

Genesis: Collegiate Structure at SUNY Binghamton and the Origins of Hinman College
By Brent Gotsch

In the beginning ALBANY created the State University of New York at Binghamton. The University was without form and void, and mud was upon the face of the campus; and the spirit of ALBANY was moving over the face of the campus. And ALBANY said, let there be collegiate structure, and there was collegiate structure. And ALBANY separated Hinman from Newing and Dickinson...¹

-Sandy Lazar, Assistant Editor for the West Harpur Other, 1969

To comprehend the character and the legacy of Hinman College we must first examine its origins. Hinman did not miraculously rise out of the mud. Hinman's pioneering spirit sprang out of the minds of the founding fathers of the State University of New York (SUNY) system and the principal leaders within SUNY Binghamton itself.

In 1946 the first college in the southern tier of New York State opened. Called the Triple Cities College, because of its close proximity to the cities of Binghamton, Johnson City and Endicott, this college evolved out of a small extension program with Syracuse University that had been around since 1932 to serve teachers in the Triple Cities region. Pre-1946, this program was small, with fewer than three hundred students enrolled in classes limited to English, foreign languages, mathematics, psychology, history, and sociology. It had no campus (nearly all the classes were held in the Union-Endicott High School) and it granted no degrees. If student from the area wanted to continue their education and receive a degree, they eventually had to transfer to another college or university.²

These modest beginnings changed drastically following the end of World War II. The end of the war saw millions of men and women discharged from military service. In order to assist with this huge return of servicemen from the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific, Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Better known as the GI Bill of Rights, this legislation allowed, among other things, returning soldiers to pursue a college education by paying for the student-veteran's tuition and books, and by providing a monthly stipend for four

years. In order to accommodate all these veterans, the Triple Cities College was founded, coinciding with a statewide initiative to create affordable colleges and universities in the state.³

Triple Cities College was a cash cow for Syracuse University during the boom years of the mid to late 1940's with the bulk of their students being returning GI's. However, as the 1940's came to a close, most of the soldiers had graduated. Triple Cities College was becoming more of a drain on Syracuse's resources than it was a moneymaking venture. Glenn G. Bartle, the dean of Triple Cities College, and those closely associated with him knew that sooner or later Syracuse would cut its ties with the college. Without a larger institute sponsoring it, Bartle knew that Triple Cities College would not last for long. He began searching for a new sponsor and soon found it in the newly created State University of New York.⁴

The story of how Triple Cities College entered the SUNY system, became Harpur College and eventually SUNY Binghamton is a long story filled with backroom deals, political wrangling, and the egos of many of the state's powerful and influential politicians and businessmen. Early in 1946, New York State Governor Thomas E. Dewey drafted legislation to create the Temporary Committee on the Need for a State University. This committee would be chaired by man named Owen D. Young and the final report would be known as the Young Report. This committee would assemble all the necessary data to see if New York State needed to establish a public university system. Two years later the committee came back with its final report. The Young Report recommended that four-year colleges be created in areas that were not adequately served by current institutes of higher learning and where the number of students desiring higher education was great enough to establish such a college. It also established a state board of trustees to oversee the creation of the new State University of New York system.⁵

Seeing the potential that this had for the future of Triple Cities College, Bartle immediately called upon all his contacts within the movers and shakers of the Southern Tier. Over a series of dinners and lunches, a group of politically savvy men would plan to get Triple Cities College admitted to the new SUNY system. Among the men who Bartle enlisted in this great endeavor was Thomas J. Watson, the founder of IBM and one of the most powerful and influential men not only in business but also in state and even national politics. Also present were Charles F. Johnson, Stewart Newing, and Edgar W. Couper, influential local businessmen, and George L. Hinman, the son Harvey D. Hinman, for whom Hinman College is named.⁶

Glenn Bartle, a talented academic, was also politically adept and had many social connections with powerful figures in state and local politics, including key members of the law firm Hinman, Howard, and Kattell. With this group of politically savvy and business-minded individuals, The Southern Tier State University Committee was formed with the sole task of lobbying for Triple Cities College to become a part of the SUNY system. The committee, made up of members from local industry such as IBM, Endicott-Johnson, and the Union Forging Company, along with the Hinman, Howard, and Kattell law firm, lobbied the local Binghamton government. Without the blessing of the local politicians the committee was bound for failure when the time came to address the state. With so many powerful and influential forces in favor of forming a public university, it was a foregone conclusion that the local municipalities would come on board as well.⁷

After securing the blessing of the local politicians, the members of the committee contacted Oliver C. Carmichael, the chairman of the SUNY board of trustees. Although initially unenthusiastic about the prospect of admitting Triple Cities College into the SUNY fold, Carmichael began to turn around when more and more of the politically influential members of

the committee began to correspond with him about the potential that Triple Cities College held for the SUNY system. The committee worked around the clock to gather such pertinent data as how much the new college would cost, the prospects of attracting students to fill its seats, and other necessary data, all in an effort to make a compelling case for their position.⁸

The journey to admit Triple Cities College into the SUNY system did hit a snag-not because of anything they did, but because of a power struggle at the state level. The SUNY board of trustees assured they would be in charge of managing the SUNY system, and in part they were. They were tasked with creating a budget for the colleges and universities already controlled by the state and developing a system of community colleges to complement the four-year colleges and universities in the state. However, the Board of Regents, which up until this point had almost complete control over the state's educational programs, resisted this new entity which threatened its power. What ensued was a turf war between two state agencies and a host of other forces. "This struggle...involved more than just these two bodies. In addition to their own interests, each represented a variety of political forces in the state."⁹

In an ironic turn of events, George L. Hinman, who at the time was the chairman of the Board of Regents, came up with legislation known as the Condon-Barrett Bill, which essentially would force the SUNY trustees to relinquish virtually all control over higher education in New York State to the Board of Regents. George Hinman's father, Harvey Hinman, was a leading member of the Southern Tier State University Committee and openly supported the SUNY trustees. George Hinman (his position on the Board of Regents forced him to step down from the committee) appeared to be in open defiance of his father and his father's support of the SUNY trustees. The reality of the situation was far more complicated. It was not that George Hinman did not want to see Triple Cities College be admitted to the SUNY system. On the

contrary, he was an advocate of it. The reason George Hinman fought the SUNY trustees was because he was loyal to the Board of Regents and furthermore he was having a sort of feud with Governor Dewey, who was trying to supplant the power and authority of the Board of Regents with the new SUNY trustees. In what would seem to be the answer to every problem in state politics (and in the future battles over collegiate structure) a committee was formed called the Committee to Save the State University. It was established by the SUNY trustees and their supporters to fight George Hinman and his legislation. The whole hassle became a non-issue when Governor Dewey vetoed the legislation on March 23, 1949. This effectively put the SUNY trustees in complete control over the state university system.¹⁰

New obstacles emerged with changing political circumstances. Dewey, though he was a supporter of SUNY, was up for reelection and was desperately trying to forge a coalition between Republicans and Democrats in the state legislature that would support his budget. Many of Dewey's fellow Republicans were demanding cuts to the budget, cuts that would all but destroy any hope for funding of the new SUNY system. With the ensuing fights over the state budget, Southern Tier State University Committee member Edgar Couper addressed the SUNY board of trustees and pleaded the case of the Triple Cities College. After much discussion it was agreed that in order to help take some of the financial pressure off the state, the local community would have to provide for half of the capital costs of the college.¹¹ While this was not ideal, it certainly was better than having absolutely no support for the college from the state.

Realizing that funds for the college had to be acquired locally, the Southern Tier State University Committee solicited the Broome County Board of Supervisors to levy new taxes to raise the sum of approximately 1.5 million dollars. This was a huge sum of money, especially in 1949. In order to win the supervisors over to their position, Couper devised a strategy whereby

each supervisor would be approached by an individual whom the committee believed to have the most influence over him.¹² The extent of this shifty maneuvering can never be known; however, the committee addressed the Board of Supervisors on November 14, 1949, and pitched their idea to them. The Board's reply to this address was that they would take the matter under advisement and adjourn until a later date. Following this, various local newspapers such the *Press*, the *Sun*, and the *Endicott Daily Bulletin* came out in support of the committee's proposal.¹³

By December the overwhelming majority of the Board of Supervisors were in favor of the proposal. This was in large part due to the efforts of the committee, who through political pressure and pure personal persuasion were able to convince the supervisors to allocate the necessary funds. Chief among those who threw their political influence around was Harvey Hinman and his son George. Both men made a series of phone calls to key members of the Board of Supervisors, persuading them to vote in favor of the committee's proposal. Late in November of 1949, Harvey Hinman wrote a letter to all of the members of the board strongly urging them to appropriate the needed funds. His letter read in part, "I am convinced, as I am confident you will be when you have examined the subject, that failure to take advantage of this rare opportunity to secure a permanent State supported college would be a grave mistake—a mistake which could not be corrected."¹⁴ The existence of this letter shows that the Hinman family, while playing a high stakes game with both New York State and local Broome county municipalities, was in the process of forever leaving their mark upon the new college and the whole of the Southern Tier.

Another obstacle that the committee had to overcome was the intense opposition that many of New York State's private colleges and universities had for a public university system in New York. Most of these institutions felt that the creation of a system of publicly funded

colleges and universities in New York State would undercut their programs and enrollment. They lobbied hard for the state to use the money allocated for the creation of a SUNY system to instead be used as scholarships to send students to the existing private colleges and universities. The reality was that the SUNY system was designed for poorer students who could not afford to study and live away from home. The goal of the SUNY system was to make higher education affordable to the student who otherwise would not be able to afford a college degree. It was not so much the cost of tuition that hurt these poorer students; it was the costs associated with room and board, textbooks, and other miscellaneous expenses. Though the state government was now firmly behind the creation of a SUNY system, they faced opposition from powerful interests such as Edmund E. Day, Chancellor of Cornell University, and Everett Case, President of Colgate University.¹⁵ A series of letters and proposals were exchanged between these two men and various political leaders in the state, and they even held hearings with politicians in Albany, all in an effort to derail the creation of a SUNY system. Nearly all of the local newspapers harshly criticized Day and Case, whom they considered to be elitist and part of the old robber-baron establishment intent on keeping the sons and daughters of average middle-class working families out of higher education. However, with the political will of the committee and the mass media on the side of founding the SUNY system, the efforts of these men and others like them led to nothing. With opposition to the SUNY system all but eliminated, and with the blessing of the SUNY board of trustees, Triple Cities College was admitted to the SUNY system on February 7, 1950.¹⁶

In an effort to continue public higher education, Bartle began plans to expand the existing college. Bartle's main focus was to revise the college so that it would rival the more established, and expensive, Ivy League schools. Bartle believed that by recruiting only the best faculty,

providing top-notch facilities, and having a strict admissions policy, the new public college would be able to draw a class of superior students and sustain itself well into the future even without veterans who were the initial backbone of the college. In July of 1950, Triple Cities College was renamed Harpur College in honor of Robert Harpur, a local man who played a minor role in the Revolutionary War and who had been a wealthy landowner in the eastern part of Broome County.¹⁷ The hope of Bartle and others like him was that this newly renamed public college would, distance itself from Syracuse University and cement the founding principles of quality affordable higher education within the SUNY system. Bartle, like many others involved with the college, envisioned Harpur becoming a public “Swarthmore in the Southern Tier.”¹⁸ The hope was that Harpur College would completely realize the dream of affordable higher education of the best quality for New York State.

With the foundations of Harpur College now established, Bartle’s task was to build the fine institution that he had dreamed about. On May 13, 1952, it was announced that Harpur College would relocate from its location in Endicott to a new site in nearby Vestal, NY. This new area, complete with three hundred acres of developable land located close to main transportation arteries, would be an ideal location to build the campus that everyone had dreamed about.¹⁹

The journey to create graduate level programs throughout the SUNY system began shortly after the establishment of SUNY itself. The Trustees of the State University of New York proposed that the SUNY system expand and offer more graduate-level programs in order to meet the demand for more technically trained men and women with advanced degrees.²⁰ Realizing the potential this initiative had for Harpur College, certain members of the faculty began to push for graduate-level programs at the college. They met some resistance from faculty

who wanted to keep Harpur College small, like Swarthmore. By February 1957, the Educational Policies Committee was established at Harpur College to research ways to develop graduate-level programming. Many influential men sat on this committee, including Glenn Bartle.

Another man who was involved with this committee would become an icon in Hinman College History. That man was Christian P. Gruber,* an assistant professor of English, would later go on to become the first Faculty Master of Hinman. But that was ten years away, and for the time being the task at hand was to create a graduate program at Harpur.²¹

For the next two months the Educational Policies Committee spent much of their time drafting reports and recommendations to the faculty of Harpur College on how to establish a graduate program at the college. Unlike the previous fight to gain acceptance into the SUNY system, the fight to create a graduate program at Harpur College was not so much about local and state politics as it was about the internal politics of Harpur College itself. Many faculty members were skeptical of a graduate program that they felt was unnecessary for the mission that they were trying to achieve, that of affording a reasonably priced undergraduate education of the highest quality. Opponents in the faculty felt that a graduate program at this stage in the college's development would only take away from the undergraduate program. These fears were salvaged by the various committees such as the Educational Policies Committee whose reports helped to justify the creation of a graduate program and won most of the college's faculty over to its side.²²

In December of 1959, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller commissioned the Committee on Higher Education (better known as the Heald Committee named after its chair, Henry T. Heald, who was the president of the Ford Foundation) to investigate the need to expand higher

* Christian Paul Gruber was his full name. While signing documents he would usually refer to himself as C.P. Gruber. However, to those who knew him, he liked to be referred to simply as "Pete."

education in New York State. On November 15, 1960, the Heald Committee released its report which called for many sweeping recommendations to be put into place. One of the recommendations called for the establishment of two university centers, one to be located in upstate New York and the other to be located on Long Island, which would provide comprehensive programs leading to Masters and PhD degrees. Though it did not name any specific SUNY colleges to become university centers, the implications for Harpur College were obvious.²³

The next year the SUNY trustees published their *Master Plan* which recommended that two additional university centers be created in the state, bringing the grand total to four. “With the publication of the report of the Heald Committee and the trustees’ *Master Plan*, the four-year effort of some of the faculty and administrators at Harpur College to establish a graduate program had largely been realized.”²⁴ Although much work remained in actually implementing a graduate program, the actions of the Heald Committee and the SUNY trustees would profoundly alter the development of Harpur College for years to come.

Until 1961 the state university system was little more than a hodgepodge of educational institutions which lacked a clear direction for their future. They were, to put it bluntly, relegated to performing those services which the state’s private colleges and universities regarded as beneath their dignity...A university is many things, but it cannot pretend to be a true university unless it offers graduate programs leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree. And it almost goes without saying that these programs must be composed of the highest quality faculty, extensive libraries, and a student body capable of completing intellectually rigorous training. These, then, were the things that many believed the state university could become. This belief was the primary motive behind the conversion of Harpur College from a small, high quality liberal arts college into a university center over the next ten years.²⁵

As early as September of 1961, Harpur College requested the SUNY trustees to implement a modest graduate program at the college. After reviewing the materials sent to them, the trustees gave Harpur College permission to grant Masters of the Arts (M.A.) degrees in a few

select subjects such as English and Mathematics. These subject areas would be followed by many more and eventually the granting of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees was also allowed. Harpur College now was officially designated as one of the four university centers, though the title State University of New York at Binghamton would not occur until 1965.²⁶

1965 was a milestone year in the history of the college, formerly known as Triple Cities College, then Harpur College. This was the year it became known as SUNY Binghamton. With its increased growth in population as well as its ever-expanding graduate-level programs, the name change made official the transformation of Harpur College from a small liberal arts college, the public Swarthmore, to a university center. Expanding programs and expanding facilities were not the only change to occur. The new university center decided to experiment with trimesters instead of the more traditional semester system. This experiment was nothing short of a dismal failure and after a few years they returned to the traditional semester system. Also, the original three divisions of Harpur College (humanities, physical sciences, and social sciences) gave way to a School of Arts and Sciences with various academic departments. In the years that followed, other schools followed, such as the School of Nursing and the School of Management. SUNY Binghamton was becoming big with a rich assortment of programs both at the undergraduate and graduate level to choose from.²⁷

SUNY Binghamton soon became a fast-growing institute. Thanks to the legacy of Harpur College developed during the 1950's, students from all over New York State and elsewhere were drawn to the exceptional quality of the liberal arts program offered at Binghamton. In its early days the university feared that not enough students would enroll; soon these fears proved unfounded. Far from having trouble recruiting students to the university, university administrators now faced the problem of how and where to house them. It soon

became clear that not all the students entering into the university could be housed off-campus. On-campus housing needed to be provided to incoming students.

The first cluster of dormitories constructed to meet this demand was Dickinson Community. Dickinson was named after Daniel Dickinson, a nineteenth century US senator whose statue currently stands in front of the Broome County Courthouse. Following closely after the construction of Dickinson was Newing College, named after the recently deceased Stuart T. Newing, a local businessman who had helped establish Harpur College. Following on the heels of these two residential communities was Hinman College, named after Harvey D. Hinman, the local lawyer and politician who had been instrumental in establishing Harpur College.²⁸

In the case of Dickinson Community, the buildings constructed to house students were simply that—buildings to house students. Newing and Hinman Colleges, though, were designed with something completely different in mind. They would be built as residential colleges, and they would follow the concept of collegiate structure, which was growing in popularity at that time.

Residential Colleges, also known as cluster colleges, grew out of the challenge of accommodating the huge influx of new undergraduate students into institutions of higher learning starting in the early twentieth century and increasing exponentially by mid-century. Truth be told, the idea behind collegiate structure was nothing new. The history of collegiate structure goes all the way back to the founding of Oxford University in England in 1249. Following in the footsteps of Oxford was Cambridge, both adhering to “the concept of a university as a collection of colleges which function as independent entities.”²⁹ Collegiate structure eventually became to mean a semiautonomous college within the campus of a larger

institution of higher education. In the United States during the 1960's, collegiate structure became vogue for numerous reasons. Some of the reasons included financial constraints, especially among smaller colleges, and the irrelevance of the existing academic programs offered at the college. The biggest reason why collegiate structure became popular was that many incoming college students during that era simply felt that their respective colleges or universities were getting too big and impersonal.³⁰ Perhaps the biggest reason why residential colleges were created at SUNY Binghamton was to prevent these feelings of alienation from completely infecting the student body.

Residential Colleges were designed to be small semiautonomous units within the overall structure of the university. Each community within the structure would have a separate identity from the larger university while still maintaining the ties to the parent institution. In theory, their small size would allow the units within the collegiate structure to be more personal, allowing a greater amount of interaction and communication between the student living within the unit and the faculty who would be instructing him or her. With these greater student-faculty interactions, more personalized instruction and warmer relations between the student and instructor, the hope was that the student would feel a sense of identity and not be just another anonymous student in the assembly-line education process. "Cluster colleges, because of their size, are supposedly freer, less rigid and traditional than large universities...living-learning dormitories, and student participation in academic policy making are the norms at cluster colleges, rather than the exception."³¹ All in all, the main goal of collegiate structure was not to simply divide the students into smaller groups. The idea was that smaller subdivisions within the living-learning environment would help students develop more personal relationships not only with their peers but also with their instructors. Students would see the faculty not only as their teachers but as

everyday people, and the faculty would see their students as human beings with dreams, desires and emotions, rather than simply another body in their classroom.

Though on the surface it may have appeared completely benign, the concept was opposed by those who felt that developing a university like SUNY Binghamton into a collegiate system would be costly because of duplicated clusters of dormitories and library facilities.³² They also felt that faculty should not be responsible for the self-actualization of the student, that that challenge fell upon the shoulders of the individual student and not the faculty or administration of the university. Various science departments has misgivings, nothing that it would be nearly impossible to incorporate science programs into the collegiate scene.³³ Perhaps the element of collegiate structure that most bothered its opponents was the call for coeducational housing within each individual cluster. This liberal policy presented the possibility of premarital intercourse, and the more conservative voices in higher education cried out against it.

The controversy over whether or not to develop a collegiate structure in American colleges and universities was fought all over the country, only adding to the increasing radicalization and hostilities that were the benchmark of the turbulent 1960's in American history. In the case of SUNY Binghamton, in the spring of 1965 the Faculty Senate under the guidance of then President Bruce Dearing created an ad hoc committee to study the housing problems that a growing university could encounter and to propose possible solutions for those problems. The Committee on Collegiate Structure, as it was called, met often, and on January 7, 1966, the committee issued its final report to the faculty of SUNY Binghamton. The report, is often termed The Colville Report, after the committee's chairman, Derek Colville. Colville was an Englishman who believed an Oxford model, could be adapted to the situation faced by the growing public university. American dorms offered little in the way of social relationships, and

Colville believed that the English model of collegiate units could work at SUNY Binghamton.³⁴

With Colville leading the charge for collegiate structure, the committee and its recommendations would have profound and far-reaching effects on the entire university community and most especially for residential communities like the future Hinman College.³⁵

Serving on that committee was Francis X. Newman, a professor of English who had been teaching at SUNY Binghamton since 1962. Newman was appointed the secretary of the committee and actually wrote the Colville Report. Forty years later Dr. Newman would relate his experiences with the committee and their efforts to develop a solution for the burgeoning growth of the university. One of the first proposals was to build dormitories according to the classical college models. This idea called for each residential college to be a sort of “honors college” with a “Great Books” curriculum and few electives. For example, one cluster would be dedicated to humanities, and another dedicated to social sciences. This model called for a high degree of specialization and differentiation among the individual colleges. St. John’s College followed this model and the committee actually traveled to the college to view it. In the end, however, the Harpur College Council voted it down. The reasons were twofold. The first was that the students on the Council believed that this model with its emphasis on “great books” and classical education was too elitist. The second problem with this model was its expensive cost. With the classical college model dead, the committee moved on to investigate other ways to deal with the problem. The solution that they proposed was collegiate structure.³⁶

The committee was working on some basic assumptions. The first was that the university would see 5,000 students enroll by the 1970-1971 academic year and that in the near future it could grow to 10,000 students. With this extensive growth the university would have greater revenue, allowing for the expansion of facilities such as the library and research labs. The extra

money would also finance more guest lecturers and speakers and expand other academic and cultural programs that the university was experimenting with. However, it was also foreseen that students within this increasingly large and expanding university would feel separated from faculty involved more and more with research. Such separation between students and faculty could result in what the committee called “anti-intellectualism”³⁷ and would hinder the development of individual students. The committee recognized that in the field of higher education, as in many other areas, growth increases the flow of revenue into the university’s coffers. However, expansion also threatens to destroy the personal interactions between the student and faculty. This experience of close personal contact with other students and faculty was key in the early days of the university and was what attracted many students to the university in the first place.

In an effort to combat those problems, the committee drafted five proposals for the residential program at SUNY Binghamton:

1. Each unit would consist of approximately 1,000 students and would be co-educational. A certain number of faculty members and administrative personnel would be associated directly with each unit.
2. The unit would be composed of students at all undergraduate levels, from freshmen to senior. Normally (although we recommend liberal transfer privileges) a student would be associated with the same constituent unit for all four years of his stay at Harpur.
3. Each unit would be located in one of the dormitory-dining hall clusters now existing or planned about the perimeter of the campus. The prototype unit that we have used in discussion is Newing Hall and the residence buildings grouped around it.
4. In addition to the buildings now existing, each unit would also have a library, faculty offices, and several classrooms, all of these perhaps in a single new building centrally located in the dormitory cluster.
5. The constituent unit would have more than simply residential functions: it would also be the focus for a portion of the students’ academic, social, and cultural activities as well.³⁸

The committee also recommended that a director who was a tenured faculty member would be responsible for the overall administration of the unit. This position would become the Faculty Master. Years later Dr. Newman would state, “The Master was crucial.”³⁹ The committee saw the Master as becoming so important that he would eventually eclipse and ultimately marginalize the Dean. Newman adds, however, that “Masters never actually had that much power and in fact the Dean would eventually grow more powerful because of the development of colleges.”⁴⁰

The committee recommended that full-time faculty also be associated with each unit. This would be done in an effort to encourage more student-faculty interaction. Professional staff would live in the dormitories themselves. The idea of providing tutors and professional psychologists was also pitched by the committee.⁴¹

One of the major recommendations in the Colville Report was the creation of a unit government that would discuss and create policies for each individual unit. The unit government would be comprised of the unit director along with affiliated faculty and students. Discipline problems would be handled within each individual cluster by a panel of students and faculty associated with the cluster. Large discipline problems would be referred to the all-college judicial body. The committee reported, “In all of this we assume a high degree of participation by students in initiating programs, deciding on policy, and executing the day-to-day functions of a unit.”⁴² Student involvement would be key in the successful operation of the proposed collegiate units.

The role of the individual student within the proposed collegiate structure was also explained. The Colville Report stated that students with a smaller community to identify with would be more likely to stay within their respective unit. By knowing that they would be living

there for approximately four years, they would have a higher stake in the cluster and would want to be active participants in the amelioration of their community. The idea of each cluster having its own dining hall was also touted as giving students a place to eat their meals with their peers to form better bonds not only between themselves but also with the faculty associated with the cluster, who would be encouraged to eat their meals as much as possible in the dining hall. The committee also stated that the units should organize social activities such as dances, open houses and parties. This would help to draw students into a controlled atmosphere of social interaction, as opposed to the fraternity social scene that then, as now, could become rather rowdy. An ‘Animal House’ atmosphere was a very real fear for many faculty members and administrators within the university at that time, and a collegiate structure could potentially hold the key to reducing that problem. The committee also endorsed collegiate structure as providing a forum for academic pursuits. With so many students clustered within an area, it was the perfect scene for faculty-initiated events such as guest speakers, student plays, and films. These pursuits would not have to be supported by outside social committees or the departments and would be completely run in-house by the cluster. Inter-cluster sporting events were also on the minds of the committee members. The report states, “The unit could also be a new and exciting element in student sports activity. The competitive possibilities here are obvious....”⁴³ Student involvement in governing the unit was also touted, as was the creation of the unit’s own library where students could study within the comfort of their own cluster.⁴⁴

The committee encouraged the voluntary association of faculty members with individual clusters. They also suggested that the faculty be active participants in the governing of the unit and perhaps even do some teaching within the unit. Also suggested was that a diverse group of faculty from various departments be associated with the units, so that as many academic

disciplines could be represented as possible. Interestingly, the committee, while encouraging student-faculty interaction, did stipulate that the faculty associated with the clusters not become too close to their students and or budget too much time among many students within the cluster. An addendum of the Colville Report stated, "...in this regard, it may be well to say that the committee does not propose to institute any of the following new faculty positions: Amateur Psychiatrist, Big Brother, Drinking Buddy, Father Surrogate, or Avuncular-Chum."⁴⁵ Forty years after writing these semi-humorous lines, Dr. Newman would say that they were his favorite of the entire report. Tongue-in-cheek they may have been, but they did have a good reason for being there. The committee wanted professional relations to be maintained between the individual student and the faculty as much as possible.

Academics within the cluster would mostly be same as the rest of courses offered in the university. In fact, there was never any move made to make the clusters into academic units. That would defeat the purpose of restructuring the university. Students would take classes that would satisfy their general education and major requirements as dictated by the university and not by their individual cluster. However, the committee recommended that certain courses be offered within the confines of the cluster, especially if one of faculty associated with the cluster was teaching a unique course. The committee recognized that clusters could also provide exciting opportunities for experimental courses and inter-disciplinary enterprises.⁴⁶

One of the biggest concerns voiced in the Colville Report was the need for new buildings. Academic facilities in particular were of paramount concern. Buildings to house and feed students as well as classrooms, libraries and faculty offices were needed. The cost of the new residential colleges was manageable, they argued, because with the projected growth of the student body, new construction would be needed whether collegiate structure was chosen or not.

The cost of involving faculty was also negligible as they would be drawn from the pool of the currently employed faculty. All in all, the committee found that the costs involved with making the move toward collegiate structure were slight, and the university would have to meet the demands of future enrollment and construction anyway.⁴⁷

By the end of the report the committee proposed that the university move away from its current system and adopt collegiate structure. It cited the numerous advantages of collegiate structure, such as the smaller size of the units, which in turn would allow individual students the opportunity to be heard and make an impact on institutional policy that directly affected their life within their cluster. As the report stated, “The unit would be an institution midway between the student’s circle of friends on the one hand and the total university on the other. The unit would be big enough to allow anonymity to students who want it, but small enough to recognize individuals as individuals.”⁴⁸ The arrangement of the unit would also allow for the cohesion and blending of a living-learning environment and foster intellectual growth amongst the student body. In short, the committee saw the need to transform the dorms from simply sleeping and studying areas to interactive spaces where both academics and social skills could emerge and be cultivated by faculty and professional staff. The committee rounded out the report by stating, “we have designed a plan that we think will help to meet the problems of growth as we foresee them...our plan, we feel, will make growth less difficult and will help to provide the Harpur undergraduate a richer intellectual, cultural, and social life in a dramatically expanding university.”⁴⁹

A front page article in the SUNY Binghamton student newspaper, *The Colonial News* (now known as *Pipe Dream*) expressed the sentiments of the Colville Report and its committee members and the advantages that collegiate structure held for students at the university. In the

article Dr. Colville and Dr. Newman “stressed the integration of social and academic realms under collegiate structure.”⁵⁰ Colville went on to indicate that one of the immediate results of collegiate structure would be greater student participation in the decisions that would affect their lives both academically and socially. This would be a direct result of the change in the lines of communication between administrators, faculty and students. Colville in particular touted the importance of the new Faculty Master position stating that “They [the Masters] will...work directly with the students to evolve the policies of a particular units...students will not be subject directly to administration authority, but would deal directly with the faculty in the formulation of all policies...”⁵¹ The article also stated the hope by both the committee members and the Masters that the small size of the collegiate units would allow for varied experimentation and unique programming.⁵²

One might ask what does this have to do with Hinman College? The answer to that question is that it has everything to do with Hinman. Although the first buildings in Hinman would not be opened until 1967, the trademark features of the individual residential communities, including Hinman, were taking shape in the Colville Report as early as January 1966. The recommendation that residential clusters house approximately 1,000 students was realized with the construction of Hinman. Hinman would have its own dining hall where both students and faculty would not only eat but also engage in lively conversations and discussions of both academic and more pedestrian matters. The call for a director to oversee the cluster is an early anticipation of a Faculty Master role. Hinman would, after some false starts and political red tape, have its very own library of books for both personal enjoyment and research purposes. The call to have faculty linked with individual clusters is the first step toward the faculty fellow system that is present today. The recommendation for students to be active participants in self-

governing their cluster was realized in the formation of the Hinman College Council. The dorms (now called residence halls) soon after completion became more than just places to sleep and study. They became places of social interaction and academic advancement with cultural activities being sponsored by both faculty and the professional staff. The committee also prophetically foresaw that, given the opportunity, students would create their own organizations and make something great, as evidenced by the creation of the Hinman Little Theater, which ultimately became the Hinman Production Company, and of Hinman's great claim to fame, Co-Rec football. The committee also paved the way for learning communities and area-based courses to be created in Hinman for Hinman residents. The Committee on Collegiate Structure paved the way for the community that today is known as Hinman College. Hinman College began shortly after the completion of the report and implementation of its recommendations. In fact, "Hinman was executed in accordance with the proposal. Hinman was the realization of the scheme."⁵³ Without the committee and the Colville Report, it is certain that Hinman College as we know it today would not exist. It is also interesting to note that while the first buildings in Hinman did not open until 1967, the date on the Hinman seal is the year 1966. When the construction of Hinman College was begun, it was with the intention that the community adhere to the principles of collegiate structure.

There are few materials chronicling the construction of Hinman College. There was a great deal of construction going on around campus during that time. The building that would become the Glenn G. Bartle Library along with the Fine Arts Building and a few other buildings gave the campus the appearance of a perpetual construction zone. Binghamton's notorious rains made walking from place to place a muddy mess.

On October 5, 1967, a ceremony was held to dedicate both the new Fine Arts Complex and the still-under-construction Hinman College. Present at the ceremony was Bruce Dearing, then the President of SUNY Binghamton, Pete Gruber, professor of English and the first Faculty Master of Hinman College, and giving the keynote address was New York State Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller. Also present at the ceremony was George L. Hinman, the son of Harvey D. Hinman, for whom Hinman College is named.⁵⁴ George Hinman was responsible for getting Hinman College named after his father and was also a member of the Board of Trustees for the State University of New York. George Hinman, like his father before him, was active in New York State politics and was close confidant and special council to Governor Rockefeller.⁵⁵ The program stated, in regard to Hinman College, “the Hinman College complex, when complete, will accommodate 1,000 students. This will be the approximate size of each of the component colleges that were established within Harpur College this year to help preserve the valuable qualities of the smaller institution, within a context of overall university and college growth.”⁵⁶ There were high hopes for both the New York State government and the university administration for this new experiment in collegiate structure.

Although the dedication ceremony was in October, Hinman had opened for business in September. The first hall to open in September of 1967 was Cleveland Hall, known originally as Hall B. About two hundred students moved into this hall and found conditions that were less than inviting. Windows lacked shades, showers went without curtains, toilets were missing seats, the pipes had a tendency to break, and many rooms were missing furniture. As one early Hinmanite put it, paraphrasing Thomas Hobbes, “the original inhabitants of Hall B found life there to be somewhat nasty, poor, and brutish.”⁵⁷ This was not the only difficulty that these first inhabitants of Hinman College had to face. With the Hinman Dining Hall still under

construction, students were forced to walk all the way to the Newing Dining Hall for meals. Walking to and from classes was also treacherous. As mentioned earlier, large portions of the campus were under construction and the seemingly interminable rains created hazardous patches of mud. With the majority of Hinman still undergoing construction, the new community had no good pathways through the obstacles.⁵⁸ Shortly after the opening of Cleveland Hall, Hughes Hall also opened, with many of the same problems. In November, the dining hall was completed.

November 1, 1967, saw the Inaugural Dinner to celebrate the opening of Hinman College of Harpur College. No written recollections exist of the dinner other than a brochure commemorating the event. The brochure contains photographs of the reception that was held in the lower level of the dining hall as well as of the actual dinner and inauguration ceremony held in the upper level of the dining hall. The event was attended by residents of Hinman as well as such university big wigs as Peter Vukasin, the Dean of Harpur College, and Faculty Master Pete Gruber. Even the Broome County Mummers, a group of men who appear to be either an acapella group or a barbershop quartet, entertained the quests. By all accounts the evening was a night of firsts for Hinman. It was the first dinner ever held in the dining hall. It was the first event held in the building. It was also the first time that long lines would congest the dining hall as hungry patrons patiently waited for their food. These “immortal lines,” as they would be called, would be the bane of the hungry Hinmanite then as now. Other memorable lines uttered at the meeting included the valedictory remarks made by Herbert Klar, the United Student Government Representative of Hinman College, a now-defunct student government position. Klar, speaking on behalf of the student body proclaimed boldly, “Don’t bore us! Challenge us!”⁵⁹ To this, Dean Peter Vukasin replied, “Hinman College is a new way to meet the challenge of growth and change at Harpur College.”⁶⁰ The first Faculty Master of Hinman, Pete

Gruber, spoke for Hinman as a whole. His words were both a reply to the concerns of the student body and to the response of the Dean of Harpur College: “We accept the challenge.”⁶¹

These words, while maybe not as eloquent or as profound as the words of other statesmen or leaders of the past, would have symbolic meaning for the new college and still resonate today. The challenges faced by both the student body and the faculty of the growing university were diverse and numerous. Whether Professor Gruber expected it or not, his lines would be the hallmark of Hinman for years to come. Never in its forty-year history would Hinman turn down a challenge. Whether that challenge be financial constraints imposed by the university, student apathy, faculty disinterest, or threats to the very existence of collegiate structure itself, Hinman College would accept these challenges and overcome them every time. In fact the entire history of Hinman College is about challenges. Some of those challenges are public, such as the potential of losing the collegiate structure in the mid-1970’s, or the challenges faced by students groups such as the Hinman Little Theater/Hinman Production Company or participants in Co-Rec football, or the challenge of the Lehman Hall fire. Some of those challenges were private and personal. Virtually every single student who has lived in Hinman will attest that at some point during their stay here they were challenged, either by a class, a leadership role, or a personal problem such as substance abuse or even a death in the family. It has been Hinman College, though, with its incredible and unique network of support and structure that it gives to students that allows each individual student to be the absolute best that they can be. As the story of Hinman unfolds on these pages, these diverse and multifaceted challenges will become clear to the reader. For now, though, the challenge that presented itself to the men and women of Hinman College was simply to learn to live in their new environment and participate in the grand experiment of collegiate structure.

At some point during the inaugural dinner, Professor Gruber read a speech entitled “I, You, And We.”⁶² The speech, stated in part:

Last Sunday in the New York Times, James Reston’s column, was devoted to the inauguration of Hinman College, although he never once mentioned our name. He did so, because, writing of the large issues, of the macrocosmic malaise of the nation and the need for transforming American values, he accurately pictured the macrocosmic malaise of Harpur College and the need to transform our values.⁶³

Gruber went on to cite Walter Lippmann’s fear in 1914, the point at which the population of America was reaching 100 million people, that a unstoppable growing population would not be held in check by a higher social or moral authority, and that all the social, moral, and religious codes that were in place had no relevance to modern society of 1914 America. Gruber went on to compare the fears of Lippmann’s era with that of 1967 America. This was a country wracked with self-doubt and social strife. It was the era of many radical social changes and progressive movements. It was the height of the Civil Rights movement, Feminist movements, protests about the war in Vietnam, and rapidly changing social mores with respect to drugs and alcohol as well as premarital sexual relations. Furthermore, the population of America was at this time poised to reach the 200 million mark. Gruber drew parallels between challenges facing the nation and the challenges facing SUNY Binghamton. In 1963 there had been 2,000 students enrolled in SUNY Binghamton. By 1967 there were 4,000 and that number would continue to grow each year. Gruber drew many parallels between the situation facing the country and the problems that struck close to home, that is to say in our very own university, and the need to reevaluate values and long-held beliefs. Gruber called the dinner symbolic in that it was like a marriage where the partners pledged themselves to one another and vowed to build a future together. He continued by saying, “...ours is a very complex marriage, indeed, a monstrous marriage, for it involves many more than two partners...For here we are, students,

administrators, faculty, and staff, sharing a common meal, and pledging our time and efforts to the creation of a new institution, a college-within-a University.”⁶⁴

These words describe the nature of the experiment in collegiate structure that the university was dabbling with. However, the true spirit and meaning of Hinman would be captured in Gruber’s final paragraph:

This College, small enough to maintain intimate relations (if you will excuse the expression) among the partners, now looks forward to a time when, to I and you relationships a new relationship, best expressed by the first person plural, will be added to our consciousness. Thus tonight, I, and, I hope you, look forward to a time when we of Hinman College, will know ourselves because we have defined ourselves, first by our words, but gradually by our deeds.⁶⁵

If anything sums up the experience of Hinman College, it is that final paragraph. Hinman would certainly be a place of challenges, but it would also be a place where definition, of both the college itself and of the individual student, would take place. These words would become the gospel of Hinman. Though they may have been all but forgotten by succeeding generations, the definition of the character, spirit, and meaning of Hinman would be embodied in these words. It would all begin on that November evening in the old Hinman Dining Hall, when Hinman residents were challenged to let their actions speak louder than words, and to forge for themselves a new place within the tired institution of higher education, and out of that dilapidated structure to create a new place for themselves to grow, to learn, and to mature into adults. Unbeknownst to the participants in that first dinner in the Hinman Dining Hall, those deeds would manifest themselves in a variety of ways including student organizations within Hinman itself and leadership within its governing body. It would also show through in the pioneering policies of Hinman such as apartment-style living, a liberal pet policy, self-regulation, and even a cooking dorm. That, however, is for another chapter. The legacy that Hinman would

epitomize would be forged that night with the immortal words of Pete Gruber. The deeds of Hinman College faculty, staff, and students would become its true and lasting legacy.

The author would like to thank Professor Francis X. Newman for his invaluable contributions to this chapter and for teaching what can only be described as the best Beowulf class ever.

¹ Sandy Lazar, "The Genesis of Hinman College," *The West Harpur Other*, 3, no. 1 (September 1969).

² Stephen McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era* (Binghamton, NY: Foundation of the State University of New York at Binghamton, 1975), 3-4.

³ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 4.

⁴ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 56.

⁵ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 58-59.

⁶ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 60.

⁷ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 60-63.

⁸ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 64-66.

⁹ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 70-71.

¹⁰ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 72-74.

¹¹ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 75, 77-78.

¹² McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 80.

¹³ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 82-83.

¹⁴ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 84.

¹⁵ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 85-86.

¹⁶ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 86-87, 91.

¹⁷ Stephen Hambalek, *Alma Mater: A Popular History of Harpur College, 1946-1964*, (Binghamton, NY: Foundation of the State University of New York at Binghamton, 1975), 30.

¹⁸ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 244.

¹⁹ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 143.

²⁰ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 240-242.

²¹ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 244.

²² McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 244-245, 261.

²³ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 262.

²⁴ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 263.

²⁵ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 264.

²⁶ McIntire, *Harpur College in the Bartle Era*, 267.

²⁷ C.P. Gruber, *Harpur College into Binghamton University: A Personal Narrative*, (Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY, 1994), 4-7.

²⁸ Michele McFee, *The Cornerstone*, (Harpur College of Arts and Sciences, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2000), 90-92.

²⁹ Susan Wild, "Collegiate Structure," (independent study thesis, SUNY Binghamton), 2.

³⁰ Wild, "Collegiate Structure," 1.

³¹ Wild, "Collegiate Structure," 2.

³² Ibid.

³³ Francis X. Newman (Binghamton University Professor of English), interview with author, November 17, 2006.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ The Committee on Collegiate Structure, report to the Faculty [of SUNY Binghamton], "A proposal for restructuring the undergraduate college," 7 January 1966.

³⁶ Francis X. Newman, interview with author, November 17, 2006.

³⁷ The Committee on Collegiate Structure, report to the Faculty [of SUNY Binghamton], "A proposal for restructuring the undergraduate college," 7 January 1966.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Francis X. Newman, interview with author, November 17, 2006.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The Committee on Collegiate Structure, report to the Faculty [of SUNY Binghamton], "A proposal for restructuring the undergraduate college," 7 January 1966.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ellen Schur, "Collegiate Structure Viewed Changing Authority Pattern," *The Colonial News*, Vol. XXII, No. 45, May 12, 1967.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Francis X. Newman, interview with author, November 17, 2006.

⁵⁴ "Dedication of the Fine Arts Complex and Hinman College Complex," program for the ceremony, October 5, 1967.

⁵⁵ Paul Hoffman, "In Rocky's Corner," *The Press and Sun Bulletin*, date unknown.

⁵⁶ "Dedication of the Fine Arts Complex and Hinman College Complex," program for the ceremony, October 5, 1967.

⁵⁷ "Hinman College ---Past and Present," *The West Harpur Other*, 3, no.1 (September 1969).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Hinman College of Harpur College, Inaugural Dinner, program created for it, November 1, 1967.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² C.P. Gruber "I, You, and We" (speech given at Inaugural Dinner of Hinman College, SUNY Binghamton, Binghamton, NY, November 1, 1967).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.