general education). According to Duke, general education became necessary when the number of students enrolling in universities increased drastically after WWII and caused a fragmentation within the student body as universities unsuccessfully attempted to cater to every student’s individual needs. In order to combat the fragmentation, a common course of study that all students followed before entering their major was created. This mandatory education received a great deal of support in cluster colleges (commonly referred to as residential colleges) in 1959-1974. Cluster colleges were attempts to create a general education curriculum based on the inspiration of common curricula in the 1930s and 1940s. Duke also believed that general education would be based on the famous books written by western civilizations. This forced common interest created the community that many felt was lacking in the post-WWII higher education system.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Duke, *Importing Oxbridge: English Residential Colleges and American Universities*, 150.

John Thelin carried on this idea of combating the fragmentation of universities in his book *A History of American Higher Education*. Similar to Duke's train of thought, Thelin believed that fragmentation was caused by the over diversification occurring as universities sought to cater to each and every student individually. While this method may have worked prior to WWII when a much lower population of students enrolled in universities, it caused problems as the population attending universities exploded after the war.<sup>31</sup> Thelin also identified that the fragmentation was occurring within student communities and not just in the curriculum offered. He rightly ascertained that students were now viewing themselves as consumers and treating the university more like a business from which they are buying goods (i.e. education). This consumerism led to the students demanding more and believing the universities should cater to their needs and interests, which resulted in universities losing sight of their missions.<sup>32</sup> Thus, a general education structure was designed to help combat these problems of a bloated academic structure while also creating a sense of community. However, Thelin recognized that general education was not without its own faults and that the rigid system it created struggled at times to adapt to the changes in an ever evolving society.<sup>33</sup> This is true even today where universities are still struggling with the concepts of general education and required classes versus what the students wants.

Bok, in *Higher Education in America*, listed three main goals for general education, which often overlapped. However, because these goals were intentionally broad in meaning, it allowed them to evolve and survive after World War II. The first goal was that general education was designed to equip students for a career by either teaching them useful knowledge and skills in a vocational major or by developing general qualities through a

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<sup>31</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 90.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 148.

broad liberal arts education. The latter part of the goal was to help them stand in good stead in any calling. Second, a goal of general education was to prepare students to be enlightened citizens of a self-governing democracy and to be active members of the communities that they were a part of. The third, and final, goal was to assist students in living a full and satisfying life by cultivating a wide range of interests and capacity for reflection and self-knowledge. To summarize, Bok's goal of general education prior to WWII was to provide the breadth required to prepare students to awaken their intellectual interests that could endure and enrich their later years. Following WWII, he changed his goals and refined them into a systemic catchall for courses that are designed to nurture the growing list of specific competencies that faculty believed students needed in order to function well in the world. This new system of general education caused many difficulties for American higher education.<sup>34</sup>

Like general education, interdisciplinary studies (IDS) is a relatively new concept that arose following WWII. Portions of the ideas behind an interdisciplinary education can be traced back as far as Greek philosophy but the popularity and refinement of its place in higher education came out of the twentieth century, most notably as another post-WWII concept. A true interdisciplinary approach to education makes use of multiple disciplines in a combined educated effort. It was to be designed as a method to approach education as new professions, needs, and disciplines emerge. When applied correctly, and when all the disciplines coordinate, it can create a unique and effective educational method that can be easily adapted as time goes on.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bok, *Higher Education in America*, 117.

<sup>35</sup> Tanya Augsberg, *Becoming interdisciplinary: An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies*. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company), 2016, 2-5.

Andrew Delbanco writes in *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be* that interdisciplinary education has become a buzzword in today's higher education and is lacking in substance. To him, interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary education are thrown around at conferences and in dean's reports, but hold little meaning.<sup>36</sup> In fact, he argues that most universities are less interdisciplinary today than they were in the past. Previously all disciplines and studies were unified under one overarching, single discipline and boundaries between fields and departments largely did not exist. This allowed for a truer interdisciplinary education. As universities and colleges began to segment and divide courses of study and set up clear boundaries between departments, an interdisciplinary education became harder to find. Furthermore, what was once a unified education that was, by its nature, interdisciplinary has now become just another cog in the machine and is often relegated to a department in itself or a specific major.<sup>37</sup>

The concept of interdisciplinary education in Bok's *Higher Education in America* appears the odd man out in today's institutions when compared to other types of education systems. While Bok considers interdisciplinary education and research a noble cause that many universities undertake, he states it is hampered in today's universities.<sup>38</sup> In a similar fashion to Delbanco, Bok notes that the interdisciplinary studies approach in modern universities is being challenged by the efforts to departmentalize the many disciplines into clearly defined roles. These efforts affect both research and instructional in universities. To Bok, an interdisciplinary education is necessary to teach students that every discipline has its own limitations and that effective leaders need to utilize and understand a variety of methods in order to reach sound solutions. Bok describes an interdisciplinary education as one that is

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<sup>36</sup> Delbanco, *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*, 41.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 41.

<sup>38</sup> Bok, *Higher Education in America*, 170.

necessary for students to handle the world outside of the university, but is hampered by the efforts to clearly define every discipline and place them into specific roles.<sup>39</sup>

Clark Kerr writes in *Great Transformations in Higher Education, 1960-1980* that interdisciplinary education has been used as a method of curricular reform, but was largely a failure. This failure is mostly due to the increasing push in higher education to departmentalize the many disciplines that exist; such departmentalization has caused premature specialization of undergraduates.<sup>40</sup> However, like with Bok and Delbanco, Kerr finds that an interdisciplinary education is necessary to better prepare students for their life outside of universities because it provides knowledge of a broad range of approaches to answering questions and solving problems. These methods are beneficial to students when they face the reality of life outside of academia. It is believed that by giving students a broad education in an interdisciplinary manner they will be much better prepared for when they graduate. However, today's universities are creating difficulties for interdisciplinary education related to integrating it into the current university systems.<sup>41</sup>

Just as with ideas about the aim of education, as long as there have been modern universities, there have been questions about what role faculty should play with students. To some, faculty need to be instructors and only that. This allows them to focus on the goal of educating students and adapting to a changing student culture. To others, faculty members need to extend their roles beyond the classroom as a means to be more familiar with their students' needs. Even in the latter train of thought, many disagree about the extent to which faculty need to be active outside of the classroom. Whether they serve additionally as

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 345-347.

<sup>40</sup> Kerr, *The Great Transformation in Higher Education*, 306.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 364.

advisors or more, every additional duty outside of instruction takes away from the faculty's ability to instruct and be able to adapt as higher education continues to change.

When it comes to faculty's role with students, Thelin writes in *A History of American Higher Education* that faculty are supposed to be separate from students; their job is to be professors and only that. There is an implicit gulf between students and faculty according to Thelin and there should never be a bridge over it.<sup>42</sup> Throughout his book, Thelin continually notes that professors at universities are supposed to focus on their duties as professors while the students are there to learn. Furthermore, he even notes that many universities throughout their history have often tried to avoid hiring professors who they either thought might possibly fraternize with students or had that reputation. Thelin goes further to discuss the fact that many professors, up until recently, were also divested from being public figures as well. They rarely gave interviews or acted as experts for outside institutions.<sup>43</sup>

In *Wisdom's Workshop*, Axtell speaks about a faculty whose role with students has been diminishing following WWII. Faculty used to be involved in more day to day operations of university life (student conduct, advising, and more), but those roles have been ceded to administrative staff. As more and more students attended universities and with universities growing to unprecedented sizes, professors have slowly had to transition to the education of masses of students over intimate groups. This change is often against the wishes of professors and comes from the administration's push for more students. This has led to professors going back to just being instructors, and only instructors, for the students. Furthermore, an additional emphasis on research and publishing within universities has

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<sup>42</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 103.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 103-105.

caused professors' roles and interactions with students to diminish.<sup>44</sup> Due to burdens the universities have placed on them, their role has regressed to traditional methods of purely lecture based instruction instead of fostering critical thinking and helping students to develop. They are expected to simply teach the students while also performing research and publishing on their own time. As such, faculty's roles with students have diminished in many universities to limited interaction outside of class.<sup>45</sup>

Bok writes in *Higher Education in America* of a changing landscape when it comes to faculty and their role with students. He discusses, as previous authors have, the increasing workload of faculty and the pressure to research.<sup>46</sup> This new focus, in part, has led to a decrease in the interactions between students and faculty outside of the classroom. He does note that inside the classroom more faculty are changing their teaching style away from the traditional lecture towards a more active one. While their role with students outside the classroom has diminished over the course of American higher education, their active role inside the classroom has increased. Eventually, it became common for faculty to use graduate teaching assistants to take over some of their teaching duties, including both in the classroom and grading. This shift has pushed some faculty at universities away from teaching and more towards research and publishing.<sup>47</sup>

These challenges facing faculty, particularly increased class size, contributed in some measure to the rise of student affairs as a profession, which is one of the newest in higher education. It stems from a unique American idea following WWII where the university became a place to cater to every student's need. American universities were no longer places

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<sup>44</sup> Axtell, *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University*, 186.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>46</sup> Bok, *Higher Education in America*, 187; Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*; Axtell, *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University*.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 239.

that only covered the academics of students. Whereas in other countries the surrounding cities picked up many of the students' needs for food, entertainment, health, and fitness, among others, American universities effectively usurped those duties and instead became increasingly involved in the day-to-day lives of their students. Collegiate athletics and clubs became emphasized as means of entertainment and socialization via the College.

Universities even took over dormitories and created many different programs to help students in their dorm life. Conversely, many universities in other countries do not own or run their dorms, often leaving that to the city or other organizations. The idea of student affairs being a profession with academic levels is still very much a unique aspect of American higher education.

An example of this new philosophy is Dallas Long's "The Foundation of Student Affairs: A Guide to the Profession." Long writes that students learn throughout their college experience and not just in the typical classroom. To him, the entire college or university is the largest classroom of them all. He defines student affairs as a distinct profession within higher education with its own graduate programs, associations, and journals. He also notes that student affairs is a new phenomenon, but can trace its roots all the way back to colonial times and the concept of *in loco parentis*. This concept is the idea that universities act as surrogate parents to their students and are responsible for a continued growth into full adulthood. As American universities began to cater to more of their students' needs in the early 1900s, the foundation was created that became student affairs. Additionally, as faculty began to be pushed away from being responsible for student conduct, advising, and other student centered duties, colleges and universities had to hire individuals to fill in those gaps. With the idea of *in loco parentis* eroding away following the 1960s, student affairs as a

profession created its own theoretical framework. It was during the 1980s and 1990s that student affairs as a profession solidified into a coherent unit and integrated fully into the new challenges presented by the ever increasing student population and rapid technological advancement. As a profession, student affairs continues to see itself having to adapt to the constantly evolving higher education landscape.<sup>48</sup>

Michael Hevel writes in his article, “Toward a History of Student Affairs: A Synthesis of Research (1996-2015),” that even individuals within the student affairs profession seem to be unaware of their own history. This lack of knowledge has caused many outsiders to view individuals within student affairs as either doing nothing of importance for higher education or as failing to provide that historical narrative to the professional writer. Beginning in the 1990s, the profession of student affairs began to see the importance of keeping its own history and began to study it. This is after little scholarship on its own story came out of the 1970s and 1980s, despite that being the period where the profession saw its creation and solidification.<sup>49</sup> Student Affairs historical literature tends to fall into three themes. In the first scholars focused on prominent individuals in the past looking at the administrative post they held, responsibilities, and accomplishments; second, scholars focused on the efforts of those individuals or groups to establish a distinct field; and finally, third, they focused on the early student affairs administrators’ encounters with sexism, racism, and homophobia.<sup>50</sup>

Bok in *Higher Education in America* paints student affairs departments as the driving force behind the majority of additional activities offered by universities outside of the normal

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<sup>48</sup> Dallas Long, “The Foundation of Student Affairs: A Guide to the Profession,” *ISU ReD: Research and eData* (1-1-2012): 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> Michael S. Hevel, “Toward a History of Student Affairs: A Synthesis of Research (1996-2015),” *Journal of College Student Development* 57, no. 7 (October 2016): 844.

<sup>50</sup> Hevel, “Toward a History of Student Affairs: A Synthesis of Research (1996-2015),” 845.

academic setting. Student affairs offices arranged, public lectures, concerts, dramatic productions, intramural athletics, and clubs for American students. These activities were designed to fill the hours of students' lives when they were not in class or studying. Often these activities were pushed and advertised much more than the academics of a college and became used as a recruiting tool for prospective students. In many cases, universities in other countries do not even run their own dorms (unless they have residential colleges) and leave those to outside organization or their countries governments. The idea that a university needs to cater to every aspect of their students' lives, not just academic, is very much a unique American idea that arose following WWII.<sup>51</sup>

In *A History of American Higher Education*, Thelin discusses how Student Affairs as a department had its origins in student conduct but expanded into other parts of students' lives.<sup>52</sup> The offices of the Dean of Men and Dean of Women eventually merged into one office, Student Affairs, which evolved to handle student advising and other aspects of students' lives. This evolution led to the unique idea of the university catering to every student's whims by offering a variety of extracurricular activities.<sup>53</sup>

Arthur Sandeen writes in his article "Educating the Whole Student: The Growing Academic Importance of Student Affairs" in the journal *Change* that student affairs can trace its lineage back to 1890. It was in that year that Harvard transformed itself into a university; faculty interests shifted to scholarship and instruction, and a need was born for someone to look after the undergraduates. A new position was created, Student Dean, in order to deal with the growing population of undergraduates. The new position was created under the ideals of the old college (Harvard) and as a means to retain those values while the worldlier

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<sup>51</sup> Bok, *Higher Education in America*, 15.

<sup>52</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 221.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 198.

goals of the university were coming to the forefront. From the unique efforts of Harvard, many other colleges followed the example of educating the whole student. As time went on, the role of student affairs expanded, adding complexity to the original simple goal of managing undergraduates.<sup>54</sup> Eventually student affairs became integral to the university system.

Georgianna L. Martin and Melandie McGee argue in their article, “The Effects of Student Interactions with Student Affairs Professional on College Outcomes,” in the journal *Research-Driven Practice in Student Affairs* that the movement started in the 1930s.<sup>55</sup> Its cornerstone ideal was that the importance of developing the whole student, or to make them well-rounded, should be stressed over the pure academic outlook of universities at the time. Eventually student affairs reassessed their overall goals and redirect themselves back towards student learning instead of simply promoting student growth. Student learning was defined as any variety of academic or cognitive gains and changes in learning-related values and attitudes. While student affairs professionals considered themselves in charge of developing students holistically they also sought to keep student learning as their core ideal. While some individuals paint student affairs as going back to the origin of Dean of Students, Martin and McGee think of student affairs as a post-World War II idea stemming from the beginnings of higher education expansion.<sup>56</sup>

The professionalization of student affairs and the emphasis on student development had monumental effects on the American higher education system. This system does not see students as functioning adults, but instead are individuals still in need of developing into

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<sup>54</sup> Arthur Sandeen, “Educating the Whole Student: The Growing Academic Importance of Student Affairs,” *Change*, 26, no. 3 (May-June 2004): 30.

<sup>55</sup> Georgianna L. Martin and Melandie McGee, “The Effects of Student Interactions with Student Affairs Professional on College Outcomes,” *New Directions for Student Services* no. 147 (2014): 49.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 50.

citizens with the university assisting their growth. Universities in America no longer solely kept their attention on student academics, as in other countries, but instead became almost self-contained entities dedicated to what they saw as a need to develop students. This shift has caused the American higher education system to become bloated where academics are no longer at the forefront of the administration's mind.

### **Residential College History**

The earliest attempts at creating residential colleges in the United States occurred at Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Chicago between 1894 and 1910. Each college's early attempts failed. Harvard's own administration failed to act after a discussion on a residential college; at Chicago resistance of alumni and trustees prevented a residential college from forming; after the death of its President in 1905, Princeton's attempts ended.<sup>57</sup> These early attempts were made under the idea of taking what Oxford University and Cambridge University had done in England and directly importing it to American universities. In these three instances, the residential colleges in their universities held only a passing acquaintance with the English ones. Even though there was enthusiasm for the creation of a new collegiate system, it was never matched with a complementary knowledge base of that same system.<sup>58</sup> The first residential colleges in the United States occurred at both Harvard and Yale in the 1930s (Harvard, called its system a "house system" rather than a residential college). In 1929, enough money was donated to Harvard for the creation of its house system and Yale followed suit two years later. In both instances, individuals outside the universities held hope that residential colleges would fix the disunity in the universities caused by increasing student populations and the widening gap between students and faculty.

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<sup>57</sup> Duke, *Higher Education in America*, 65.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

Additionally, it was hoped that the creation of the Colleges would help to rein in the student population that had long been moving off campus for living. Residential colleges did not gain a national following until after WWII when the population at American universities skyrocketed.<sup>59</sup>

Following World War II, residential colleges took on a new meaning and format. In the 1950s, residential colleges began to be used to address common university problems, but also began experimenting with educational methods, as was the case with Watauga College. There were three major university problems after WWII that residential colleges were created to address. First was the question of how to treat students as unique human beings while in a large mass of a student body. Second was how to make the university seem smaller and more intimate as it continued to grow, an issue that is still being addressed today. And, third, was how to establish a range of contact between the faculty and students that was broader than the one-way route across the lectern or through a television screen. Through addressing those three common issues, many residential colleges began to share certain characteristics. These characteristics included housing in older residence halls, experiencing a we vs. them feeling, a growing emphasis on community, an integrated or interdisciplinary approach to learning, experimental pedagogy, a focus on student involvement, deeply committed faculty, a liberal reputation, and coeducational dormitories.<sup>60</sup>

One of the first residential colleges that took up this new experimental and more liberal approach in the post-WWII society was at the University of California at Berkley. This residential college was formed by a philosophy instructor, Dr. Joseph Tussman, in direct

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>60</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College At Appalachian State University," 23-25.

response to the student reforms of the early 1960s. Though this college only lasted two years, it helped set the stage for the new era of residential colleges.<sup>61</sup>

As with many trends in higher education, residential colleges in the 1960s and early 1970s saw a quick rise in popularity. But, beginning in the 1980s, the trend began to decline. As student affairs became professionalized more autonomy was taken away from the faculty. This meant that the main of the purpose of residential colleges, that of experimenting and responding to student needs, was transferred to student life (or development) departments in the university.<sup>62</sup>

The professionalization of student life came at the same time that college students saw getting an education as a means to a lucrative career. More students came to college with the express intent of getting a degree that allowed them to join the workforce in a better position. Part of this motivation came from a trend in the 1980s that money equaled success. Students took this idea and came to universities with the intent to take majors that allowed them the best chance to make the most money when they graduated.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, another main reason for the decline in residential colleges was a trend amongst students back towards a more conservative mindset. It was theorized that this mindset came out of a more career oriented view of higher education.<sup>64</sup> During the is time between 1978 and 1985, some faculty stated that even students at Appalachian State transitioned to a career mindset, losing much of their interest in co-ed living and interdisciplinary studies.<sup>65</sup> These trends during the 1980s caused many residential colleges to lose students and stalled the building of new ones as well. In addition, student populations exploded, administrative departments and offices

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<sup>61</sup> Joseph Tussman, *Experiment at Berkeley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 10-15.

<sup>62</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College At Appalachian State University," 30.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>65</sup> Joe Watts, Interviewed by Barbara Daye. Personal interview. June 28, 1962, LLC Records.

proliferated, faculty had less interaction outside the classroom, and dormitories became more about numbers than standard of living.

A resurgence in residential colleges began in the final decades of the twentieth century because they offered solutions to many of these problems. Modern residential colleges seek to solve these problems through decentralization of administration, increased faculty leadership, social stability, and diversity.<sup>66</sup> Decentralization helps to bring faculty and students closer together and counteracts the increasing administrative bloat and retrenchment that some saw as occurring at many universities.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, by integrating faculty back into the daily lives of students the residential colleges help to create a more educational environment. This is done to help residence life managers who, though well meaning, are often detached from the university academic structure. Smaller residential colleges also help social stability when alcohol, vandalism, and discipline have become major issues at universities.<sup>68</sup> In effect, modern residential colleges have become fusions of the early models and those created in recent years. They are meant to bring structure back to students' lives while also allowing for experimentation as a means to solve the many problems facing students, faculty, and universities as a whole.

While Watauga College was created at the tail end of the residential college era between 1950-1975, its founding reflected trends in American higher education. From its beginning as an attempt to put ASU at the forefront of educational innovation, Watauga College has faced multiple challenges, but its status as an independent organization within the larger ASU structure allowed it to successfully change with the times. However, the

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<sup>66</sup> Robert J. O'Hara, "Hogwarts U.," Inside Higher Ed, accessed February 20, 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2006/11/28/ohara>.

<sup>67</sup> Peter Petschauer to unnamed, 1978, Watauga College Collection, unprocessed, Special Collections and Records, Appalachian State University Library, Boone, North Carolina (hereby cited as "University Records").

<sup>68</sup> Robert J. O'Hara, "Hogwarts U."

professionalization of student affairs greatly eroded its ability to experiment with educational methods or even survive as an independent residential college.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FOUNDING AND EARLY YEARS OF WATAUGA COLLEGE

In the 1960s, many universities across the United States began creating cluster colleges which were often presented as residential colleges, and as a means to provide a coherent approach to diverse education subjects. These residential colleges experimented with many different methods of classroom instruction, research, and discussion. Appalachian State University (ASU) faculty sought to create their own residential college in 1972 with the same goal of experimenting with new educational practices. In its early years, Watauga College was a near independent residential college contained within the larger framework of ASU, but the rise of Student Affairs as a new profession and academic path began to reshape both Watauga College and universities across America in the late 1970s.<sup>69</sup>

The concept of a residential college at ASU originated with Dr. Jane Jackson, Dean of Educational Innovation. Jackson, in 1970, conceptualized that there should be a

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<sup>69</sup>Note: This thesis has chosen to focus on Watauga College, with limited insight and documentation from the Student Development Department of Appalachian State University, for several reasons. First, records were readily available that identified faculty members who were previously a part of Watauga College. Many of those faculty members also still resided in Boone, NC (or near to it), which allowed for easy access to them for interviews and interpretation of documents that assisted in researching and understanding Watauga College from its inception to today. Second, the records of Watauga College were more readily available as unprocessed collections, which allowed for almost unrestricted access. Records, specifically official documents, for Student Development were often restricted as part of University Records with little intent to process into the archives or to allow access due to possible sensitivity. Third, the core of this thesis was showing the effects of Student Development on Watauga College. The college provided an ideal case study due to the extensive development and involvement of Student Development that closely tracked Watauga College's foundation and growth as a residential college. Fourth, while some Watauga College faculty had a student development background, attempts were still made to interview outside Student Development individuals which did not come to fruition. Fifth, there was a significant concern that adding in viewpoints from Student Development would have caused the thesis to expand past of the boundaries of its scope and present too many opposing opinions that distracted from its purpose.

living/learning community off-site from the main campus of ASU, where students and faculty could live together while studying humanities disciplines.<sup>70</sup> This community functioned as an affiliated but separate entity from ASU, thereby allowing faculty and students the space and freedom to experiment with educational innovation without the confines and restrictions of a traditional college campus. Jackson suggested the community should be located at Camp Broadstone – a University-owned facility outside of Boone located on thirty-five acres in Valle Crucis, approximately a seven-mile drive from the main campus.<sup>71</sup>

Shortly thereafter, in 1971, Dr. Jackson's vision began to take form when the *Teachers Training Teachers* report (Triple-T Report) gave the first framework for what later became Watauga College. Initially, the Triple-T Report outlined three main objectives for Watauga College. First, it was to be a “cluster college” (eventually named a residential college) with a large amount of autonomy in which students and faculty could live and learn together. Second, the College was to experiment on innovative academic projects and practices. Finally, Watauga College evaluated its programs and utilize any recommendations from those evaluations to enact reforms to the main campus.<sup>72</sup>

After the Triple-T Report was published and provided a base guideline to the purpose of Watauga College, the primary objectives for the College began to change and evolve as more people became involved in the project and the realities of creating a successful residential college were considered. The first proposal offered after the Triple-T Report illustrated that evolution by featuring six main objectives for Watauga College that not only

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<sup>70</sup> Barbara W. Daye, “Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections,” 1982, 1-3, LLC Records.

<sup>71</sup> “Explore Broadstone,” Appalachian State University, accessed March 24, 2017, <https://broadstone.appstate.edu/explore>.

<sup>72</sup> *Teachers Training Teachers*, 1970, 3-7, University Records.

highlighted the goals of Watauga College's founders, but also attempted to offer practical means on how to accomplish those objectives. Those objectives were: (1) to develop a sense of community to enrich the learning experience; (2) to create a more unified and holistic approach to the social sciences and humanities then was possible under the current traditional course structure; (3) to supplement class work with off campus activities; (4) to allow professors flexibility in teaching methods; (5) to utilize upperclassmen, who had already experienced their freshmen year in the program, by placing them in teaching roles as a method to help bridge the gap between professors and students; and (6) to experiment with non-traditional academic approaches that later served as a guide for future development of successful tools for teaching and learning in other parts of the University.<sup>73</sup>

As the concept of Watauga College continued, Kenneth Webb, Dean of the General College, offered continued support for the creation of Watauga College during his tenure at ASU and even proposed creating a living/learning community on campus, as opposed to the original idea of an off-site location. Webb initially suggested moving the residential college to Watauga Hall. However, the Chancellor at the time, Herbert W. Wey, rejected that initial suggestion because, while he supported the idea of creating a residential college, he felt that moving the students into an on-campus dorm created a program where students were merely going to "special classes" as they attended ASU; the concept of a residential college, in his opinion, was lost within the confines of the main campus.<sup>74</sup>

Additionally, the chancellor worried about Webb's suggestion of Watauga College being housed in a coeducational dormitory.<sup>75</sup> In the early years Watauga College allowed students to live in mixed gender housing within each floor. For several years male and

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<sup>73</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 3-6, LLC Records.

<sup>74</sup> Herbert W. Wey to O.K. Webb, November 3, 1971, University Records.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

female students often shared a bathroom, the dorm having every two rooms share a bathroom.<sup>76</sup> ASU had previously tried and failed to get students interested in a coeducational living facility in 1970, but not enough students signed up. As it stood, Wey did not feel there were even current students pushing for a coeducational dormitory. Instead they were bombarding trustees for the ability to obtain visitation rights. The public and surrounding community was also opposed to co-ed living arrangements on-campus.<sup>77</sup> Thus, in Wey's opinion, if interest in co-ed living remained low and the public continued to object to coeducational dormitories, then Watauga College could be doomed before it was even launched. However, Wey was overruled by a natural disaster. The main hall at Camp Broadstone burned to the ground and Wey had no choice but to allow the residential college to move into Watauga Hall. Thus, it was in 1972 that Watauga College was officially founded and its first freshman class arrived in Watauga Hall ready for the residential college experiment at ASU.

In addition, due to the utilization of Watauga Hall, Wey also had to acquiesce and allow for the dorm to be co-ed.<sup>78</sup> This created the first co-ed dorm on ASU's campus and caused one of the first controversies surrounding Watauga College. Watauga allowed mixed gender by floor in their first dormitory, often having one male room and one female room share the suite style bathroom (which is a unique and progressive concept even today, with many universities today still not allowing the sharing of bathrooms between genders). Additionally, within the dorm, the students could visit each other without supervision, since

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<sup>76</sup> Mike Moore, interview by author, personal interview, March 9, 2017, Boone, NC, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>77</sup> Herbert W. Wey to O.K. Webb, November 3, 1971, University Records.

<sup>78</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 2, LLC Records.

the dorm lacked resident assistants in the beginning.<sup>79</sup> Through the coeducational dormitory a precedent was set of Watauga beginning a new direction which the main University eventually followed.

Now that Watauga College had been founded, the experiment began and the true differences between the residential college and main campus began to become apparent. For example, Watauga College did not have traditional resident assistants, which was a departure from the traditional university structure of ASU. Instead, Watauga College had a residential director, which was usually the wife of the married couple (the husband was the assistant director) who lived in the dorm, and informal resident assistants, which the students selected. The residential director was largely on her own running the dorm, as during the first four years of Watauga College there were no residential assistants in any capacity. When they were added, these resident assistants had no formal power, but instead served to offer advice and guidance to the students within their dorm. Thus, from the outset, the dorm structure put in place for Watauga College deviated significantly from ASU, serving to broaden differences between the two organizations and allowing the outside observer to take note as to whether the traditional or informal resident assistant best served the students and assisted in achieving the goals of the College/University.<sup>80</sup>

Watauga College was also created with unprecedented autonomous self-governance, in sharp contrast to the main University. The first expression of autonomy was the creation of the Watauga Assembly, a dorm-specific student government. The Watauga Assembly had twelve elected students who served for a period of one year. From their ranks, they elected a President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. The Assembly had total control over the money

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<sup>79</sup> Mike Moore, interview by author.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

collected from specific student fees for Watauga College. In the beginning, these fees amounted to roughly \$3,000, but as the years went on, the fees increased the total money controlled to as high as \$5,000. Adjusted to 2016 values, those fees equaled approximately \$17,265 to \$28,774, depending on the year, which is a significant amount of money to put under student control. These funds generally went towards student activities, dorm upkeep, and class trips.<sup>81</sup>

A further example of Watauga College's self-governance was in the formation an independent judicial body separate from ASU. This occurred because, at the time of creation, the ASU Office of Student Affairs wanted little to do with Watauga College. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs struck a deal with the College to allow it to handle all their student affairs internally.<sup>82</sup> This arrangement allowed the College to create an incredibly powerful student-run judicial council. That council handled all incidents related to Watauga College and its students, including incidents that would have led to police involvement on the rest of the campus. In the early years, outside observers saw that in many cases, the student judicial council elected to handle incidents brought to them with community service-oriented punishments (or sometimes no punishment), and rarely chose to refer punishment decisions to the University or local police.<sup>83</sup> It quickly became clear that not only did the Watauga Assembly and the Watauga College judicial council wield far more power than any other student run organization on campus, but that they solved problems, allocated money, and made decisions in a unique way from the main University. ASU naturally had greater involvement by teachers, police, trustees, and others, dealing with the many of the same

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<sup>81</sup> "Value of \$1000 in 1972," Saving.Org, accessed March 24, 2017, <http://www.saving.org/inflation/inflation.php?amount=1000&year=1972>.

<sup>82</sup> Unnamed to Kenneth Webb, March 15, 1973, University Records.

<sup>83</sup> Barbara Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 5, LLC Records.

issues. The experiment was starting to produce data for analysis and eventual application to the main University.

The first three years of Watauga College's existence were characterized by a new director each year. The first director was Don Frantz, who only served for one year (1972-1973). In his opinion, Watauga College came about at a time when students at ASU were questioning the conservative social rules and regulations of society and, to some extent, even the main University. Many students were looking for change at ASU, such as gaining the right to in-room visitation in the dorms.<sup>84</sup> Watauga College portrayed itself as an avenue for students to obtain and enact those desired changes, while also providing a unique support system for students who experienced loneliness, homesickness, and low morale – issues ASU was concerned about at the time. To combat those issues, Watauga College built a spirit of friendship and community among students, faculty, and staff in order to make students feel that academics were vitally related to them. However, as many faculty members pointed out during that time, while Watauga College had unique autonomy it was still subject to University regulation, thereby preventing it from being so radical that it could harm the University or its reputation.<sup>85</sup>

Perhaps the largest change Watauga College enacted that Frantz had to oversee was the acceptance of co-ed dorms. At the time of his one-year tenure, universities were still largely gender segregated by dorms and students did not have visitation rights. Watauga College, however, permitted their dorm to be co-ed by floor. This set the stage for the first round of resistance to the College's creation and led to a much bigger separation between ASU and Watauga than the founders originally intended. Many individuals in the larger

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>85</sup> *Student Recruitment Brochure*, Spring 1972, University Records.

University reacted negatively to what they viewed as the social permissiveness of the co-ed nature of the College. Even Chancellor Wey, who was a defender of the concept of Watauga College and its co-ed dorm, wanted the coeducational dormitory to exist only off-campus.<sup>86</sup> A student article written in *The Appalachian* in the late 1970s spoke how many female students did not want to walk by Watauga College at night due its ill reputation.<sup>87</sup> This issue of a co-ed dorm and the subsequent negative attitudes towards it were colored by the perceived social aspects of colleges resulted in many of the initial successes of Watauga College being overshadowed. Unfortunately, many of outside negative opinions of Watauga College persisted even into the late 1990s.<sup>88</sup> Internally, those negative perceptions did not appear to survive, with faculty member interview summaries viewing the co-ed nature of the dorms and College as beneficial for the male and female students, who could get to know each other “as individuals and people rather than as sex objects or date” according to one anonymous interview.<sup>89</sup> This allowed for the negative outside perceptions to have little effect on how Watauga College operated internally and permitted the College to continue to flourish and grow. However, due to the regulations at ASU governing interaction between male and female students, there were no opportunities for this model of residential living outside of Watauga College on the main campus.<sup>90</sup>

The first year under Frantz also began to illustrate how Watauga College's goal of trying to bridge the gap between faculty and students had the unexpected result of professors gaining a more extensive and fuller awareness of students as whole persons. Barbara Daye, an early instructor, theorized that the freedom that Watauga College allowed to both students

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<sup>86</sup> Herbert W. Wey to O.K. Webb, November 3, 1971, University Records.

<sup>87</sup> *The Appalachian, Watauga College, 1979*, University Records.

<sup>88</sup> Cynthia Wood, interview by author.

<sup>89</sup> Peter Petschauer et al., “Summary of Faculty Interviews Concerning The Watauga College Living-Learning Experience,” October 1975, University Records.

<sup>90</sup> David Krall, interview by unknown, personal interview, 1974, University Records.

and teachers challenged the faculty personally and intellectually.<sup>91</sup> This freedom further allowed for the faculty to grow alongside the students, evolving and enhancing their individual and group ability to make the experience of Watauga College fulfilling and successful for the students. The Watauga experience allowed for a great deal of anecdotal data to be collected on to how to enhance a student's college and educational experience. Increasing amounts of freedom and autonomy created resistance in the next couple of years from the main University for the continued existence of Watauga College that future director(s) had to combat.

The second year (1973-1974) of Watauga College began more roughly with Bill Moss as the director. He was not supposed to become the director of Watauga College, but when the search committee failed to find a replacement for Don Frantz, Moss decided to step in.<sup>92</sup> One of the first problems Moss encountered was that students from the first year of the College's existence continued to loiter in and around Watauga Hall, even though the dorm housed only a freshmen program. This caused issues because those sophomores began to influence the culture of the new freshmen and impose their ideas of Watauga College. This influence was contrary to the very core of Watauga College's concept, which allowed for greater freedom for students to discover themselves and what college meant to them without too much outside influence. Mike Moore (third director of Watauga College from 1974-75) discovered that many of these sophomores continued to loiter largely due to having difficulties assimilating into a more traditional university life; these students had become too dependent on the Watauga College program. This discovery permitted some critics of the College to claim that the College was merely an extension of high school and suggested the

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<sup>91</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 9-10, LLC Records.

<sup>92</sup> Bill Moss, interview by Barbara Daye, personal interview, 1982, LLC Records.

freshmen did not always take the program seriously as a stepping stone to eventual assimilation and acceptance into the main University.<sup>93</sup>

Another issue of concern for Moss and Watauga was the formation and development of the College's student judicial council for issues that arose within its residence hall. As previously discussed, due to student affairs not wanting associate with the College, Watauga created its own independent judicial council run by students with limited faculty oversight. The very first case heard by the council was two women who were accused of growing marijuana in their dorm room, a type of case normally handled by police and not on-campus. While there is no indication in the College's records of whether the women were found innocent or guilty, it appears that many of the punishments decreed by the judicial council did not always apply merely to the individual accused of the "crime." Instead, Watauga College residents seemed to organically create the concept of performing community service projects together as a way "to pay for the sins of their peers" according to Mike Moore.<sup>94</sup>

During Moss' one-year tenure, he also saw students thoroughly enjoying the informal relationship with both their peers and faculty that Watauga College advocated. This resulted in many students advocating for a second year to be added to the program. However, the proposal for the addition of a second year was met with some resistance by the main University and faculty.<sup>95</sup>

Despite these difficulties, the faculty involved in Watauga College enjoyed the interdisciplinary approach, with many saying they only successfully accomplished the University's goals in the Watauga College setting. They also enjoyed the community-type

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<sup>93</sup> Mike Moore, interview by Barbara Daye, personal interview, July 2, 1982, LLC Records.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 11-12, LLC Records.

learning environment created by the College. Unfortunately, the faculty was given less time by their departments to devote towards Watauga College as compared to the time they were allotted to spend for their duties on the main campus. This put a strain on the professors who were trying to balance between their responsibilities and requirements for the main University and the College. Thus, some members of the faculty expressed concern that if they had to spend more time with more students at the College, which was not necessarily supported by their departments, it might have detrimental effects to their overall career within the University and their individual departments. Additionally, some departments believed that by teaching in the College, the professors and members of faculty alienated themselves from the main University, the department, and their peers who did not participate in Watauga College. Fortunately, though, these concerns did not prevent Watauga College from finding professors willing to teach their classes and carry on the efforts of the College.<sup>96</sup> These concerns also illustrated to Moss that during the first two years of existence, Watauga College had already managed to achieve a residential community, though it was still striving for an intellectual community.<sup>97</sup>

During the 1973-1974 school year, Watauga College met some of its strongest resistance to its continued existence. Since its creation, various departments, especially, the Department of Philosophy and Religion, had been questioning Watauga College's place amongst the growing interdisciplinary programs at ASU.<sup>98</sup> They questioned if the College was even necessary since other programs were growing and possibly offered similar instruction to students. One faculty member said that the University had enough evidence by the end of the 1973-74 school year from the Watauga College experiment that it could be

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 11-13.

<sup>97</sup> Mike Moore, interview by Barbara Daye, LLC Records.

<sup>98</sup> Jim Stines to Dr. Paul Sanders, January 15, 1973, University Records.

shut down and changes could be implemented on the main campus. However, they noted that by making such statements, they now stood accused of "cooking up" Watauga College and ramming it down the faculty's throat.<sup>99</sup>

Nevertheless, Watauga College persisted into its third year and these continued issues over the very nature of Watauga College became the leading factors that created the division allowing it to operate autonomously within the larger ASU. Essentially, aside from faculty paychecks, Watauga College in its early years was allowed by ASU to largely have autonomy in its own matters and was often left to its own devices by the main University. To the Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs, and others outside of Watauga College, the residential College represented too large a departure from what they saw as normal Appalachian State academic life. Specifically, they disagreed with the linking of living and academics.<sup>100</sup>

The third year for Watauga College (1974-1975) saw many major changes and milestones. With Director Mike Moore at the helm, the first of these changes moved the College from Watauga Hall to East Hall, where it stayed for the next 30 years. However, the move to East Hall presented many challenges for the College, the most pressing being to fill all the beds in the larger dorm. Moving from Watauga Hall to East Hall nearly doubled the number of beds available and the College assumed responsibility for filling them on their own due to their independence from the University. This resulted, for some time, in the academics of the College being overshadowed by the need to fill all the beds. Fortunately, it was during this school year that Watauga College decided to add a second year to its

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<sup>99</sup> Unnamed to Kenneth Webb, March 15, 1973, University Records.

<sup>100</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, personal interview, November 10, 2016, Boone, NC, transcript in possession of author.

program, thereby allowing sophomores to continue in the College and reside within East Hall. This almost immediately solved the problem of filling all the beds.<sup>101</sup>

The next area of concern Moore encountered during his tenure was the many structural problems with East Hall, such as holes in the roof, leaks, low water pressure, and other minor issues. Ironically, these structural challenges, instead of causing members of Watauga College to want escape the dorm, served to bring the students and faculty closer together as a community. With the University Residence Facilities Department (part of Business Affairs at this time and not Student Affairs) unwilling to make the repairs in a timely manner, the students and faculty banded together to make repairs themselves and create a community spirit within the dorm.<sup>102</sup>

The move also led to students creating classrooms and offices for the College's use. At the time of the move from Watauga Hall, East Hall did not have any offices or classrooms. Thus, once the allotted money became available, the students largely took on the project of building those rooms. Portions of lower floors that had sufficient space were renovated into classrooms, with the students moving all the furniture and doing the painting primarily on their own. Unfortunately, as was the theme with many of the early issues encountered at Watauga College, while the challenges with the dorm helped to unify students and faculty of the College, it also created a rift between those in Watauga College and the larger University by promoting an “us versus them” mentality within the College.<sup>103</sup>

The creation of a sophomore program also created multiple challenges for Moore and the College. Many of the sophomores wanted and expected a continuation of the programs from their freshmen years, with freedom to choose their classes and focus on the humanities.

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<sup>101</sup> Daye, “Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections,” 15, LLC Records.

<sup>102</sup> Joe Watts to Dr. Frantz, Director of WC, March 26, 1973, University Records.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Sophomores were dismayed when the initial second year program offered by the College was heavily steeped in the sciences and they lost their ability to choose classes without restriction. Upon realizing that they were no longer a unique group at ASU – the new freshmen class was instead – the sophomores briefly held the opinion that the freshmen were encroaching on their College. This led them to attempting to influence the freshmen in an effort to protect what they viewed as theirs thought their interactions with the freshmen.<sup>104</sup>

Similar to the prior two years of existence, Watauga College continued to experience trouble and resistance in getting faculty released to teach at Watauga College. This was largely due to the outside view that the College was not academically respectable. In an effort to combat that description and reduce the resistance by other departments and faculty members, the current faculty of the College began to work more closely to create and maintain academic integrity. Director Moore also fought for a largely autonomous faculty as a means to protect the staffing needs. This resulted in the College seeing its first full-time faculty hired at Watauga College during Moore's tenure.<sup>105</sup>

For the school year of 1975-76, Peter Petschauer became the fourth director of Watauga College and was the first director to remain for more than a one year term. Throughout his tenure (1975-1980), Petschauer faced the same issues and criticisms as his predecessors, but he also had to defend Watauga College on new, somewhat unexpected, issues. In the beginning of his tenure, one of the main challenges faced by Petschauer was getting funding from the Housing Office, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs for the benefit of Watauga College.<sup>106</sup> Petschauer aimed to use additional money from one of those

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<sup>104</sup> Mike Moore, interview by author.

<sup>105</sup> Jay Wentworth, interview by author, personal interview, November 20, 2016, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>106</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 12, LLC Records.

sources to create a student-to-student advising program. When it appeared that the University and the state of North Carolina would not provide the necessary funding, Petschauer began to look for outside sources of revenue.<sup>107</sup> It seemed that the lack of money available to Watauga College from the different University departments was in large part to administrators in those departments beliefs that Watauga College did not fit into the established patterns and protocols within ASU. The structure of the College did not allow it to easily identify with, or be classified as, a specific department, thereby contributing to its being seen as separate from ASU. Individual departments ignored its existence and denied funding allocations to the College. Furthermore, according to Daye, many departments did not like the bottom up program or ones that were created from within their ranks that Petschauer and the College appeared to advocate.<sup>108</sup> However, those became moot points when Petschauer's exhaustive efforts to locate the funding came to fruition in the summer of 1977 when Watauga College received an Exxon Grant worth \$6,000 to be used towards the development of the student-to-student advising program. In the long run, however, Watauga College evolved to fit in better with the main University, making the need to obtain outside funding a thing of the past.<sup>109</sup>

It was also during Petshauer's tenure that many outside observers felt that the students of Watauga College were becoming too radical. This appearance of radicalism was in large part due to the near complete freedom that students were afforded in the College, a freedom they would not have been experiencing in other departments on the main campus. In addition, students in Watauga constantly demanded such freedoms. While there were some students who took advantage of the freedom afforded to them by the College, overall the

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<sup>107</sup> Peter Petschauer to O.K. Webb, May 5, 1977, University Records.

<sup>108</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 14, LLC Records.

<sup>109</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by Barbara Daye, LLC Records.

College was often unfairly judged for the actions of a select few as opposed to the success of the overall Watauga student body according to several faculty.<sup>110</sup> It was during the 1976-77 school year that Petschauer had to defend Watauga College against this view by pointing out that the College was much more than what was listed in discipline reports and grade based statistics. Instead, Petschauer argued, it was hard to quantify the College using traditional evaluation methods and it should not be judged purely based on those methods. However, Petschauer did appear to concede that part of the "rebellion" of students may have been due to the lack of consistent faculty members.<sup>111</sup> The College was designed to have a rotating set of staff, to allow as many faculty to experience it as possible, but this rotation affected the continuity between years and showed a need for, on a bureaucratic level, some form of consistency to be developed in order for the program to succeed.

In 1976-77, Petschauer pushed to change the grading scale within Watauga College. He introduced the idea to have grades of A, B, C, and No Credit. The purpose of a No Credit (N/C) score, as opposed to the traditional D or F, was to be used to increase the student's acceptance of failure without punishing them for failing. He intended to use this new scale to see if his research on the punitive aspects of grading were true. Petschauer also advocated for Watauga College to add (+) and (-) as a standard part of student's grades. This new scale was instituted for the school year 1976-1977, with ASU following Petschauer and the College's lead in the school year of 1980-81.<sup>112</sup>

While the long-term success of the Watauga College experiment may be measured in the number of students applying for entry to the College, Petschauer recognized that

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<sup>110</sup> Petschauer, "Summary of Faculty Interviews Concerning The Watauga College Living-Learning Experience," 1-2, University Records.

<sup>111</sup> Article: Peter Petschauer, "What Ever Happened to All Those Living/Learning Programs? The Example of Watauga College at Appalachian State University," 1981, 2-3, University Records.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 1.

enrolling too many students began to erode what the program stood for and possibly impede the freedom that its students coveted. Thus, as he encountered applications from an ever-growing number of students wanting to participate in the program, Petschauer made the decision to cap the maximum number of students for Watauga College at 200 in 1976. This was done to ensure that the College never became too similar to the main University. One of the continuing joys and difficulties of the College that Petschauer appreciated was its aim to represent a cross-section of Appalachian State's student body, including those who did not want to participate in learning in the traditional university setting. In many university settings class sizes had become large and difficult to manage.<sup>113</sup> By controlling the number of students involved in the College, and thus in the classes, some students were emboldened to participate in more classroom activities. However, as Petschauer and his faculty discovered, by rejecting the traditional classroom setting, several students "exercised their freedom" and lacked motivation to attend and to participate in classes.<sup>114</sup> This residual issue, due to the structure of the College encouraging student freedom, became such a significant issue that it was continually addressed in faculty meetings where ideas were often discussed in an effort to reduce the number of students cutting or not fully engaging in class.<sup>115</sup>

Another difficulty encountered by the College during Petschauer's tenure were the few students who decided to use their allotted freedom in a destructive fashion. While many students and faculty banded together to improve East Hall, others chose to abuse property around East Hall through littering or vandalism.<sup>116</sup> Essentially, after expending so much effort in creating a positive learning environment, some students simply were not taking care

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<sup>113</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 17, LLC Records.

<sup>114</sup> Bob Stout, interview by unknown, personal interview, 1975, University Records.

<sup>115</sup> "Discipline Notes on student's cutting class," 1980-81, University Records

<sup>116</sup> Joe Watts, interview by Barbara W. Daye, personal interview, June 28, 1982, 2-3, LLC Records.

of East Hall and not accepting responsibility for its general upkeep.<sup>117</sup> This problem was compounded due to the Housing Department wanting little to do with Watauga College and, thereby, only doing the minimum upkeep. That department's negative view was reinforced by the College's students littering and strengthened even more when several students took it upon themselves to paint caricatures next to each dorm room door representing the students that lived within.<sup>118</sup> However, the Housing Department and many other outside observers seemed to ignore that during the 1978 school year vandalism was a campus wide issue, not just an issue exclusive to East Hall and Watauga College.<sup>119</sup> It was convenient to highlight the problems associated with the College and allow them to overshadow the University-wide issues. This was not be the first time that Watauga College was judged unfairly even when a problem was not entirely their own. This perception of Watauga College being dissociated from the University and having unique problems was illustrated during Petschauer's tenure when an article in the *Charlotte Observer* quoted a student as stating "Watauga College is like one hellacious big fraternity, sorority, school, club, and everything rolled into one."<sup>120</sup> This article spawned a memo from then Chancellor Herbert Wey to Petschauer asking to clarify what the student meant by the quote, but not asking whether that quote was applicable to any other aspect of the University outside of the College.<sup>121</sup>

The quote could be attributed to the yearly years of Watauga College when it received multiple complaints about noise, which were consistently detailed in the still existing minutes of the Watauga Assembly. Students were either being loud in their rooms or playing their

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<sup>117</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 16, LLC Records.

<sup>118</sup> Joe Watts, interview by Barbara W. Daye, LLC Records.

<sup>119</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 14-15, LLC Records.

<sup>120</sup> "200 ASU Students Chart Unusual Course in the Academic Sea," *Charlotte Observer*, April 9, 1979.

<sup>121</sup> Herbert W. Wey to Peter Petschauer, December 14, 1977, University Records.

music so loudly it could be heard in the nearby academic building of Sanford Hall.<sup>122</sup> The Watauga Assembly continually discussed different methods of dealing with the noise, but the violations still occurred. Two actions that the Assembly eventually undertook to deal with the issue were instituting courtesy hours in the hall and posting signs being made.

Unfortunately, when it came to the courtesy hours many students chose to not follow them. The signs, in comparison, actually worked for a short period of time, but eventually the noise returned and the complaints persisted.<sup>123</sup> The Assembly was at a crossroads, for it felt that it was not feasible to punish students for noise, but without consequences for students that disobeyed the courtesy hours or the signs, students chose not to comply.<sup>124</sup> It appears, through this example, that while the students on the Assembly were given more freedom to determine the structure of their environment, thereby allowing them to learn to solve problems, without some guidance from faculty or the administration these unprepared freshman did not know how to successfully implement of the solutions to the problems they encountered.<sup>125</sup>

According to several former Watauga College faculty members, the discipline problems experienced at Watauga College often started when many freshmen students viewed the program as merely an extension of high school.<sup>126</sup> Student recruiters who traveled to in-state high schools to speak about the College often emphasized the social aspects of the program rather than the academic side.<sup>127</sup> It should not be surprising then that many of the new students that joined the program came in with the notion that they were

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<sup>122</sup> Ruth Higgins, "Watauga Assembly Meeting Minutes," 1975, 6, University Records.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>124</sup> "Watauga Assembly Meeting Minutes," October 4, 1976, 2, University Records.

<sup>125</sup> Petschauer to unnamed, 1978, 2, University Records.

<sup>126</sup> "Watauga Evaluation," 1977-78, University Records.

<sup>127</sup> Petschauer, "Summary of Faculty Interviews Concerning the Watauga College Living-Learning Experience," 5, University Records.

joining a social program. This idea became compounded and never countered by the freedom allowed to the students in their dorm. One student noted when he initially came to Watauga College in 1983 it appeared that there were no rules.<sup>128</sup>

Perhaps one of the most difficult issues that Watauga College attempted to combat, especially in the early years when the US was at the cusp of a nationwide epidemic, was drug use among students. Drug use was a known issue among the students in Watauga College, and was even recognized by Peter Petschauer when he noted that students had drug related health issues almost every year due to drug intake and abuse.<sup>129</sup> Interestingly, Petschauer never placed the blame fully on the students for the drug issues existing at the College, but instead came to the conclusion that many of the drug issues were because of outside forces that were using East Hall and its relaxed, autonomous nature to deal drugs to the larger University.<sup>130</sup> This belief is corroborated by longtime faculty member and former director Bud Gerber.<sup>131</sup>

The lack of security at East Hall also contributed to the ease by which drugs flowed in and out of Watauga College. For instance, East Hall was commonly used as a shortcut by many students walking across campus as its doors were left open during the day. This lack of security allowed for anyone to enter and exit the dorm without supervision.<sup>132</sup> Additionally, in the first few years, Watauga College did not have any student RAs to provide some modicum of additional security both during the day and night.<sup>133</sup> The solution suggested by Petschauer was, instead of immediately dealing with the drug dealers within

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<sup>128</sup> Mark Cook, "My Watauga Experience," 1983, 2, University Records.

<sup>129</sup> Peter Petschauer, "Drugs in East Hall," undated, 1, University Records.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Bud Gerber, interview by author, personal interview, December 12, 2016, Boone, NC, transcripts in possession of author.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Mike Moore, interview by author.

Watauga College, that the resident assistants and faculty issued a stern verbal warning. It was not until the second time someone was caught dealing or using drugs that Watauga College enacted some type of formal punishment.<sup>134</sup>

Similarly, alcohol also became a problem originating from the lack of regulation of Watauga College. Like drug use, directors realized that the problem did not solely rest with the students in the College but also with outside factors. In this case, not only were outside individuals exacerbating the problems, but state laws combined with University policy permitted the problem to legally exist within the dorms. At the time, ASU permitted students who were eighteen to drink alcohol to do so within their dorm rooms.<sup>135</sup> Dorm rooms were also the only place the University allowed students to drink alcohol on campus. This rule, combined with University limitations on the number of people allowed in the dorm rooms and the unsupervised visitation allowed in Watauga College, allowed University rules to be easily ignored. Watauga College became the perfect location for consumption of alcohol within the dorms. Thus, when students had get-togethers at Watauga College, they quickly filled up their dorm room and then spilled out into the hallways. From there, it became a noise issue as well (a common problem) and there was no adequate means to control who was consuming the alcohol and what other negative acts of behavior were occurring.<sup>136</sup>

Petschauer put forward two different ideas to Chancellor Wey to combat the problems caused by alcohol. One was to allow consumption of alcohol outside of students' rooms in a select few spots on campus, one of which was to be East Hall. This policy change was designed to help mitigate the issue of social gatherings starting in rooms and then spilling outside, incidentally causing noise complaints in addition to the alcohol-related incidents.

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<sup>134</sup> Petschauer, "Drugs in East Hall," 1, University Records.

<sup>135</sup> Bill and Diane Griffin, "WE WANT YOU TO KNOW:" 1976, University Records.

<sup>136</sup> Staff of Watauga College/East Hall to Housing Council," October 1977, University Records.

His second idea was to allow students to reserve the recreation room in East Hall for social events and parties if there was a resident assistant present and they cleaned the room afterwards.<sup>137</sup> Petschauer thought that either of the two suggestions might solve the issues that came out of students drinking and conflicts with University policy. Unfortunately, neither policy was enacted; the Chancellor deferred to the University legal department, which determined that the suggested policy changes were against current state law.<sup>138</sup>

Petschauer, after defending Watauga throughout his tenure, saw the tide of societal opinion began to shift near his tenure's end against liberal arts education, thereby threatening the existence of the residential college. Beginning in the late 1970s, society experienced a cooling off and even a pushback against the social revolts that were popular in the 1960s. This was characterized by the election of Ronald Regan to the presidency and a period of conservatism that affected the experience and focus students received who went to college in the 1980s. The 1980s saw an unprecedented drive toward higher education being used almost purely as a means for career and success advancement. More and more students went to universities with the express goal of pursuing a major that allowed them the best chance to make the most money in their career; there was less of a focus for students to explore their own interests and choose their own direction that might or might not result in a traditionally-defined successful career. These changes in society detrimentally affected student culture in liberal arts educational institutions, as students began to lose interest in alternative education methods or in taking classes that did not directly contribute to their degree.<sup>139</sup>

Responding to the changes in society's beliefs and goals in the late 1970s, universities began a push emphasizing the departmentalization of university functions, facilitating the rise

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<sup>137</sup> Bill Sposato to Dr. Braxton Harris," undated, 1, University Records.

<sup>138</sup> Staff of Watauga College/East Hall to Housing Council," October 4, 1977, 2-3, University Records.

<sup>139</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College At Appalachian State University," 7-10.

of Student Development programs. This increase in size and scope of bureaucracy and bureaucratic thinking allowed for a system that could institutionalize routine activities. The system aims at efficiencies and fair allocation of resources. As a result of this new system, student development departments saw increased power and greater emphasis on its needs and wants. This, in turn, affected many other departments in addition to Watauga College due to more money going towards administrative positions instead of faculty.<sup>140</sup>

The school year of 1979-80 was Peter Petschauer's last as the director of Watauga College, though not his last year as a faculty member at ASU. His resignation as director was the result of the accumulation of several different factors that involved Watauga College, ASU, and personal choices. The first factor was that the University had begun serious discussions about combining Watauga College with the Earth Sciences Department, creating just one unit. In his resignation letter, Petschauer wrote that this discussion made him "sick." The second factor involved only Watauga College. It involved the resignation of Diane and Bill Griffin, the current married couple in East Hall, who were having a baby. Thus, Petschauer was tasked with replacing them, a task he did not want to handle because of the difficulty in finding a replacement. The third factor was that he simply wanted to return to teaching and to writing. Petschauer knew that when he became the director of Watauga College he would have to sacrifice his teaching and writing; however, as time wore on he missed being able to engage in both of those activities. The final factor leading to his resignation was that he wanted to get away from administration. He had become tired of the near constant battles with other Appalachian State faculty in his defense of Watauga College.<sup>141</sup> While Petschauer may have grown tired of those battles, he ended up being one

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<sup>140</sup> Peter Petschauer to O.K. Webb Jr., January 11, 1976, University Records.

<sup>141</sup> Peter Petschauer, "Resignation letter," February 10, 1980, University Records.

of Watauga College's greatest defenders, alongside Chancellor Wey and Dean Webb, who helped the College survive and evolve, despite all the challenges it had faced.<sup>142</sup>

At Watauga College, students experienced power that they never thought was possible in a traditional university setting. In particular, Watauga College students were permitted to have a direct say in the operation of the program. For example, students were allowed some representation on search committees for any new faculty, allowing them input into who was hired and which professors from the larger University were invited to teach at Watauga.<sup>143</sup> This power was provided to students because the founders of the program thought it was necessary to allow students a say in the faculty and staff matters of Watauga College. Thus, the founders created a program that experimented with a democratic system of collegiate governance, incorporating students and staff equally. That democratic experimentation became advertised as a major asset to ASU by many of the directors.<sup>144</sup>

The students were also the primary individuals in charge of evaluating the professors in the program through overseeing the making of evaluation forms, collecting the information, and processing it, thus learning valuable life skills. The Watauga Assembly also created a council under the name Evaluation Council whose purpose was to organize the evaluation of the professors in the program. They had the responsibility of creating an evaluation system for the overall academic structure of the College.<sup>145</sup> However, the Assembly's power later crumbled when the Watauga Assembly was forcibly done away with due to Student Development taking over dorm governance years later.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Note: Due to Petschauer being the first director to have tenure greater than two years, there is a great deal more documentation related to him than his predecessors. Thus, it is easier to determine what successes, failures and difficulties the college, and Petschauer by extension, faced during his time.

<sup>143</sup> Peter Petschauer to Bob Snead, V-C for Development, February 16, 1979, University Records.

<sup>144</sup> Peter Petschauer to O.K. Webb Jr, January 11, 1976, 1, University Records.

<sup>145</sup> *Watauga Collage*, September 4, 1975, 3, University Records.

<sup>146</sup> Peter Petschauer to unnamed, 1978, University Records.

The faculty was also given far more power and autonomy in comparison to what they experienced in the University structure. From the beginning of the program, professors were allowed nearly complete freedom in the structure and content of their classes so long as they fulfilled the general education requirements for the freshmen. While this was enjoyed by the faculty who taught the courses, it often caused contention with the outside ASU faculty, as many asked if the students were just checking off a box or actually learning.<sup>147</sup> The most complaints came from the English Department, which questioned whether students were capable of actually learning proper English skills in a ten-hour block class that incorporated other subjects and was not taught by an English professor.<sup>148</sup> Despite those initial roadblocks, with support from the directors and the faculty involved in the College, this greater faculty autonomy thrived at Watauga College.

The academic autonomy further extended to the entire curriculum. All faculty who were teaching in the program had a say in the College's curriculum, which allowed greater flexibility than other departments. All that was needed from the faculty was a consensus vote to change the curriculum in Watauga.<sup>149</sup> The democratic style practiced by the faculty was intended to allow for the removal of ego as a factor in departmental management. An example of this style can be seen in 1974 when the faculty decided to create a new curriculum for Watauga College based on their own studying of the United Nations. This new curriculum was organized around epochs of human history that advanced as the school year progressed. The faculty did not require approval by the University to institute this change, merely a consensus vote of approval among its faculty members.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Herbert W. Wey to Dr. Peter Petschauer, December 14, 1977, University Records.

<sup>148</sup> Peter Petschauer to Herbert Wey, January 3, 1978, University Records.

<sup>149</sup> Petschauer to Bob Snead, V-C for Development, February 16, 1979, 2, University Records.

<sup>150</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College at Appalachian State University," 59.

From its inception, one of the major hallmarks of Watauga College was its integration of both genders equally in its structure. Watauga stressed that everyone be allowed to participate equally in all its function regardless of gender. The aim of this idea was to help the male and female students begin to see each other as individuals and build interpersonal relationships.<sup>151</sup> However, this was one aspect of Watauga College that ASU was slow to adopt. Even in the late 1970s, when ASU allowed visitation between genders, ASU required that the door to the dorm room be open with the roommate present the entire time.<sup>152</sup>

Considering Watauga College's ability to easily change its curriculum, it was identified as a preferred place to create new programs. Two landmark programs popular at ASU today had their beginnings in Watauga College. Both Earth Sciences (now called Sustainable Development) and Women's Studies were born out of the curricular freedom of the Watauga faculty. Both programs were placed in the College because of its flexibility in changing its curriculum.<sup>153</sup> It is commonly accepted by ASU faculty today that it was the freedom given to faculty members and students of Watauga College that allowed the Women's Studies program to be developed with relative ease, an ease that was not possible in the stricter structure of the main campus. It is interesting to note that there was an attempt to create a Women's Studies cluster college, but it fell through before it could achieve success.<sup>154</sup>

Watauga College was founded as an organization that existed within Appalachian State University but was largely independent from it. When the College was moved on campus, instead of at Camp Broadstone, a series of problems limited its success but did not

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<sup>151</sup> Petschauer, "Summary of Faculty Interviews Concerning The Watauga College Living-Learning Experience," 10, University Records.

<sup>152</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 23, LLC Records.

<sup>153</sup> Petschauer, "Resignation Letter," 1, University Records.

<sup>154</sup> Daye, "Watauga College: The First Ten Years, Reflections and Recollections," 13, LLC Records.

prevent its early directors from creating a residential college with almost complete autonomy within the larger Appalachian State. In its first eight years, Watauga College successfully experimented with education innovations, though its independent and freewheeling nature caused many problems. Not until the late 1970's and the beginning of the professionalization of student affairs did its autonomy began to erode.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### PROFESSIONALIZATION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND WATAUGA COLLEGE

Beginning in the late 1970s, Student Affairs began to solidify its position as the next big profession in American higher education. The first sign of this emerging trend occurred when universities throughout the United States started catering to every aspect of their students' lives, not just their educational needs, under the guise of student development. The universities — particularly the departments of Student Affairs and their predecessors — accomplished this by taking over services previously provided by cities and towns, and surrounding those students not only with university-controlled dormitories, but also with fitness centers, clubs, club sports, and other student oriented programs. This uniquely American idea of student development was primarily advanced during this time by the belief that the development of the whole student should take precedence over academics alone. This was in sharp contrast to universities in Europe, where the prevailing attitude was that students become adults when they left home to pursue a higher education and did not require, or have a right to, a university providing non-educational services or social stimulation.<sup>155</sup>

ASU, like most other US universities, followed the American trend, and began to rely on their version of a Student Affairs department, which began to take a greater role in providing for all aspects of student life in the late 1970s. To accomplish these goals, ASU's department, which eventually became the Department of Student Development, turned towards Watauga College, and utilized its successes and failures for a blueprint of student

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<sup>155</sup> Duke, *Importing Oxbridge: English Residential Colleges and American Universities*, 135.

development. As a consequence, ASU's Student Development department began to increase its involvement in what had been a mostly autonomous residential college and Watauga College underwent extensive changes.

After World War II, it seemed unlikely that a profession dedicated primarily to student development could ever exist within a university, especially since the concept of *In Loco Parentis* had fallen out of favor and many within the higher education system believed those entering university were adults and should be treated as such. This belief that an university's primary purpose was to provide students with an education and nothing beyond was reinforced throughout American culture and society in the 1950s and 60s, which at the time defined the age of adulthood as eighteen.<sup>156</sup> However, beginning in the 1970s, a shift in what society defined as a self-sufficient adult began to occur and the concept of student affairs as a career began to gain traction within higher education. Universities were less likely to view their incoming students as adults capable of providing for themselves without guidance and assistance. They needed a department that could focus on the student's needs beyond academics. Thus, by the 1980s, universities saw a successor to *In Loco Parentis* arise through an increasing emphasis on the development of the whole student via the professionalization of student affairs. This shift in belief culminated by the turn of the century, when student affairs had its own graduate programs, professional organizations, journals, and scholarship complete with schools of thought and numerous theories on the development of the student.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Note: In 1960, the Supreme Court had ruled that the legal age of adulthood was eighteen years old "*Dixon V. Alabama State Board of Education*, 186 F. Supp. 945 (M.d. Ala. 1960)," Justia US Law, accessed May 29, 2017, <http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/186/945/2374127/>.

<sup>157</sup> Dallas Long, "The Foundation of Student Affairs: A Guide to the Profession," *ISU ReD: Research and eData* (1-1-2012):1-5.

As student affairs professionals helped create a social, if not legal, return to *In Loco Parentis*, degrees in student affairs became more commonplace among graduating seniors and many universities began favoring them over other degrees when considering candidates for student affairs positions within the university. This hiring trend occurred despite student affairs positions previously being considered primarily administrative in nature. Eventually, student affairs degrees became more commonplace and acceptable qualifications for academic advisors. Policies and procedures based in new student affairs theories became the norm, overriding earlier freedoms allowed to faculty advisors. Academic advisor positions became based around following those student development theories. Soon, employees who came from an academic background (non-student affairs related degrees) became the minority within academic advising units.<sup>158</sup>

Before ASU began to directly involve itself with the operations of Watauga College, many involved in the residential college foresaw and tried to avoid the changes – both positive and negative – that ASU and Watauga College underwent as a result of this increasing interest in student development. In particular, Peter Petschauer recognized late in his tenure (1975-1980) as director of Watauga College possible difficulties stemming from the rise of student affairs within universities and retrenchment in other departments. He saw how ASU's continued push to grow their Student Development department was occurring at the expense of his residential college and its autonomy. He feared that the emerging trend of increased bureaucratic structures within universities threatened Watauga College's freedoms within ASU.<sup>159</sup> Eventually, as foreseen by Petschauer, the increased power of ASU's

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<sup>158</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, email interview, October 23, 2016, transcripts in possession of author.

<sup>159</sup> Peter Petschauer, "Memo to O.K. Webb Jr.," January 11, 1976, University Records.

Student Development department largely eliminated student direction of Watauga College, and forced faculty to give up some of their own authority to oversee their students.

One of the earliest examples of how the University began to restrict Watauga College's independence was through dormitory governance. At the end of the 1970s, Student Development at ASU decided to exercise greater control over the self-governance of students, which led to the eventual end of the Watauga Assembly. Citing research and Watauga College's own data derived from its autonomous student government, Student Development enacted a University-wide change in dormitory governance and control by implementing Residence Life Councils (RLCs) in all University dormitories, including East Hall.<sup>160</sup> Up until this point, ASU had permitted East Hall to be largely governed by the Watauga Assembly and its committees, with faculty and the rest of the University having only minor input as to the operations of East Hall. With only three faculty members and two adult counselors being on the Watauga Assembly, the power to decide on rules and regulations for East Hall rested primarily in the hands of the students.<sup>161</sup> However, in sharp contrast to the Watauga Assembly (where students effectively held the power of final decisions with little faculty oversight), the new structure of the RLCs implemented by ASU Student Development created a council of only students who voted on matters relating to their dormitories. Those decisions were then treated as suggestions recommended to a three member faculty council that had the final say in the operation and governance of the dorm. The students of East Hall were essentially left with little to no power in the operation of their dorm.

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<sup>160</sup> Peter Petschauer to unnamed, 1978, University Records.

<sup>161</sup> *Watauga Collage*, September 4, 1975, University Records.

This implementation of RLCs throughout campus represented to Petschauer a discomfoting trend toward centralized university administration by the creation of standardization and routines. This new model also greatly reduced any democratic process from the residence life model promised by Watauga College. Petschauer disagreed with this change, for he believed students should be allowed to have a direct say in their dormitory life and the structure of their environment. By permitting students in each dormitory to determine every fall the political, financial, and other structures of student life they wanted to adopt without significant faculty and administrative involvement, taught them to solve problems rather than simply accept solutions handed down to them.<sup>162</sup> This learning process was one of Watauga College's core purposes when it was founded -- to offer a more democratic alternative to bureaucratic methods of solving major problems. The faculty wanted young people educated on how to search seriously for, and learn to live with, balanced solutions.<sup>163</sup> Petschauer believed that the new RLC method of governance was completely contrary to the aims of higher education in general and Watauga College, in particular.<sup>164</sup>

After reducing student governance during the late 1970s, Student Development at ASU sought to further expand its oversight by taking full control of East Hall. Up until Marvin (Marv) Williamsen's tenure (1980-1983), even after students lost their governmental autonomy, the dormitory was still partly controlled by Watauga College via budgetary and hiring decisions. At that time, University Housing (which had been moved to Student Development) appeared content with just paying the salary of the Resident Director (RD) and

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<sup>162</sup> Peter Petschauer to unnamed, 1978, University Records.

<sup>163</sup> Peter Petschauer, "Memo to Ken Webb, Steve Millsaps, Virginia Foxx, Thomas Cowley, Bud Gerber, Helen Latour, Bunk Spann, Red Alderman, Joe Watts, Mary Watts, Maggie McFadden-Gerber, Leighton Scott, Jay Wentworth," November 18, 1976, 2, University Records.

<sup>164</sup> Peter Petschauer to unnamed, 1978, University Records.

Resident Assistants (RAs) of East Hall with little interference into who was chosen for those positions.<sup>165</sup> That freedom did not last and, as student affairs continued to gain traction throughout America, ASU's University Housing eventually took over the responsibility of choosing the RD and RAs – further developing its own Student Development department at the expense of the residential college.

Part of Student Development's motivation and justification for increasing its control over East Hall stemmed from the constant need of Watauga College for more space. Watauga College, in the department's opinion, was near constantly seeking renovations to dormitory rooms and the creation of classroom space and faculty offices. To some in Student Development, the College's escalating needs were an annoyance, especially since the University was paying for all these renovations while having little to no jurisdiction over Watauga College and East Hall.<sup>166</sup>

For the first three years that Watauga College was on campus (1972-1975), the faculty relied on a married couple who served as the faculty-in-residence for dormitory management. Usually the husband served as the Assistant Director of the College while the wife took over duties of what could be described as a Resident Director.<sup>167</sup> The College did not have any student Resident Assistants initially and relied entirely on their RD and the goodwill of the students to make sure the dormitory ran safely and smoothly. This format did not always result in success. The doors to the dormitory often were left open both day and night, which allowed anyone to enter and exit the dorm, causing security concerns. In

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<sup>165</sup> Marvin (Marv) Williamsen, interview by author, personal interview, December 13, 2016, Boone, NC, transcripts in possession of author.

<sup>166</sup> Kay Smith, interview by author, email interview, December 5, 2016, transcripts in possession of author.

<sup>167</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College at Appalachian State University," 43.

response, the RD of the dormitory created unofficial RAs from the student population of Watauga College. These students served as both monitors and a form of security.<sup>168</sup>

Up until and throughout much of Williamsen's tenure, whenever the married couple who served as the Assistant Director and the Resident Director left, Watauga College organized the search for a new couple. While Student Development participated in the searches, the decision of who to hire was entirely within the purview of Watauga College. The Resident Director was then allowed to choose the Resident Assistants, who were selected from Watauga students.<sup>169</sup> This arrangement often resulted in the perception that because Watauga College's RAs did not want to offend or upset fellow Watauga students, they were lax on those in the dorm.

However, with the continued growth of Student Development during Williamsen's tenure and in the early 1980s, Student Development began to exert more control over the Resident Director position. Consequently, by default, the Department also gained control of the RAs. This decision-making was threatened when Bill and Diane Griffin – the third couple in residence for Watauga College – left their positions in 1982 and Watauga College struggled to find a new couple to fulfill the RD position. Eventually the Watauga faculty settled on hiring a male individual to serve as the Resident Director, a choice that was contrary to what Student Development wanted. Nonetheless, due to the prior arrangement of Watauga College having control over hiring, this individual was hired despite the objections of Student Development.<sup>170</sup>

Following this hiring, however, Student Development was able to increase its control over the money paid to the Resident Director and informed Watauga that it controlled who

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<sup>168</sup> Mike Moore, interview by author.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Marv Williamsen, interview by author, December 13, 2016.

the next RD was, citing the fact that it paid for the position. Since they decided to assume full control of the RD position rather than just acting as the funder for the position, the RD became a position that was hired solely through Student Development. While Watauga College was consulted for input in the hiring of future Resident Directors, Student Development continued to have the final say in the hiring process and never permitted Watauga College faculty sole ownership of the RD position until the creation of a new dormitory built for the College.<sup>171</sup>

As an accidental consequence of this assumption of control over the hiring of the RD in 1982, Student Development also gained control of the RAs. After gaining control over the hiring of the RD, Student Development decided to select the RAs and not permit the RD to have complete authority to choose RAs solely from within Watauga College. As a result of this shift in choosing RAs, issues and significant conflicts arose almost immediately due to the department placing non-Watauga College students in RA positions. With no real knowledge of Watauga College and its unique culture, those new RAs often came into conflict with the students, who primarily saw them as intruders.<sup>172</sup> These issues with non-Watauga RAs continued to persist for several years, resulting in faculty members becoming involved in search of a solution in the mid-1980s.<sup>173</sup>

In response to the difficulties between Watauga College students and RAs from outside the program, Watauga faculty and Student Development created what was called a Resident Educational Specialist (RES). The RES had a master's degree and was tasked with operating the dormitory as a typical Resident Director might while concurrently teaching within Watauga College. This new position allowed for the social and academic components

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

of Watauga College to positively coexist, thereby initially exceeding the expectations of those who created the position. But new difficulties arose, including an increasing workload of the RES and found problems with training the Student Development-chosen RAs. While the RES was hired by Student Development, those individuals – due to their unique job description – became a part of Watauga College and ingrained in the culture and function of the College. They began to embrace Watauga College’s unique residential college culture – where students were encouraged, and in some cases required, to think critically, ask questions, look for solutions, and question assumptions. However, Student Development’s standardized approach to RA training was at odds with the residential college culture. As a result, the training the RAs received did not encourage the RAs to accept and be empathetic to Watauga College’s methods, which led to inevitable conflicts between RAs and Watauga College students.<sup>174</sup>

During the 1980s and 1990s, the RES became a mediator in these conflicts and had to help the RAs understand and learn to interact with the uniqueness of Wataugan students. This led to, at the beginning of each year, the RES, RAs, and Wataugans negotiating with each other and creating a functioning, though not perfect, system.<sup>175</sup> Simultaneously, Watauga College also tried, and succeeded at least once in the 1990s, in getting two students from the program to apply to be RAs. The hope was that the Watauga students would then be assigned to East Hall, avoiding some of the conflicts arising from the RAs not comprehending the culture of Watauga College. Unfortunately, while the two students got

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

selected to be RAs, they did not get assigned to work in East Hall and elected to quit the RA program due to their dormitory assignment.<sup>176</sup>

Challenges within their dormitory were not the only ones that Watauga faced in the 1980s. ASU also encountered a shift in the culture, and the priorities of, its student body during this decade. These cultural changes caused a sudden decrease in new students applying to Watauga College. According to Mike Moore, many incoming students to ASU at the time appeared more inclined to attend main campus and participate in many of the new programs being offered by the University outside of regular academics. This sudden shortage of students wanting to attend Watauga College resulted in the idea of moving the student body of Watauga College to a smaller dorm, since Watauga College was finding it difficult to meet its requirement of filling all beds assigned to it while in East Hall.<sup>177</sup>

It was ultimately decided by Watauga faculty and students not to move the College to a smaller dorm. However, an investigation began for the cause of this sudden decrease in recruitment for the College. Two main reasons were identified as contributing to the shortage of applicants. The first, according to Virginia Foxx (who wrote a PhD dissertation on the College), was a return to a more conservative, traditional mindset in the students, which meant they were not as interested in a more liberal program such as the one offered by Watauga College. This cultural shift was even exemplified by students' dress attire; it was noted that during this time period, the University saw a reduction in students wearing blue jeans across campus, with a more conservative style of dress suddenly making a comeback.<sup>178</sup> Second, the yuppie culture was born in the 1980s, resulting in the belief that one's success was determined by the ability to earn and spend money. According to Joe

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<sup>176</sup> Cynthia Wood, interview by author.

<sup>177</sup> Mike Moore, interview by author.

<sup>178</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College At Appalachian State University," 15.

Watts (Assistant Director 1974-78 and second married couple in residence with then-wife Maggie McFadden), many students who came to ASU in the 1980s, while more conservative, wanted to get the major that best allowed them to enter the job force right after graduation and make the most money. He believed many students did not see the merit in Watauga College, which took a greater commitment from them and did not always permit the fastest track to graduation. Instead, those students wanted to focus on their major, graduate in four years, and enter the job market.<sup>179</sup> To Foxx, Watts, and many other Watauga faculty members, these new trends in student mindset and culture helped to contribute to the decline in the College's numbers. Thus, in the mid-1980s, Watauga responded with a new recruiting system.

Leslie "Bud" Gerber and Kay Smith were the primary faculty members assigned to undertake the recruitment overhaul. In addition to the shift in student culture, Gerber and Smith discussed additional causes for the decrease in enrollment. They learned of rumors about the College that turned prospective students away from it and found that student recruiters emphasized the social aspects of the College over academics, which led to many new students being shocked when they first arrived at Watauga College and discovered academics were still a priority. Their solution to this problem was an aggressive overhaul that focused on meeting with prospective students during their orientation as ASU students and making sure those prospects were provided with accurate and complete information about the College.<sup>180</sup> Gerber further worked on changing the public image of Watauga College, focusing on making the College's students more visible on campus to combat the

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<sup>179</sup> Joe Watts, interview by Barbara W. Daye, LLC Records.

<sup>180</sup> Kay Smith, interview by author, December 5, 2016.

rumors surrounding them.<sup>181</sup> Amongst the outside faculty and students of ASU, Watauga College students were viewed as partiers, heavy drug users, alcoholics, radicals, common thugs, and more. One student article in *The Appalachian* commented that “some (students) will not so much as set foot in East Hall,” and “some girls from Cannon Convent will not even walk by at night.”<sup>182</sup> Gerber’s and Smith’s changes worked; during the late 1980s and early 1990s, recruitment steadily began to increase.<sup>183</sup>

Nonetheless, the decline of students entering Watauga College during the 1980s was also indicative of a larger problem developing at ASU, especially as it related to Watauga College’s unique fabric and programs. Student Development began to undertake changes of its own during that time that served, though unintentionally, to compound Watauga’s problems. In a move that first saw its start near the end Petschauer’s tenure and ramped up during the 1980s under Williamsen, Student Development finally began to see the benefits of certain aspects of Watauga College. In response, Student Development created their own programs based on those already existing in Watauga College that they deemed successful and potentially beneficial to the general student population of ASU. These resulting programs – offered to all students at ASU – competed with programs in Watauga College.<sup>184</sup>

In particular, many of Student Development’s newly created programs in the 1980s were geared toward freshmen and designed to help ease the transition from high school to college. The concept of assisting with the transition to college life was previously a concept that Watauga College utilized to recruit students and distinguish itself from the main University. However, ASU saw the positives that came from Watauga’s transition program

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<sup>181</sup> Bud Gerber, interview by author.

<sup>182</sup> William M. Tredway V, “East Dorm Vs. Cannon,” *Appalachian*, 1978, University Records.

<sup>183</sup> Bud Gerber, interview by author.

<sup>184</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, personal interview, October 26, 2016, Boone, NC, transcripts in possession of author.

and decided to create its own version. The original name for that program was the Freshmen Year Experience.<sup>185</sup>

Often freshmen at ASU had issues adjusting to a university life where they suddenly encountered an absence of authority figures and little to no boundaries in their life. Suddenly there were no parents to make sure they attended class, and few teachers were constantly informing them of their grades. The Freshman Year Experience was created to help students adjust to the much less rigid structure and learn how to cope with new aspects of university life, such as living in a dormitory. The Freshman Year Experience was developed into a year-long program designed as a true transition into university life and to set up all students – not just those at Watauga College – for success at ASU.

In addition, different departments, with the blessing of Student Development, began creating new learning communities at ASU. These learning communities drew many of their characteristics from Watauga College – such as format and purpose - though they rarely carried the same emphasis on integrating academics into the everyday lives of students that Watauga College did. Instead, these communities emphasized only the importance of providing necessary social stimuli for students through common activities and having students live in close proximity with other students sharing similar interests. The obvious similarities between Watauga College and the department-led learning communities combined with the absence of an academic focus led to some faculty within Watauga College viewing these newly developed learning communities as "Watauga-lite."<sup>186</sup> While these University-wide and Student Development-approved programs had the best of intentions behind them, they took concepts that were identifying features of Watauga College and its

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<sup>185</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, personal interview, November 2, 2016, Boone, NC, transcripts in possession of author.

<sup>186</sup> Kay Smith, interview by author, December 5, 2016.

culture and made them accessible to all ASU students, resulting in making the College and its students less unique. By offering Watauga-like programs within the main University, ASU also siphoned some prospective students away from Watauga College, contributing to a decade of lean years for Watauga College recruitment.<sup>187</sup>

The 1980s also brought an additional challenge to the residential college through the College of Arts and Sciences. Dean of General College O.K. (Kenneth) Webb was one of the strongest supporters of Watauga College. While he was the Dean of the General College between 1968 and 1982, he had no problems assigning a portion of the budget to Watauga College and allowing it to allocate the funds as it saw fit. In fact, he even allowed for the creation of a new position that was assigned to Watauga College, but was never filled. Watauga College utilized it as a funding source for raises for its other positions, which were given out independently from the normal university method.<sup>188</sup> However, when Webb retired in 1982, Academic Affairs chose to move Watauga College, and the Interdisciplinary Studies Department it was a part of, into the College of Arts and Sciences. According to faculty accounts, Dean James W. Byrd did not support the idea of giving Watauga College free reign with its budget.<sup>189</sup> The Dean assumed control of the budget, which began a period in Watauga's history when it was forced to justify expenditures and solicit for its money.<sup>190</sup>

Perhaps one of the most apparent areas that show how Watauga College encountered budget and money issues was in dormitory maintenance. In the 1980s, Watauga College found it difficult to obtain consistent dormitory maintenance from ASU and the state of the dormitory became so poor that it even contributed to some of Watauga's struggles with

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<sup>187</sup> Mike Moore, interview by author.

<sup>188</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, October 26, 2016.

<sup>189</sup> Marv Williamsen, interview by author, personal interview, November 17, 2016, Boone, NC, transcripts in possession of author.

<sup>190</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, November 2, 2016.

recruiting students.<sup>191</sup> Some prospective students chose to attend ASU, but declined Watauga College upon seeing the building conditions. However, the resolution to the issue of dormitory upkeep and funding came from an unlikely source -- Student Development.

Prior to the late 1980s, Residence Facilities was a department within Business Affairs.<sup>192</sup> During that time, Residence Facilities did not want to be responsible for maintenance on East Hall, primarily because that building hosted academic programs as well as serving as a residential facility, which Residence Facilities believed excluded it from its responsibilities. Understandably this belief meant that anytime issues arose in the dorm, it was a struggle to get Residence Facilities to address the problem in a timely matter, or even at all.<sup>193</sup> Thus, the lack of maintenance became an ongoing problem for Watauga College. Sometimes the problems were minor and could be addressed without significant expenditure of resources, but there were several major problems that surfaced in East Hall and Watauga College was often left to fend for itself.<sup>194</sup> At one point in time, the roof collapsed into a dormitory room to such a degree that residents could see the sky.<sup>195</sup> Other major problems that were common included fluctuating water pressure and even a lack of hot water on occasion. Some of these issues took several weeks or even months to fix.<sup>196</sup>

Kay Smith (Director from 1986-1990) saw this maintenance problem as a challenge that needed to be overcome during her tenure. Working with Greg Blimling (Vice Chancellor of Student Development), she helped convince the ASU administration to move Residence Facilities into Student Development from Business Affairs. Once this transition took place, East Hall saw significantly more attention and started being maintained

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<sup>191</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College At Appalachian State University," 45.

<sup>192</sup> Note: Residence Facilities is now currently housed in Student Development

<sup>193</sup> Kay Smith, interview by author, December 5, 2016.

<sup>194</sup> Foxx, "Watauga College: The Residential College At Appalachian State University," 59-60.

<sup>195</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, December 3, 2016.

<sup>196</sup> *Watauga Collage*, 1978, University Records.

regularly.<sup>197</sup> Today, Residence Facilities and Residence Life are combined and are now called University Housing, which oversees all dormitories.<sup>198</sup>

As Students Affairs departments assumed more responsibilities relating to student lives they began developing their own theories on the development of the student. Within the profession of student affairs, individuals work on the basis of three assumptions in their efforts to develop the student. First, each student is a unique individual with different needs. Second, the entire environment needs to be taken into account and used as part of their education. Third, each student has a responsibility to participate actively in their education. These three guidelines have formed the basis for many student development theories since the mid-twentieth century. Based on these guidelines, it is understood that students learn both in-class and out-of-class. With their learning influenced by both their genetics and social environment, student affairs professionals try to combine nurture and nature theories.<sup>199</sup> A problem arises, however, when the development of the whole student is emphasized above all else, especially academics. This focus can lead to programs becoming less rigorous academically as they lean further and further towards the whole experience.<sup>200</sup>

Beginning during the tenure of Marv Williamsen and continuing into Kay Smith's tenure, Watauga College experienced several challenges to its reputation for academic rigor. One such challenge surrounded the use of the T-group method in the classroom.<sup>201</sup> T-groups are the idea that participants in the classroom groups are able to learn about themselves via their interaction with others. T-groups make use of feedback, problem solving, and role-play

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<sup>197</sup> Kay Smith, interview by author, December 5, 2016.

<sup>198</sup> "Student Development Departments," Student Development, accessed March 11, 2017, <http://studentdev.appstate.edu/pagesmith/37>.

<sup>199</sup> Astin, A., "Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education." *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25(4), 1984, 295.

<sup>200</sup> Kay Smith, interview by author, email interview, October 10, 2016, transcripts in possession of author.

<sup>201</sup> Bud Gerber, interview by author.

as a means to gain insight under the direction of a highly trained facilitator. The use of T-groups is considered controversial due to its encouragement of self-disclosure and openness that may lead to highly personal information being shared.<sup>202</sup>

Pete Reichle was a champion of T-groups at Watauga College in the mid to late 1980s. Reichle was a faculty member who many in Watauga saw as trying to bridge the gap between Student Development and the residential college. However, Reichle's classroom discussions reportedly focused on the personal lives of students to the point that other faculty believed he was compromising academic content by leaning too far towards student affairs' goals of developing the whole student. For example, a student trip Reichle led to visit Native American tribes in the Southwest United States was criticized as having no formal educational basis.<sup>203</sup> While Reichle's instructional methods were seen by some faculty as lacking academic rigor, the concept and theory of developing the whole student over academics was not restricted to Reichle. Many faculty within Watauga felt that experiential learning was superior to traditional academic learning, an idea that was occurring in Student Affairs departments more frequently as well. Reichle just appeared to be one of its most enthusiastic advocates. Others in Watauga College also adhered to the whole student theory during various times of its existence.

Changes began to occur in the late 1990s with the implementation of a new director who had a different view point on academics and development of the student. The director of Watauga College from 1998-2001, Cynthia Wood, made the issue of academic rigor and academic credentials a major aspect of her tenure. She believed that Watauga College had

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<sup>202</sup>“T-Group as Cutting Edge: Today? Really?,” *Crosby & Associates Leadership and Organization Development Blog*, December 23, 2013, accessed March 11, 2017, <https://crosbyandassociates.wordpress.com/2013/12/22/t-group-as-cutting-edge-today-really/>.

<sup>203</sup> Bud Gerber, interview by author.

begun leaning too far towards the practices of student development. Specifically, Wood thought that the academic side of Watauga College was losing out to an increased emphasis on the whole experience being a better benefit to the students. This emphasis had led to cases where instructors taught classes for which they may not have been qualified. In one case, an instructor sought to teach a class on Irish culture and history based solely on a few personal trips to Ireland. In another case, an instructor was assigned to teach a class on New Zealand culture after spending just a few weeks there. Stemming from these cases and others, Wood began implementing criteria for what courses instructors could teach based on their qualifications. She further worked to implement Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) criteria for accreditation in Watauga College. But the trend and idea of focusing on developing the whole student (mentally, physically, and emotionally) over a intellectual focus was not forgotten and it continued after her tenure as director.<sup>204</sup>

Academic rigor versus developing the student was not the only academic debate faced by Watauga College during this time. The College faculty have always debated the role of General Education and other curricular requirements at ASU in their college, specifically, whether a greater emphasis on curricular standardization invalidated the original concept of Watauga College. At its core, Watauga College was designed to allow students the freedom to choose their own path without worrying about restrictions. The fear among Watauga faculty was that if the College was forced to meet the same curricular restrictions as the rest of the University it became just another general education program. Former director Marv Williamsen believed that this in fact happened. A general education system was put in place

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<sup>204</sup> Cynthia Wood, interview by author.

at ASU during the early 1980s that severely restricted students at Watauga College from taking the class they wanted.<sup>205</sup>

Through most of its first decade, Watauga College was able to set up its own curriculum, choose thematic elements, and ultimately decide what counted academically for their students. This freedom allowed it to offer unique classes while still having them count towards general education requirements. However, ASU's new general education program of the early 1980s, ironically based in part on the experiences of Watauga College, took away some of the College's pedagogical freedom. Watauga College further lost the ability to determine what academic credit or general education requirement each class earned.<sup>206</sup> In order to create new classes, the College had to follow the standard procedures that all other departments followed for the class to receive academic credit.

Under the new general education structure created in the 1980s at ASU, students had to take several courses within specific themes. This restriction meant that if a Watauga student chose a general education course purely out of interest their following choices had to be in the same theme.<sup>207</sup> To some faculty, the general education changes undertaken by ASU in the 1980s ended up turning Watauga College into just a slightly different version of the general education program.<sup>208</sup> But as ASU continued to refine its general education system, Watauga College was able to regain some of the freedom that allowed its students to take classes based on their interests without risking wasted credit hours.

As Watauga College entered the 1990s a new, nonacademic focused, challenge arose. This challenge tested the College and potentially be beneficial for it. Beginning in the 1990s,

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<sup>205</sup> Marv Williamsen, interview by author, November 17, 2016.

<sup>206</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Marv Williamsen, interview by author, November 17, 2016.

when Greg Blimling served as Vice Chancellor of Student Development, Watauga College got its best chance to regain much of the autonomy it lost in the 1970s and 1980s. Under Blimling's leadership, ASU raised funds for building a new residential facility that could completely house Watauga College and transform it into a real residential college. This design included a residence hall for the students, an apartment for faculty, a library, lounges, classrooms, and computer labs. Additionally, an accompanying academic building was to be built to include multiple classrooms, offices, and a full dining hall for the College. Aside from multiple faculty in residence (which traditional residential colleges have and Watauga College had always lacked), this new facility essentially was to allow Watauga College to move back towards its original structure.<sup>209</sup> Nonetheless, the implementation of what eventually became the Living Learning Center (LLC) also reopened the divide that had been closing between Watauga College and the rest of the University.<sup>210</sup>

The new residential facility was not meant to merely be another residence hall. Blimling's vision was to create and build a true residential college on ASU's campus for Watauga College to inhabit. To achieve this, he sent a small group of faculty from Watauga College to spend a week in Oxford, England, where they studied the various residential colleges that made up Oxford University. The LLC represents, in part, what the faculty observed at Oxford and felt was needed for a successful residential college to be built at ASU. In addition to learning potentially successful keys to a true residential college by taking into account what the faculty determined was necessary, the plan for a physical facility came from the bottom up. The administration did not dictate the blueprints but

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<sup>209</sup> Jay Wentworth, interview by author.

<sup>210</sup> Cynthia Wood, interview by author.

actually followed the advice of the faculty. This process allowed for an immediate sense of faculty ownership and loyalty to the LLC.<sup>211</sup>

However, nothing could ease the fear among some of the longtime faculty that moving Watauga College to a more isolated building might create more issues between the students in Watauga College and the larger University. The root of these concerns was the belief that by transferring from a dormitory in the center of campus with high visibility to one on the periphery of campus with less visibility, students of Watauga College would not have sufficient interaction with students on the main campus to create positive relationships and understanding.<sup>212</sup> These fears were somewhat realized as the transition to the LLC occurred and Watauga became known by various nicknames such as “hippies on the hill,” and “Hogwarts.”<sup>213</sup> It was realized too late that by removing Watauga College from the center of campus it was no longer able to immediately counteract negative perceptions of its students seemingly having special treatment, a view Chancellor Wey had been concerned about when it was founded.<sup>214</sup>

Beyond the physical isolation of the LLC, there were vast differences between East Hall and the base structure of the new building, which was a great improvement. The primary difference was that the LLC was designed specifically to be a living/learning facility with offices, classrooms, meeting space, and a great hall. East Hall, on the other hand, was a dormitory that Watauga College was trying to turn into a living/learning facility. In East Hall, they had to build their own offices and classrooms, often at the loss of residential space, and even had to make use of existing student lounges as classroom space. Attempting to

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<sup>211</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

<sup>212</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, December 10, 2016.

<sup>213</sup> Jay Wentworth, interview by author.

<sup>214</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, December 10, 2016.

create a living/learning space inside of a pre-existing building usually hindered what the faculty was able to do. Additionally, having an academic space inside of a residential building meant University Housing did not always keep the building in repair. By creating a new and separate residential facility, many conflicts of the past began to dissipate.<sup>215</sup>

However, this new building was not without its problems. First, under North Carolina law, universities could not use their own money for academic buildings; instead they had to rely on state funding for them. Academic and residential buildings were also not allowed to be officially connected as one building, which was the basic idea of a residential college. Blimling was able to use student fees to raise the money for the residential building and managed to get state funding for the academic building. However, this funding plan required separation between residential and academic buildings, thereby preventing Watauga from having one coherent new facility. Second, the planned full-service dining hall did not materialize. Once again, state budget rules got in the way. Dining halls could be built with University money, but the funding had to go through the Business Affairs department, which did not want to shoulder the additional cost of a new full-service dining hall. Thus, the University administrators only allowed for drink and warming stations for catered food within the facility. This design meant that students and faculty were unable to have daily meals together. Joint meals were limited to twice a week, preventing one of the hallmarks of a residential college.<sup>216</sup>

Once the facility was completed in 2002, Watauga College had a decision to make. The original intent was for the College to take over the entire facility. But longtime faculty, remembering the difficulties of being required to fill all the beds in East Hall, initially

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<sup>215</sup> Peter Petschauer, interview by author, October 26, 2016.

<sup>216</sup> Jay Wentworth, interview by author.

decided to not take over the whole building. Instead, the make-up of the building became a mix of Watauga College, North Carolina Teaching Fellows, and international exchange students. Thus, it fell to all of these three groups to create the structure for the LLC. While Watauga College lost full control over the building, the faculty and students still had a say in its structure and the three groups managed to create a uniquely cooperative system that was almost a return to the original Watauga College.<sup>217</sup>

Together these groups made important changes that reflected some of the earlier ideas of the residential college concept. One change was that they rebranded the RAs to Community Guides (CGs), who were pulled from the groups in the LLC and trained primarily through the LLC program directors, with only limited training coming from Student Development.<sup>218</sup> The fact that these Community Guides all had previously lived in the LLC was important to the programs, especially to Watauga College. Having CGs from the LLC solved the creation of rifts between community students and outside RAs that often did not understand each other.<sup>219</sup>

Another important improvement that occurred was that student infractions were handled through small groups which were separate from Student Development. The overall goal of this new program was to avoid the purely punitive system often used at universities and instead focus on a community service system. Those students who were found guilty of infractions often were assigned service in relation to their infraction, such as a drunken student throwing up in the stairs spent time with the custodians. A set of guidelines called the “Four Respects” replaced the previous long list of rules. These were aimed at creating a more holistic system that emphasized respect for others and your surroundings instead of

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

<sup>219</sup> Lee Williams, interview by author, email interview, November 1, 2016, transcripts in possession of author.

following “do’s” and “do not’s.”<sup>220</sup> Through these changes, the three groups in the LLC created what looked like a return to the early years of Watauga College when a large degree of autonomy was allowed.

This autonomy lasted only as long as Blimling was the Vice-Chancellor of Student Development. Following his departure in the early 2000s and appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor, Cindy Wallace, Student Development once again moved to assume control of dormitory life. First, it sought control of the dormitory through the Community Guides, who were renamed back to Resident Assistants. Then Student Development took back control of the training of the RAs. For a short period of time the RAs continued to be chosen solely from the LLC, but that did not last long and eventually RAs from outside the LLC were brought in.<sup>221</sup> The unique LLC method of restorative justice was also replaced with a standard student conduct system which all students of ASU were subject to.

It was theorized by some that Vice-Chancellor Wallace was focused on data driven conclusions. The problem was that Watauga College, and the entire LLC system, did not fit very well into a data oriented system.<sup>222</sup> This focus caused Student Development to begin to view the LLC with some suspicion because it was not able to produce the numbers to prove it was being an effective program. Additionally, as David Huntley (longtime faculty and director from 2005 to 2014) explained, Student Development did not want something so different compared to the other dormitories to exist under its banner. Thus, gradually the LLC was transformed back into a normal dormitory structure with the standard processes.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Bud Gerber, interview by author.

<sup>223</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

This control by Student Development meant that all requests related to dormitory structure from David Huntley's tenure as director to the present must be referred to Student Development.<sup>224</sup> This was part of the impetus for changing Watauga College into Watauga Global Community. The new name represented a new beginning.<sup>225</sup>

After the creation of Watauga Global Community (WGC) in the early 2000s, a final challenge arose to test Watauga's ability to adapt and survive. This time WGC saw the dissolution of the Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) Department it had called home for several decades.<sup>226</sup> In the 1970s ASU created an IDS Department alongside WGC, though the two were initially separate programs. The IDS Department was created at ASU for one primary reason; it was to provide a truly interdisciplinary education program for students. This was completed with an undergraduate degree pathway. Eventually, however, the department came to act as a home for programs that did not easily fit into other academic departments. Watauga College, Women's Studies, and Global Studies, among others, were placed into the IDS Department over its lifetime.<sup>227</sup>

When Watauga College was first placed under the IDS Department in the late 1970s, many faculty members disagreed with that move, partly because they viewed it as curbing their influence across campus and decreasing autonomy.<sup>228</sup> Despite their reservations, WGC remained within the Department. When Watauga was placed in the IDS department it kept its own tenure track lines for faculty and maintained those even after its placement.<sup>229</sup> Those

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<sup>224</sup> Jay Wentworth, interview by author.

<sup>225</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Jay Wentworth, interview by author.

<sup>228</sup> Maggie McFadden, "Black Mountain College, Watauga College, and Me," *Black Mountain Studies Journal* 11 (Spring 2011): 1, accessed March 11, 2017, <http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/volume-11-spring-2011/1-8-maggie-mcfadden/>.

<sup>229</sup> David Huntley, interview by author, October 23, 2016.

select faculty were part of IDS and Watauga College fulltime and able to focus on the College.

However, after the IDS Department was dissolved in 2009, the College lost these tenure track positions, which reverted back to their primary departments. At that same time, tenure at ASU also became increasingly reliant on research and publishing, which forced the faculty to devote more time towards research in their academic disciplines as opposed to teaching in WGC. This emphasis on research created a division between WGC's perceived needs and its faculty's other responsibilities. Combined with Student Development's increasing control of the College, different components of WGC were now handled by different departments instead of being combined under a united program and faculty.<sup>230</sup>

Three years after the creation of University College, five of the programs (excluding Sustainable Development) were moved out of University College and told to form their own departments and choose a college to join. These programs were considered too small to act as their own independent department and the University elected not to fund expansions to make each of them a full-sized department. The departments also did not easily fit into other established academic departments or were new academic disciplines. The idea was that these programs, including WGC, gained more stability being part of the new department instead of trying to be truly independent without the funding they once enjoyed. Many in WGC, though, chafed at being told to join a department after being considered a standalone program while under the University College.<sup>231</sup>

Faculty in WGC managed to convince the administrators that it should remain a standalone program despite its decrease in funding over the years. Their argument for

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

allowing WGC to be its own program was largely based on the idea that it was not easy to quantify its accomplishments and to subject it to a normal, data driven, departmental structure only served to hinder WGC. The way WGC was designed and operated did not lend itself to being able to produce the hard data most administrators focused on.

Furthermore, it was argued that the College's worth was more than just academic, with its focus on liberal education and a student-centered driven system. Successful in making this case, Watauga College was allowed to join the College of Arts and Sciences, by itself, as a program.<sup>232</sup>

In 2014, Watauga Global Community was once again renamed Watauga Residential College (WRC) under new director Clark Maddux. Watauga Residential College continues to operate as close to an independent residential college as it can, given the challenges it faced both within ASU and in American higher education. In its first six years, it was allotted considerable independence. However, beginning in the 1980s, the College faced many challenges to that independence, the most significant being the arrival of the new profession of student affairs. This new profession was eager to make its mark on campuses across the United States and increase the development of the whole student. WRC was not the only program to be affected by this new profession, but its unique structure made it particularly vulnerable. Additionally, multiple schools of thought from different administrators had a large impact on the College depending on whether they valued its independence, were more concerned with budgetary issues, or followed a data-driven idea of management. WRC survived because it was able to adapt to those changes, but not without having to evolve into the unique form of a residential college it is today.

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

In the end, the changes Watauga College experienced do not lie with any single administrator, faculty members, or specific organizations. Instead it is apparent that a combination of both the profession of student affairs and select individuals within ASU's Student Development Department shaped Watauga College beginning in the 1980s. The case study of Watauga College illustrates how student affairs, as it quickly rose to power starting in the 1970s, culminating in becoming its own department titled Student Development at ASU, caused the College to lose its original autonomy. Instead, student affairs assumed some decision-making abilities for Watauga College, forcing the College to conform to University-wide ideals and fight for sufficient funding and support for its programs and faculty. Student affairs at ASU also took successful programs developed at Watauga College – such as programs that forced students into social situations and focused on the development of the student beyond merely academics – and implemented them throughout the entire University, thus taking away from Watauga College's uniqueness.

In this regard, Watauga College is an example of the changing landscape of higher education in America since the 1970s. As views of Student Development evolved and Student Affairs emerged as a recognized profession, faculty-led programs that focused on extra-curricular development of students were required to adapt to changing ideas of education. Throughout the country, as the student affairs profession came into its own, its practitioners started formulating their own theories and practices for the developing

profession. At ASU, as those new theories developed, individuals within the Student Development department used these theories to decide how much power they exerted over Watauga College and what changes they implemented compared to the College's founding principles. Those individuals often noted that their changes to the College came from evidence gained from the College's experiences. And ultimately, it was up to those in the administration to determine what changes the College would experience.

This case study of Watauga College illustrates how residential colleges often were caught unprepared for many of the earliest changes brought by student affairs professionals. In many cases these colleges acted defensively to save their identity as opposed to anticipating future challenges. This flat footedness is especially true in many of the earliest changes, such as the surprise implementation of the RLCs in the late 1970s which elicited grave concerns among Watauga faculty.<sup>233</sup> With Watauga College initially being so self-sufficient and independent, the faculty's focus was generally inward, causing them to be surprised when many of the challenges from the external Student Development department arose and resulting changes occurred. It is not that the faculty was delinquent in their duties, but that Watauga College's own nature sometimes worked against proactive moves by lulling faculty into being unaware of the larger University.

Watauga College belongs to an era of residential colleges that formed after WWII and whose purpose was focused on experimenting on higher education, a far cry from the European model's *laissez faire* attitude toward student development. However, the professionalization of student affairs in the United States essentially inhibited the post 1970s residential colleges from existing as autonomous entities within universities. Thus, student affairs used Watauga College as their own experiment, trying to control what the College did

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<sup>233</sup> Petschauer to unnamed, 1978, 2, University Records.

and received, and then taking the successful, unique aspects of the residential colleges to implement them on the main campus. For example, in the case of Watauga College, student affairs took the idea of a freshmen year program to act as a transition to college that focused on both academics and the social development of the student, and created a University-wide freshman program with the same objective. This implementation of new programs essentially removed a unique aspect of ASU's residential college by applying it to the whole University.<sup>234</sup>

Because student affairs implemented many new changes, some borrowed from residential colleges, in American universities, many higher education history authors now view student affairs as one of the driving forces behind American universities shifting away from a purely academic focus to one where the student as a whole is catered to by the university.<sup>235</sup> Additional activities outside of pure academics created by student affairs department and offered to all university students – not just those who are members of a residential college – have become part of a university's marketing to potential students and often receive more emphasis than the academics the university may offer. However, despite the extensive influence student affairs had within America's higher education system, there is insufficient research on the topic, especially in relation to the origins of the student affairs profession.

Additionally, student affairs as a profession is one where many individuals seem to be without knowledge of their own profession's history. It was not until the beginning of the 1990s that the profession began to acknowledge the importance of its own history. Prior to that, there was little scholarship on this new profession even though it creation and

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<sup>234</sup> Kay Smith, interview by author, December 5, 2016.

<sup>235</sup> Duke, *Importing Oxbridge: English Residential Colleges and American Universities*, 150.

solidification happened during the 1970s and 1980s. Instead, the majority of the literature pertaining to student affairs was written in the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, and is found primarily within biographies of individuals (Deans of Men and Women); unfortunately, biographies are usually inadequate in providing the creation and development of an entire profession and its resulting influence within universities.<sup>236</sup> Thus, there is a significant absence of literature and references detailing the professionalization of student affairs and its rise to power within the American system of higher education.

Filling in the narrative gaps of the 1980s and up through the early 2000s within student affairs' history is important in understanding its role as a new profession and its influence on American higher education. This thesis provides a concrete narrative to add to the rising interest in student affairs' history. Specifically, this thesis looks at the changes brought to one campus by student affairs beginning in the 1980s, which is an area of its history that has previously been neglected.<sup>237</sup> This thesis also extends that narrative of changes into the early 2000s. It chronicles the effects of the growth of student affairs on an institution, using Watauga College as a case study. It looks not only at the institution itself, but at the faculty in the College and the student affairs individuals who were the proponents of those effects. These observations provide a foundation for future scholarship.

While Watauga College was created in 1972 with the intent of being autonomous and allowed to experiment with educational pedagogy it was, like many other residential colleges, not immune to the changes brought by the professionalization of student affairs. Those changes, beginning in the 1980s, caused fundamental changes to Watauga College, both positive and negative. Though at times it may have seemed like the end for the College,

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<sup>236</sup> Michael S. Hevel, "Toward a History of Student Affairs: A Synthesis of Research (1996-2015)," *Journal of College Student Development* 57, no. 7 (October 2016): 844.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

it persevered. In recent years it evolved into Watauga Global Community and in 2014, finally to Watauga Residential College. Many other residential colleges encountered, and adapted, to similar challenges brought by Student Affairs departments, leading to significant changes in higher education.

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### **Vita**

Samuel Austin Nicholls was born in Walnut Creek, California to parents Paul and Julie Nicholls. They, along with sister Jennie Nicholls, moved when he was seven to Morehead City, North Carolina where he was raised. Samuel graduated from West Carteret High School in 2005 and received his B.S. in History, Secondary Education from Appalachian State University in 2010. From 2010 to 2015, he taught social studies at Seventy-First High School in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In 2015, he returned to Appalachian State to complete his M.A. in History, graduating in December 2017. He currently teaches World History at East Carteret High School in Beaufort, NC.