A Short History of the Residential College at the University of Michigan

In September 1967 the Residential College opened its doors to 217 first year students. It was part of a nation-wide turn to innovative experiment in higher education. Nearly fifty years later, long after coeval initiatives elsewhere have faded, the RC remains a vibrant academic community on the University of Michigan campus. How and why this is so is what this brief history attempts to capture.

1) The Plan and its Implementation

The Residential College was over a decade in the planning. In fundamental respects, it was an experiment. The idea arose among faculty and administrators in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) who were worried about the impact of steadily rising undergraduate enrollment upon the quality of education at the University of Michigan. Beginning in 1959, LSA deans Roger Heyns and Burton Thuma, among others, expressed concerns about the inertial drag and impersonality of a big university, especially with the anticipated growth of student numbers. At the same time, faculty members in the social sciences, especially Theodore Newcomb and Donald Brown, were exploring the potential educational impact of a more coordinated intersection between living and learning. Together they drew the outlines of a small liberal arts college, within the larger College of LSA, that could combine a core of common educational and cultural experiences, a close sense of community, and considerable autonomy for curricular innovation. At a LSA faculty meeting in October 1963, a motion to "sympathetically consider establishment of a new residential college" met with considerable opposition. Various critics spoke against any effort by LSA to absorb a larger enrollment, against the possibility of diverting funds from departments to a new academic unit, and against the idea of residential-based learning itself.[1] Given the tone of the debate and "the apparent confusion" of the resulting vote, the Dean appointed a feasibility committee to review the concept. It recommended proceeding, provided that no diversion of departmental funds took place. This report was approved by faculty vote in March 1964. A planning committee (which included Professors Theodore Newcomb, Donald Brown, Jean Carduner, Steven Kaplan, Carl Cohen, Bradford Perkins, Alfred Sussman, and Ellis Wunsch, among others) was appointed to develop the idea. After long deliberation, the Committee presented a full-scale plan for the new college which the Regents approved in April 1966.

The original design sought to create a liberal arts program that united the virtues of smallness with the resources of a large research university. It was to be a separate, four-year college within LSA, focused exclusively on undergraduate teaching and learning. It was designed to be experimental – not only in curriculum, but in different kinds of pedagogy, different approaches to grading and assessment, distinctive residential arrangements that combined living with learning, and a unique governance structure in which students were to have equal voice with faculty in decision-making about requirements, curriculum, staffing, and community life. It was to have its own building, newly erected

[1] Records of the planning process are in the Residential College Collection, Box 1, at Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. A retrospective account may be found in Richard Curtis & Wallis Stomberg, "The Inception of the Residential College: a Case Study", dated December 1971 in Box 2 ("Reviews of the RC, 1971-72), from which the quotation is taken. This was but one of several assessments and surveys of the RC experiment in its early years.

on North Campus by the Huron River on a budget, approved by the Regents, of $11 million. The Planning Committee devoted much time to discussing the layout and architecture of the new building, which was to include classrooms, dormitories, dining services, and recreational facilities.[2] Rather than waiting for the completion of construction in 1969, the new college began operation in 1967, temporarily quartered in East Quadrangle, a men's dormitory on the main campus. This was done, partly, in the hope that a "going concern" might more readily attract donors to fund a new building.

The planners also crafted a detailed curriculum, designed to foster freedom and flexibility within a carefully structured liberal arts framework. It combined large lectures with small seminars and options for more informal and independent study that took learning outside the classroom. In the original plan, students were expected to live in the residence hall for their entire college career. Combining the learning with the living framed a core curriculum that was required of all students. The core included intensive first year writing seminars, a semi-immersion study of a foreign language to a useful proficiency, direct exposure to the practice of the visual and performing arts (the Arts Practicum), and a cluster of large lecture courses, all required of all, that were to be broadly interdisciplinary in content and team-taught. At the end of their sophomore year, students were to take a comprehensive examination on the core, before proceeding to entirely independent and individualized concentrations in their upper-level program. These self-directed majors were to be supervised by some 80 faculty members, borrowed from departments, who would work with students individually. Assessment featured a mixture of letter grades and written evaluations, with an emphasis on one-to-one feedback designed to reduce competition among students and personalize faculty review of work. The aim of both the core sequence and the evaluation system was to encourage students to take charge of their education, finding their own voice and figuring out how to use it in shaping a meaningful agenda of learning during their upper-level careers at the University – and beyond.

It is worth emphasizing that the RC was designed, not only to experiment with various strategies and approaches to learning, but was itself a kind of social science experiment to be closely watched, even studied. Theodore Newcomb crafted an elaborate admissions process for the initial cohorts of RC students, aiming to enroll in the program a representative cross-section of those admitted each year to LSA. His expressed purpose was to insure a valid experiment with an unbiased sample, and in the first years of the college, he and Donald Brown oversaw a number of comparative survey reports on student behavior and learning outcomes.[3] There were "a steady stream of visitors" from other colleges and universities, many of whom wrote appreciatively about the experiment.[4] There were dozens of external reviews, self-studies, critical surveys, and even graduate research projects conducted on the college in the first decade of the its existence. James Robertson, an English Professor who was appointed the first Director of the RC in 1967, was also an associate dean in LSA and sat on the LSA Executive Committee, where minutes record that the RC was a "perennial item" on the agenda: "The Committee looks

[2] RC Collection, Box 14 Files on the Building Project, and Box 15, Files on Residence Hall and Space Requirements.
[3] In RC Collection Box 9, for example, there is an undated report "The Impact of a Small Residential College upon its Students." that was overseen by Professor Brown; other early reviews are in Box 12, "Reviews."
[4] Various letters of appreciation are collected in RC Collection, Box 13, "Staff Correspondence".

forward each week to Dean Robertson's report of the latest perils through which his College has passed."[5]

Indeed, things did not go exactly according to plan. Even as the college prepared to open its doors, the Planning Committee was "shocked and surprised" to learn that the new facility on North Campus would not be built.[6] Expected donations had not materialized and state funding proved unavailable. Disappointment was actually quite short-lived, however, as faculty and students came quickly to prefer the temporary quarters on central campus; East Quad allowed students easy access to LSA classes and enabled faculty teaching in the RC to move back and forth. The entire RC student body met with the Regents and University President in March 1968 to urge the permanent occupation of East Quad, and consequently, $2.5 million was allocated to retrofit the building for the academic needs of the RC. Inside the Quad, now inhabited by the initial contingent of 217 first year students, a series of town meetings quickly fleshed out the governance structure that the planners had devised, pushing it in unexpected directions. A Representative Assembly, consisting of eight students, six faculty, and two resident fellows, with the Director in the chair holding a veto (which he never used) became a remarkably active legislative council for the college. Although there was an Executive Committee to advise the Director and a curriculum committee under various names to review courses, both initially reported to the Representative Assembly as the authoritative decision-making body. Within a month of opening, students were protesting dorm curfew hours, demanding the right (quickly granted) to determine housing policies for themselves in "the belief that the Residential College should be accorded the same freedom and responsibility in the realm of personal conduct as it now enjoys in academic affairs". This proved an early extension of the experimental principle that the relationship between RC students and faculty "should be fraternal rather than paternal."[7] As "the student estate more and more came to feel, and act, as a fully franchised constituency in government," the "Rep Ass", as it came to be known, emerged as a catalyst of the community, the site of fierce debates over civil rights and the Vietnam War, university policies and research programs, as well as the curriculum and requirements of the RC itself.[8]

The core curriculum came in for the most heated attacks. There was indeed a built-in tension between the lock-step requirements of the first two years and the promise of expansive freedom at the upper level, and students were quick to spot it. As the second in-coming class swelled student enrollments, moreover, the growing variety of their interests and academic directions was less easily contained within the core. The required lecture courses in the core were in fact fairly conventional in

[5] Report of the Executive Committee, LSA, November 19-December 10, 1969, quoted in Marlene Hathaway, "Between Two Worlds: the Residential College at the University of Michigan", a Senior Project, 1980, RC Collection Box 6.

[6] RC Collection, Box 2, "The Robertson Administration." First meeting of the Administrative Committee, August 1967.

[7] Letter, Robertson to Vice President for Student Affairs, Richard Cutler, 11 October 1967. RC Collection, Box 8. See also Box 8, "Government: Women's Hours, 1967."

[8] Quotation from a "Critical Self-examination of the RC", November 1971, written by Ellis Wunsch, then Associate Director of the RC, RC Collection, Box 12. Minutes of meetings are in RC Collection, Box 15 (1968-71) and Box 16 (1971-73)

content – entirely western in languages and focus (Modern Literature, Human Behavior, Western Man, Reason and Myth in America) – and aside from one course on "Contemporary Problems" (which survived in the Social Science major a decade later), somewhat out of step with the radical nature of the community experiment and, indeed, of the students who populated it. Nor were the large lecture courses entirely successful. Newly-formed instructional teams were often at sea, having never taught interdisciplinary content and unfamiliar with collaborative pedagogies. Some guest instructors assumed that their learning gave license to pontification and they soon ran into the vocal, even rebellious resistance of students required to sit restlessly through their lectures. Politics entered the mix, as it did almost everywhere on campus in the late 1960s; students in one core lecture strongly and pointedly disagreed with the instructor's positions on American politics, and he was so dismayed by their insubordination that he left at mid-term, never to return. In all, while the first-year seminar proved immensely popular and the pedagogical innovations in foreign language instruction were both novel and successful, the intent of the core – to provide a common educational experience for all students – was probably realized more in the opposition to it than in the experience of it.[9] The social commonality of the RC community trumped the literal commonality of academic content, and students, feeling their power to change the curriculum, pushed the boundaries. At the end of the winter term, 1969, the Representative Assembly created a student-faculty committee, chaired by Newcomb, to review the core curriculum.

There followed nearly a year of debate, polarized between those who saw the core "as springing, immaculate and perfect, from the corporate heard of the Planning Fathers", and those who gravitated toward a position of total abolition of the core sequence in the name of "personal, social, and political freedom".[10] Many LSA faculty associated with the inception of the college wavered between what was called the "common knowledge" objective and the "personal development" objective, and many proved distinctly uncomfortable in the arena of the "Rep Ass", especially as some students embraced the view that all requirements, whether of the RC or LSA, were an imposition upon a liberal arts education that sought to encourage the exercise of autonomy.[11] In early 1970, the review committee's recommendations took a middle ground: it suspended the required sequence of core courses, making them optional and their order more flexible, and it dropped the sophomore comprehensive exam altogether (as it had yet to be administered and, with the elimination of the core sequence of common requirements, now lost its point). At the same time, the committee recommended preserving several key elements of the core – first year seminars, intensive language instruction, and the arts practicum – as central requirements of the RC program. It also urged the continued development of interdisciplinary courses in the curriculum, both to meet LSA distribution requirements and to support upper-level

[9] RC Collection, Box 26, Minutes of the Executive Committee, "The Annual Report, October 1970" cites a study by Higher Education scholar from SUNY Buffalo that found that 75% of RC students felt some sort of core experience was necessary, but only 15% expressed satisfaction with the existing core.

[10] Quoting from a proposal, "Liberal Education and a Core Curriculum" written by Ellis Wunsch and circulated by a group of faculty, December 2, 1969. RC Collection, Box 6, "Course Information." A decade later, Jens Zorn characterized the debate as between "We are masters of our own future" and "Father knows best." In RC Collection, Box 16, "The Speech of the Place," a project from an oral history course in 1982, p. 20.

[11] This position eventually took the form of the so-called Proposal C, tabled in the Fall of 1970, but never acted on. A copy is in the RC Collection, Box 2, "The Robertson Administration."

students in their majors. As University Housing proved reluctant to turn over dorm space on central campus to juniors and seniors, the committee recommended that all RC students be required to live in residence for their first two years of college and then be expected to take a set number of RC courses beyond the now reduced requirements of the core.[12]

This compromise solution was widely endorsed by RC students who professed strong loyalty to the college and its faculty once greater curricular flexibility was embraced.[13] Although Robertson was said to have been close to tears at the dismantling of the core,[14] many RC faculty, including Robertson himself, accepted the outcome and the governing process that had produced it; experiments yielded experiences that altered plans.[15] But others left: by 1971, perhaps half of the initial contingent of LSA faculty who had taught in the RC, including several who had served on the Planning Committee, were gone. Some had harbored idealized, even elitist notions of a liberal arts college that were ruptured by student insubordination in the controversies surrounding the core curriculum; others experienced "a real or fancied" hostility from politically activated students; still others objected to the time commitments required by team-teaching, independent studies, and endless meetings. Whatever the reasons, many left "with highly critical or at best ambivalent feelings toward the new college", and these would color attitudes and images for years to come.[16] In the aftermath of these changes, the Dean of LSA, Frank Rhodes, convened a faculty committee for an external assessment of the Residential College to determine, among other things, whether it should continue.

This review, under the direction of the geographer and historian Rhoads Murphey, was in many ways a turning point for the Residential College. A number of committee members were highly critical of the whole experiment, and there was serious discussion of closing it down. Their review focused on the quality of instruction, the high turn-over of staff, and what it called "the misuse of freedom" – relying heavily on the parent-child imagery in calling on LSA to "exercise its parental responsibility" and recognizing that what the RC had accomplished so far was "almost entirely without concerted assistance or guidance from the parent college." In the end, however, the Murphey Committee's report affirmed a

[12] The committee suggested 12 courses (with intensive languages making up an equivalent of five), but that number has varied over the life of the RC; currently students take four beyond the Core. See the Report and Executive Summary of the Committee in RC Collection, Box 9, "RC History/Critique," February 24, 1970.

[13] See Bill Moore's report on a survey of opinion, "Student Comments on the Core Curriculum and the Residential College, 1969-70" n.d. Box 9

[14] This the 'testimony' of Professor Alan Guskin. Minutes of the Murphy Review Committee, November 1971. The RC Collection, Box 12, "Robertson Administration."

[15] As Robertson wrote, "…the doctrine of channeling the intellect, dubious in itself and odious in implementation, appears to be an increasingly questionable deployment of energy and talent." Memo on the Core, November 13, 1972, RC Collection, Box 2, "Robertson Administration". Marilyn Young would later reflect: "To watch Dean Roberson deal with the Representative Assembly was a pleasure…. He would never fudge about what he believed. He could get very angry when he was deeply challenged. He would also recognize when the weight of opinion was so much against him that to continue to resist would create irreparable divisions. He would never do that." RC Collection, Box 16, "The Speech of the Place," p. 21.

[16] The quotations are from the retrospective musings of Ellis Wunsch, in his "Critical Self-examination" of November 1971, RC Collection, Box 12.

continuing role for the RC and outlined a number of recommendations for change.[17] It endorsed the alteration of the core curriculum, and it strongly recommended that the now amended core for freshman and sophomore years be linked to a limited number of intellectually more structured, upper level concentrations. It gave considerable attention to the governance structure of the RC, accepting the role of the Representative Assembly, but urging a stabilization of administration through stronger standing committees and the appointment of three Associate Directors (for student affairs, for curriculum, and for staffing). It also recommended the formation of a Joint Board, made up of RC and LSA faculty, as an operating link between the two units and the final arbiter of staffing and administrative decisions, and it made several recommendations about how to secure a stable roster of instructors for the RC curriculum. The final Murphey Report sparked a spirited and confusing debate at an LSA Faculty meeting in October 1972, after which the LSA Executive Committee determined that the RC should continue.[18] Its decision affirmed the tone of the committee's final evaluation – balanced and supportive, but not effusive – mixing a measured criticism with a somewhat grudging admiration for the "warmth and unity" of the student community: "We would like to stress that we do not regard the RC as the solution to any problems, but as one promising effort which extends the diversity of student options as well as the diversity of existing and developing partial solutions."

The reconfiguration of the initial plan, amidst much rancor and uncertainty, and the tension-filled, but ultimately supportive review of its existence by LSA, set the Residential College on trajectories of development that would run across the next decades. Rather than pursuing a blow-by-blow administrative narrative, we can more effectively trace how the upheavals of the early years set a framework for further development by focusing on three general arenas of activity: the evolution of the RC curriculum in the wake of the controversies over the core; issues of faculty staffing and governance that entailed a continuing and ever-changing "dance" with LSA – often tellingly called "the parent college;" and the successive iterations of a student-centered, living-learning community with ever changing cohorts of undergraduates who continued to have many minds of their own. Across these realms, the RC faced a continuing tension between innovation and stabilization, which was often expressed as the pull towards standardization and alignment with LSA and the push to experiment, be different, and avoid duplications with LSA.

2) The Evolution of the RC Curriculum

The dismantling of the core curriculum threatened the coherence of the college. While a required lock-step sequence might grind against the spirit of independent inquiry that the RC sought to nourish, a common educational experience of some kind was integral to the founding vision of a cohesive community of learning. Everyone could agree on the importance of preserving the residential character of the RC and the interdisciplinary nature of its curriculum, but with the shake-up of the core, new means were needed to sustain an intellectual common ground among students and faculty within this community. In the winter of 1971, a new Educational Policies Committee (EPC) had already been

[17] RC Collection, Box 12, "RC Review, 1972"
[18] RC Collection, Box 15, "LSA Faculty Meeting re RC".

formed to explore options. A year later, this committee recommended that the RC build coherence around a reduced, but strengthened core curriculum linked to a limited number of upper level concentrations, derived "from interests or themes developed in core courses" – all interdisciplinary in approach and, where possible, taught by teams of instructors.[19] Two months later, the Murphey Report echoed these recommendations in almost identical language, adding that the new concentrations in the RC must not duplicate offerings in the LSA.

If we take the minutes of the EPC as a guide,[20] discussions in 1972-74 still focused on relatively large lecture courses mainly for the sophomore year, no longer required, but available for the distribution credits that students needed to amass. These were often called "common experience courses" and their interdisciplinary character is suggested by the frequent use of terms like "sources", "fundamentals", and "approaches" to fields of learning. In the minds of some, these may have represented a kind of segmented common experience which, because enrollments were relatively large, could reach broad segments, if not quite all students in the residential community. The EPC also discussed a number of possible upper level concentrations in the wake of the Murphey Report, and many of the larger courses eventually morphed into gateway or introductory classes for RC majors. Thus what had been a lock-step two-year core, leading to a broad array of completely individualized concentrations, changed into a more limited set of core requirements, with greater flexibility and choice, leading to a small number of RC concentrations, with the larger lecture courses of the amended core becoming a kind of bridge between the two.

This was an evolution strongly endorsed by the Joint Board, convened in early 1973 under the leadership of economics Professor and future University President, Harold Shapiro. While it did not concern itself with the details of curriculum planning, the Joint Board saw its work in stabilizing RC administration and strengthening the continuity of academic staff as being critical to building and maintaining upper level concentrations.[21] Zelda Gamson, appointed Associate RC Director for Curriculum, led the in-house discussion. On the one hand, steps were taken to strengthen the core: a First Year Seminar Committee was formed to establish benchmarks and standards for freshman writing;[22] the intensive, semi-immersion pedagogy of the language programs, still often challenged by students, was re-affirmed as a permanent and distinctive part of basic RC requirements; and the Arts Practicum, which required all RC students to have some "serious and sustained" engagement with the creative arts, was reinforced with additional faculty and courses, especially in music and studio arts, and the conversion "into rudimentary studios [of] some of the unused basement spaces of East

[19] Educational Policies Committee Report, Winter 1972. RC Collection, Box 12, "Critical Self-Examination."
[20] RC Collection, Box 6, "Course Information." There is another report from the EPC, dated April 1972, that summarizes the committee's discussions about how to (re)organize the curriculum. RC Collection, Box 25, "Harold Shapiro" file, and some scattered material in Box 21, "Educational Policies Committee: Correspondence, 1971-72."
[21] The work of the Board is discussed below. It was especially influential in RC affairs in 1972-75, as Dean Robertson finished his stint as director, his successor proved physically unwell and temperamentally unsuited to the work and had to be replaced a year later (in 1975) by Marc Ross of the Physics Department.
[22] A retreat of 15 faculty to discuss the philosophy and fundamentals of first year seminars is reported in RC Collection, Box 26, "Minutes of the Executive Committee," January 14, 1974.

Quadrangle."[23] On the other hand, a rather haphazard collection of electives, in many ways the debris left by the dismantling of the original core curriculum, were gradually reassembled into coherent concentrations. Gamson encouraged a move away from organizing around themes, given the variety of student interests and the frequent turnover of faculty, in favor of an emphasis on practice – hands-on, experiential, and direct. Her primary planning focus was on how "to help students and faculty apply and perform their knowledge and, conversely, to go back to theory from practice." [24] This approach built on the kind of direct engagement required of entering students – the practice of writing, proficiency in foreign languages, and the arts practicum – and it helped to stimulate and underwrite interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge at the upper level. This emphasis on practice, and on the relationship between theory and practice, made RC pedagogy unique at the time and has remained a core feature of an RC liberal arts education to this day.

The programs in Drama and Creative Writing led the way, in part because they were both, in content and practice, quite distinct from anything available in LSA, but also because they were both already engaged in the union of theory and practice which the EPC espoused: Creative Writing combined intensive tutorials in the practice of various genres with requirements that students take a wide range of literature courses in both the RC and LSA. Originally affiliated with a humanities program in literature, it gradually took on an autonomous life as a small group of faculty coalesced around a tutorial system of instruction. The Drama major fostered a combination of course work and practice that "requires students to venture out of the textual dimensions of the play and into the theater space. It is by working on the stage, by finding the voice hidden in the written line, by discovering the roots of action in the body that the student comes to understand the nature of the dramatic art."[25] In both cases students were challenged to act and reflect in tandem. The next LSA review of the RC in 1977, under the chairmanship of John Mersereau, singled out the Drama major, saying it "embodies a mode of study unique in the university," and it saluted the disproportionate number of Hopwood awards won each year by RC undergraduate writers. It also noted that other areas of the curriculum in the Humanities and Social Sciences were moving more slowly, "in a state of flux" and consolidating majors that were still "in a very preliminary stage". [26]

It is hardly surprising that this consolidation took time. In part it was a matter of faculty turnover; the efforts of the Joint Board to stabilize a continuing core faculty (see below) preceeded slowly and with uneven results. Students worried that programmatic instability and continually changing course offerings made planning a major in the RC difficult. But by far the biggest challenge was a matter of practice: RC faculty had to learn how to do interdisciplinary instruction and pedagogical

[23] RC Collection, Box 25, File on the Arts and Humanities Concept, memo by Ellis Wunsch, 21 October 1977. The original design assumed that students would do this requirement through university courses in music, art, and dance, supplemented by a few drama and creative writing classes in the RC – or through independent studies. But students found access difficult in visual and performing arts courses, and the independent studies proved to be poorly supervised. By adding part-time teachers in music and studio arts, Wusch noted, "the RC soon became known for its theatrical productions, art shows, concerts, and Hopwood winners."

[24] See Zee Gamson, "The Residential College in 1974: Suggestions for some Directions", December 1974, RC Collection, Box 9.

[25] RC Collection, Box 25, "Review Committee, 1985" Memo on the RC Curriculum, circulated April 1985.

[26] RC Collection, Box 12, "RC Review of 1977".

collaboration – not just in individual courses, but in coherent programs. This had proven challenging enough in the era of the large core lecture courses and it was no easier for faculty trying to develop interdisciplinary majors. Economists had to learn to speak with sociologists, literary critics with art historians – and more broadly, cultural studies had to learn to harmonize with music, history had to find its feet on the stage, and art history had to grope its way into studio practice. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were a remarkable number of team-taught courses and collaborations developed in the RC, testimony to on-going conversations among faculty in search of common ground and the means to teach across disciplines – both within the Humanities and the Social Science programs, but also between them. A collaboration of history and drama faculty, for example, built courses between majors and across the divisions that underwrote the highly successful in-house Brecht Theater Company during the 1980s and together with writing faculty, helped nurture a project at Mackenzie High School in Detroit that pioneered the RC's long engagement with the city.[27]

A Social Science concentration took shape in the late 1970s, just as the Mersereau review was underway. In 1976, two programs in social science area once associated with the core, History of Ideas and Human Behavior, combined and this formation incorporated (not without controversy) the Urban Studies core course and faculty the following year. The new concentration found focus through a grant from the federal Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) that in the late 1970s-early 1980s allowed individual instructors to work with a small seminar of students (taking full credit for a whole semester) to design, conduct, and write up full-scale collaborative research projects.[28] From thematic content growing out of direct experience and practice, the faculty assembled a concentration around "Major Issues of the late-20th Century." Students were required to do coursework in social theory and research methods, but then developed a plan of study, in consultation with faculty, that focused on the particular contemporary problems that interested them individually. Students were encouraged to do field work in the community, the archives, or in interviews, and they brought their experiences together in a capstone seminar, where they composed an essay that drew the themes of their study together and reflected on what had been learned.[29] The student-centered structure of the program drew faculty from several areas, heretofore organized separately, into closer collaboration. In combination they provided students with the perspectives of several disciplines – economics, geography, history, anthropology, psychology, and sociology – and opened bridges to disciplinary departments in the LSA, enabling students to draw on the wider resources of the College in the areas of their interest and thus to compensate for the thinner menu of offerings that the smaller college could provide. In an assessment of the program in 1993, the Liaison Committee (a successor to the Joint Board) used the

[27] RC Collection Box 19 "MacKenzie High School/Residential College Joint Projects." Six RC faculty became involved in this collaboration with Detroit high school teachers.

[28] These, sometimes book-length monographs, are in RC Collection, Box 4 and 5 and include such titles as: "Women, Hard Drugs, and Natural Highs", "The Political Economy of the University of Michigan", "Social and Political Organization in two Ann Arbor Communities," "Appalachian Images of Migration and Place in the Hills and in Detroit", "The Transformation of Michigan Politics in the 1940s", "Political Activism: a Quantitative and Qualitative Study of Two Neighborhoods and Two Dozen Activists in Southeast Michigan," and "Enrollment and Retention of Black Students: Four Case Studies". Material on the FIPSE grant is in Box 4, "Social Science Program" and on the training of students in research and interviewing in Box 20, "Student Faculty Research Community."

[29] Material on the consolidation of the program is in RC Collection, Box 19, "Social Sciences, 1978-1984"

metaphor of grocery shopping: "RC [Social Science] concentrators enter the LSA supermarket having already consulted with local shop owner(s). They move to the shelves with informed purpose, they deliberately visit several aisles, and they select their goods with a clear sense of what it is they have come for."[30]

Also in the late 1970s, a highly successful team-taught course, "Arts and Ideas in the 20th Century" (first offered in 1975), drew several faculty together to organize an interdisciplinary program that placed strong emphasis on combining theory and practice in the study of the arts.[31] As it congealed, the Arts and Ideas major sought to integrate the study of literature, visual arts, music and dance by putting more than one medium or art form into conversation and diachronic analysis. The approach was interdisciplinary, combining the insights of literary study, art history, and the study of film and of dance, and it was comparative, exploring how different art forms respond to one another – how they argue or agree, how they overlap or diverge in form and content. Students were expected to take a number of "foundational" courses, taught in the RC, treating historical perspectives and issues of modernity; here they learned the skills of close reading and visual analysis and were exposed to a variety of theoretical approaches to the arts. These courses – again in the imagery of the same Liaison Committee report – formed the hub of a wheel whose spokes reached out to further study in LSA disciplinary departments where individual student interests could be developed; again the resources of the larger College were incorporated into a singular curricular initiative in the RC both to enrich it and enable it to cohere. The major was capped by a number of individualized tracks that students could pursue according to individual interests. In consultation with faculty, they chose two areas of specialization between which linkages and comparisons could be explored in both academic study and engaged practice. Unlike the new major in Social Science, the faculty in Arts and Ideas used established visual and performing arts courses in the RC, but without trying to absorb them under a single arts and humanities umbrella, since many of these creative arts courses also served the Arts Practicum and other RC majors (Drama and Creative Writing) which had distinct agendas of their own.

John Mersereau, who after chairing the 1977 review became RC Director, championed these developments. "Since the early days of the college, when the curriculum was highly variable and experimental," he wrote in 1982, "we have moved to a more structured curriculum [with] well-defined concentration programs."[32] The faculty full-time-equivalent (FTE) devoted to each of these majors remained small, and the RC continued to rely on borrowings or contributions of faculty from LSA departments to staff them. But precisely because of the RC's limited instructional resources, all its majors also relied on having their students take courses in relevant LSA programs and counted these as part of RC majors. LSA students also had access to virtually all upper level offerings in the RC, although access to RC majors for LSA students only came later and only a few LSA departments used RC courses as cognates to a disciplinary major.

[30] RC Collection, Box 4, "Report of the RC/LSA Liaison Committee," April 17, 1993.
[31] At its meeting on February 25, 1977 the Executive Committee discussed a document entitled "The Restoration of the Humanities" which outlined the new major. RC Collection, Box 26, "Minutes of the Executive Committee." See also Box 25, "Arts and Ideas Concentration", especially a Memo "Arts and Humanities Concept," October 21, 1977.
[32] Letter to High School Counselors, 1982, RC Collection, Box 6, "Admissions and Recruitment"

Whether these new curricular configurations preserved the educational coherence that the planners had invested in the core would always be debated. Whether the RC needed concentrations to remain viable was, in the minds of some, a continuing question. But practically speaking, building upper-level interdisciplinary majors on the foundation of the first-and-second year core sustained the RC as a four-year college, one of its founding principles. Unlike the first-year bridge programs developed with University Housing in the 1990s or the LSA disciplinary departments which typically met their undergraduates in mid-career when they declared a major, the RC was able, without requiring it, to give its students a liberal arts pathway through the larger University across their entire four years. Concentrations also gave full-time faculty as well as joint appointments sustainable intellectual anchors in the curriculum which helped the RC to experiment with content but also enabled it to staff the core first year seminars, the language readings courses, and the creative arts offerings that underwrote the culture of the living-learning community. Both Marc Ross and John Mersereau as RC directors saw themselves as implementing the recommendation of the Murphey Report, to build a few well-conceived upper-level majors. They both spoke of the RC as "a high-quality alternative" offering LSA faculty "real opportunities for continuing interdisciplinary and interdivisional teaching at the undergraduate level,"[33] and both regarded the interdisciplinary content of the RC majors as distinct from LSA and a valuable option for students. It was Mersereau's view that "current RC degree requirements are more demanding, more coherent and more firmly based on clearly stated educational principles than are LSA's."[34] Moreover, in developing these programs and courses, the RC faculty learned to articulate an approach to liberal arts pedagogy that was more about practices and stances than about content and outcomes. This fostered "a kind of strategic awareness that makes students conscious of options and possibilities and alive to their capacity as doers and actors."[35] In this, they moved away from the founding vision toward active principles of engagement in which much learning was in the doing. After RC faculty members met with the LSA Curriculum Committee in 1985 to discuss the thinking behind the RC majors, Associate Dean Jack Meiland professed that "we are quite impressed with the well-thought-out and unified view of liberal education which you expressed"[36]

The process of preserving difference and avoiding duplication, while building an alternative curricular pathway grounded in interdisciplinary courses and programs placed very heavy demands on instructors, and this undoubtedly sustained a collegiate esprit de corps. Yet it also fostered a kind of inward turning "territorialism" on the part of RC faculty during the 1980s – a feisty sense of independence fostered in the creation of something different. Some in LSA saw this attitude as isolationist and defensive, even standoffish. It was also the case that by the late 1980s, as the review panel a decade later observed, interdisciplinarity was beginning to spread through certain areas of the undergraduate curriculum of LSA itself. This affected some elements of the RC program. Comparative Literature, for example, was originally part of the core curriculum and surfaced as a possible RC

[33] Letter Ross to Dean Billy Frye, commenting on the Mersereau Review Report, April 11, 1977, RC Collection, Box 3, External Evaluation File.
[34] RC Collection, Box 3, "Programs: Concentrations, 1977-1982"
[35] RC Collection, Box 16, "General Review, 1985-86" Letter to Associate Dean Jack Meiland from RC Faculty, November 27, 1984
[36] RC Collection, Box 16, "General Review of the Residential College, 1985-86," which also includes a number of memos and reports circulated as part of this exchange.

concentration in 1974; but it did not gain sufficient faculty and traction until the early 1980s to become a viable interdisciplinary major. Its success in subsequent years was in part what prompted Comparative Literature in LSA, heretofore a graduate program, to develop an undergraduate major of its own and, despite significant differences in detail, this necessitated the gradual phasing out of this RC major. The principle of "non-duplication" applied, even to successful curricular innovation, and while it made perfect sense, certainly from an LSA point of view, it also contributed to the sense among some RC faculty that they were besieged. Thus while in 1993 the Faculty Liaison Committee was struck by "the relatively firm structural coherence and distinctiveness of the RC concentrations,"[37] the External Review Committee five years later, called upon the RC to reduce its isolation and to "recognize that its greatest instructional strengths complement rather than compete with the disciplinary programs" of LSA.[38] While the main burden of this review's recommendations in 1998 concerned issues of academic staffing – in particular the role of lecturers (to which we shall return) – and the committee missed the extent to which the emerging upper level curriculum in the RC made use of LSA courses, its call for the RC and LSA to move closer together and make better use of one another had significant bearing on the development of the RC curriculum in the decade that followed.

Among faculty, efforts to better integrate the RC curriculum took several forms. Tom Weisskopf, the Director at the turn of the century, convened several retreats and task groups to give sharper focus to the RC mission within LSA. This became a central theme of the strategic plan that the RC faculty prepared in 2001-02.[39] As LSA had introduced undergraduate minors in 1999, it seemed only natural for the RC to extend the interdisciplinary practices of its majors into a number of cross-campus minors, open to all undergraduates. Building combinations of courses around themes long integral to the RC curriculum – in urban studies, crime and justice, the environment, globalization, and the performance of dramatic texts – enabled the RC to make an early contribution to this new campus-wide initiative.

Building minors also gave structural form to recurrent efforts by RC Directors over the years to frame a program of science courses for non-scientists. There had been science offerings in the original core curriculum, both GSI led sections of math and natural science courses and free-standing seminars taught by LSA faculty on a volunteer basis. But the RC always lacked the laboratory facilities to teach basics. In the 1970s, Marc Ross had recruited a number of physicists to teach courses in the RC, bringing distinguished visitors like Eric Ashby and Victor Weisskopf to campus for a semester in the RC. Under John Mersereau, a small cadre of lecturers had assembled a non-concentration program around themes of "science and society" – offering courses on medical health, energy and the environment, gender in science or the politics of scientific change – even an ecology course offered in Spanish. In 2000, thanks to a visiting professor in information technology and the successful recruitment of this individual and his partner, a scholar of nuclear power, the RC Science program renamed itself Science, Technology and Society (STS).[40] Over the next several years, this initiative developed an undergraduate minor based in

[37] Report of April 1993, RC Collection, Box 9, Files of the Liaison Committee
[38] Report of the Residential College External Review Committee, April 1998, RC Collection, Box 8 "External Review."
[39] RC Collection, Box 9, "Long Range Plan;" the working documents and committee files for this plan are all in nine folders in Box 10.
[40] RC Collection, Box 25, Science, Technology and Society Initiative, 1992-1997 and Box 12. STS Initiative, 2000.

the RC, established a graduate certificate program, and through a successful speaker series, assembled a network of faculty affiliates across campus. The focus on graduate training, however, led the two tenured colleagues to move their appointments out of the RC in 2005, and the next year, the retirement or departure of several RC-based lecturers in STS created a perfect storm, sweeping away all but one instructor in science and leaving the undergraduate minor an orphan with an uncertain future. The RC was back to using visitors and one-off contributions to provide science offerings for its students, especially in the First Year Seminar program.

In each case, RC minors were assembled around curricular themes that were not otherwise available in LSA, pulling together courses from numerous departments to form a coherent pathway for students. In several cases, when LSA developed new programs of its own, the RC minors migrated to these units: thus its Environmental Studies minor moved to the new Program in the Environment and its Global Transformations minor became part of an International Relations program at the International Institute. In these cases, the RC pioneered a course of study that was subsequently taken up by others. Several other minors have remained grounded in the upper level curriculum of the RC: Crime and Justice, offered in collaboration with Sociology, is one of the oldest and best enrolled minors on campus; the Urban Studies minor extended a long-standing thread in the RC curriculum going back to the core and, sharing curriculum and faculty with the Urban Planning Department in the School of Architecture, it became the curricular anchor for the new Semester in Detroit program after 2008; and the Drama major developed a joint degree program with the Theater Department of the School of Music, Theater, and Dance that expanded access to its minor. While most minors deployed by LSA departments over the last decade have been, essentially, 'mini-majors' (fewer courses in a single discipline), the RC's history of programming and thinking in interdisciplinary ways has enabled it to play a lead role in identifying and developing undergraduate minors that cross the campus in new ways and along themes, unavailable elsewhere.

One essential component of pedagogy that emerged from the long labor of building interdisciplinary concentrations for undergraduates was the principle of grounding learning in active and direct engagement. Already in 1973, the Educational Policy Committee was looking for "a solid proposal for a community practicum"[41] and a Field Studies office was established, in conjunction with the Urban Studies core course, to facilitate community engagement by its students.[42] This office, with (off-and-on) part-time staff and many student volunteers had to be shut down in the budgetary austerity of the early 1980s[43]. But the principle that would underwrite RC engagement practice in the future was already well-articulated in an assessment report of 1980 which observed "that a proper field study program should not only get students OUT of the quad; it should also bring the problems and practical dilemmas of the larger community INTO the college."[44] The FIPSE research projects in the Social Science program sustained the principles and practice of active student education through direct encounters with surrounding communities, as did an on-going writing-theater collaboration with

[41] EPC minutes, February 13, 1973, RC Collection, Box 6 "Community Government"
[42] RC Collection, Box 26, "Minutes of the Executive Committee", October 21, 1974.
[43] RC Collection, Box 2, "Field Studies Program Report, 1975-76," and Box 8, "Field Studies, 1976-1980"
[44] "Assessment," Fall 1980, in *ibid*.

MacKenzie High School in Detroit. Students and alumni were again calling for a community practicum in the 1990s, and the Director, Tom Weisskopf, proposed an Office of Community-Based Learning to promote on-site research, internships, and community projects, overseen by a faculty committee.

In the absence of institutional frameworks for engaged learning, individual RC programs and faculty invented a series of one-off initiatives that, cumulatively, congealed into a broad college-wide set of opportunities for students. An early collaboration by RC faculty in history and drama with Detroit-area theater companies, under the auspices of the University's Arts of Citizenship program, produced one model for campus-community engagement; it conducted oral histories on various topics of interest to partner-organizations in the city and helped develop live theater from the material collected. Early work with the Mosaic Youth Theater of Detroit, a highly successful troupe of high school students, created an original musical play about the Hastings Street-Black Bottom community which premiered in 2001 and became the template for additional collaborations about Motown and the Central High School student strike of 1966. The Drama program also collaborated with Matrix Theater in Detroit on original plays and workshops with interns, and in association with the School of Social Work built the "Telling It" program which works with at-risk children in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. A number of language programs developed community extension projects in which languages being mastered could also be used: the Spanish Language Internship Program placed students in area agencies where Spanish is used; PALMA trained students to tutor in the local Latino community; the Freedom House project enabled French speaking students to work in Detroit with refugees from Francophone West Africa, and so forth.

RC minors also generated off-shoots and out-riggers in the community. The Urban Studies minor was the seedbed that produced the new Semester in Detroit program, open to all undergraduates, which offers courses combining public history, creative writing, and urban planning to students who live and work in the city for a full semester's credit. The Crime and Justice minor has developed an alliance with the long-running Prisoner Creative Arts Program, now residing in East Quad, to help implement its requirement for direct encounters with the worlds of criminal justice, especially prisons. And recently, the RC coordinated with the Department of African and Afroamerican Studies in a successful joint proposal (together with Sociology, Social Work, and Urban Planning) for a University "cluster hire" in urban studies that has brought to campus four scholars of different disciplines and intellectual interests, all of whom focus their research on South East Michigan and Detroit. This has now become part of a broad cross-campus initiative to develop a "Detroit School" of urban studies – the RC component of which will include the study of the impact of mass incarceration upon urban communities. Again the principles that informed the construction of RC interdisciplinary majors – moving between theory and practice, classroom and real-world experience – has informed new curricular initiatives and efforts to build bridges between the RC and the wider University. For this work, the RC won the Departmental Award for Contributions to the Undergraduate Initiative in 2011 and helped shape the new LSA Office for Community Engaged Academic Learning, which was established in 2012.

In pursuing these initiatives towards greater curricular integration between the RC and the wider campus, certain dogged myths persisted among students. The most intractable of these was the belief that one had to be in the RC to partake of RC courses, programs, and minors. Part of the reason for this conviction was that, while RC courses were open to all, its majors remained closed to non-RC

students throughout this period. Access that was only partial helped sustain a perception of general exclusion. The strategic plan raised the possibility of opening RC majors to non-RC students and after considerable internal discussion and negotiation of details with LSA, RC majors were made available to LSA students beginning in 2012. There has always been a "penumbra" of undergraduates who, while not in – or no longer belonging officially to – the RC, have gravitated to its community culture and cross-disciplinary curriculum. Adding an, as yet unknown number of LSA students to this mix via the RC majors is likely to be mutually enriching. What the addition of LSA students to RC majors will do to the pedagogy and programmatic coherence of the curriculum remains to be seen. But the move is part of an on-going and long-running effort to deepen integration and common purpose between the RC and LSA, even as it highlights the continuing, ever-delicate balancing between the normalizing pressures within LSA and the RC's mandate to be distinctive.

3) Dancing with LSA

In the original plan, the faculty of the new Residential College was supposed to be supported by an endowment raised through a sesquicentennial fund which never materialized. In the meantime, the bulk of teaching in the new Residential College was notionally to be done by ranked LSA faculty on loan from their departments, dropping in for a semester – or a single course – and working in teams. The large lecture courses of the core were thought enough, along with enthusiasm for the new college, to hold this faculty together. Mandating a series of large courses was also critical to fiscal feasibility, as a strong student-to-faculty ratio at the lower level made possible the economies of scale necessary for the smaller more intimate instructional relationships envisioned for the upper level. In the event, the instructional budget to fill out the rest of the curriculum was actually very small. When the RC first opened, with only a freshman class, its staffing needs were minimal and Dean Robertson, the first RC Director, was able to use his extensive network of friends in the LSA to attract volunteers (many of whom had been part of the planning process). Yet no formal mechanism was ever established to insure the transfer of LSA teaching resources to the RC, even though this had been recognized in the planning process as an essential component for enduring success.

As the number of undergraduate students grew and the problems with the core curriculum multiplied, a crisis of academic staffing was not far behind. The RC needed more instructors just as many of the initial professorial cadre decamped in disappointment. And it lacked sufficient budget to buy replacements. At the end of its fourth year of operation, with a full complement of students enrolled, there were 21 ranked faculty from LSA teaching in the RC – six paid (partially) by departments as contributions, and 15 giving their time as overload with little or even no remuneration from the RC.[45] This was not sustainable. Departments inevitably looked to their own needs first, often withdrawing faculty promised to the RC or withholding faculty who wanted to teach in the RC – often at the last minute. The meetings of the RC Executive Committee in the early years were almost entirely concerned with recruiting and replacing faculty; curriculum planning was impossible as the roster of instructors was

[45] RC Collection, Box 26, "Minutes of the Executive Committee", Annual Report, November 1971.

under constant negotiation. "The net result," Robertson wrote early on, "has been a gradual devolvement of teaching and administrative load upon a crew of dedicated faculty without regular LS&A appointments: advanced graduate students, research center appointees who would like to teach, and wives of faculty members excluded from other University teaching appointments." [46] It was with these teaching personnel, often very talented and well-trained, that the RC found its economies in the wake of the core curriculum, relying on a younger, less-well-paid cadre who, under prevailing University rules, were on term-limited appointments and had to be rotated out within two, or at most, six years.[47] As a result, "the one constant in staffing has been perennial change," occasioned both by the uncertain supply from LSA and the impermanent status of low-paid instructors. The dominant atmosphere of RC administration in its first decade was an air of instability, sometimes bordering on chaos, which was largely occasioned by the uncertainties of staffing.[48]

The unravelling of the core curriculum bore home a perhaps obvious lesson: LSA faculty could not simply 'drop in' on courses in the RC without a continuing commitment of some kind to the RC and without a small core of continuing faculty dedicated to the RC in order to cultivate the terrain on which to drop in. "The root of the matter," Robertson wrote, was that "present staffing arrangements hamper the maintenance of an active, full, and continuing undergraduate program." Without mechanisms for a regular movement of regular faculty to the RC and with most instructional staff on short appointments, continually turning over (or looking for other opportunities), curricular fragmentation was inevitable. The RC was living "on borrowed time, begged money, and stolen energy." What it needed, Robertson told the Murphey Review Committee in early 1972, was an "in-house, full time faculty to give continuity to its academic work"[49] The Murphey report agreed. Its recommendation was unequivocal:

> The RC should be given the right to support a certain proportion of its staff with the same degree of autonomy that an LS&A department now has, and it should be able to promote and grant tenure to this proportion as RC faculty only, without any obligation to or on the part of any LS&A department.

The committee suggested that this component make up 25-35% of the RC faculty. The report allowed the RC to hire a few part-time non-academic instructors to staff the visual and performing arts, but it sternly limited the number of pre-doctoral instructors and teaching fellows who were then teaching in the RC. The remaining 60-65% of RC instruction was to be carried by LSA faculty, "on two-or-three-year loan, paid for by a new formula based on a proportional withholding from LSA departmental

[46] James Robertson "A Statement of Policy regarding Faculty in the Residential College," March 1971, RC Collection, Box 9, "RC History/Critique"

[47] At the time, there was a flat two-year limit to teaching assistantships (the RC had 26 in 1971)and other pre-doctoral appointments (the RC employed 12 in 1971) and a six year limit for appointment of lecturers with terminal degrees (the RC had 5 in 1971). These thresholds were exceeded or rapidly closing in when the Murphy Review Committee convened in 1971-72.

[48] RC Collection, Box 16. Memo. Marc Ross "Goals of the RC" prepared in advance of the Mersereau Review, 1976.

[49] Executive Committee Memo on Guidelines for Faculty Hiring and Retention, February 4, 1972. RC Collection, Box 12, Robertson Files.

budgets."[50] Robertson endorsed these conclusions as "sensible, balanced, equitable," but he could not have been unaware of the fact that a tax on departments for RC teaching was precisely the "diversion of funds" which LSA faculty had objected to when approving the creation of the college. It was this proposal that caused the most rancor at the LSA faculty meeting that debated the Murphey Report in the fall of 1972. And not surprisingly, Robertson found that LSA Dean Frank Rhodes approached the matter of funding with "an urbane tepidity."[51] While the report was accepted in the main, the funding mechanism was never implemented. The RC was not to compete with LSA departments for resources; how it was to be funded was a question left hanging.[52]

The recommendations of the Murphey Report were turned over to the new RC-LSA Joint Board, which took the question of faculty staffing as its central mandate.[53] Its chair, Harold Shapiro, clearly recognized that establishing some stability of RC staffing was essential to a stable curriculum and, in particular, to the consolidation of upper level concentrations, another recommendation of the Murphey Report. The Joint Board addressed the problem from several angles. On the one hand, it moved to phase out the large number of teaching assistants (perhaps 1/3 of the instructional staff in 1972) who had reached (or surpassed) their two-year limit; at the same time, it moved to regularize the appointment of six-or-seven so-called "incumbent faculty of value to the RC,"[54] who were already teaching full-time in the RC but without continuing LSA appointments, and whose scholarly accomplishments and contributions to the college were such as to merit consideration for tenure. In a long and complicated series of negotiations, in which the Board felt "free to invent new titles and combinations of titles" and the LSA Executive Committee ("which does not share our sense of crisis in personnel matters") facilitated conversations with LSA departments, three faculty members were granted tenure but with full-time appointments in the RC. In negotiation on the other cases, the Board crafted a process whereby four younger RC instructors were put on the tenure track, jointly with a disciplinary department, but with their teaching remaining principally in the RC. This solution provided a rough outline of how joint appointments might be crafted in future, but it did not specify procedures for joint review or promotion, nor did it provide a clear budgetary means of funding such positions. Things were worked out on a case-by-case basis, and the complex negotiations these appointments entailed framed them as grand-fathered or exceptional solutions. The idea of the RC itself might become a tenure home was gradually abridged, amended, and qualified, and the arrangement for full-time tenured appointments in the RC was never repeated.

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[50] Murphy Committee Report, April 1972. RC Collection, Box 12, "RC Review, 1972." The total recommendation for teaching, including teaching fellows, came to 37 FTE.

[51] Letter Robertson to Ellis Wunsch, March 6, 1972. RC Collection, Box 12, Robertson Files.

[52] The Dean appears to have been non-committal in another respect. In Box 25, the Harold Shapiro file, there is a memo from Robertson (November 14, 1972) that includes the guidelines conveyed to him by the Dean of LSA for implementing the Murphy Committee Report. This contains a slight modification of the Murphy recommendations: up to 35% of the RC instructional staff "may serve as full time faculty in the RC," writes the Dean, but these will be term-limited (after "an extended period of service [not specified], it is expected that a faculty member will normally return to active teaching in his L.S.& A. department"). The idea of the RC as a tenure home, which the Murphy report had entertained, was here urbanely avoided.

[53] The Minutes and Papers of the Joint Board are in RC Collections, Box 9. Additional material may be found in Box 24, "Joint Board, 1973-1983" and in the "Harold Shapiro" file, RC Collections, Box 25.

[54] Memo. Shapiro to the Joint Board, February 21, 1973, Minutes and Papers, Box 9.

While a small cadre of full-time faculty in the RC, with tenure or on tenure-track, together with handful of LSA faculty with continuing, but always part-time and often infrequent affiliation with the RC, may have solved the question of leadership for the college, it did not fully staff the curriculum. Three or even seven full-time tenure-track faculty in the RC did not comprise 25-35% of the staff and without the budgetary mechanisms recommended by the Murphey report, there was no hope of finding enough LSA faculty to staff 60-65% of the courses that remained to be covered. In any case, tenured LSA faculty, even in rotation, did not ordinarily volunteer to teach beginning languages, again and again, especially on the intensive program pioneered in the RC. Similarly, the LSA did not have programs in music, dance, theater, or studio arts and had no institutional way to hire or assess creative artists. The RC curriculum required a different kind of instructor. As the number of teaching assistants and pre-doctoral instructors was sharply reduced, it became clear that the, as yet unstable category of what was then called "post-doctoral lecturers" would emerge as a potential middle-ground solution. In some respects, this was inescapable, as the minutes of the Board make clear.[55] Even as the tenure track solution for insuring continuities was being hammered out, Robertson and others on the Board were recorded as "pushing hard for the RC to be able to hire non-tenured full time faculty, given the slow and testy record of getting professional appointments and the shortage of budget."[56]

Indeed while tenured joint faculty took the lead in overall curricular planning during the mid-1970s, much of the daily labor that went into teaching the core (writing, languages, and the arts) and in developing interdisciplinary majors over the ensuing years was done by lecturers with terminal degrees, teaching full-time in the RC on year-to-year appointments, some well-past the six year limit. How to make these lecturer appointments continuing rather than term-limited became a principal concern of the Joint Board from the mid-1970s on. Along with the ancillary guidelines for hiring and review, it devoted much time to contriving a policy of renewable-term contracts for this emerging category of instructor. Because the "lecturer status provides no job security," the Mersereau review found, there was constant turnover, making plans unstable and lowering faculty morale – which, it concluded, "would be greatly bolstered by implementation of the current proposals for career lecturers." The case was made many times – perhaps never more succinctly than in 1985 by then Director Libby Douvan, who wrote Dean Peter Steiner that "some form of tenure in the RC or career lectureships or some combination of the two is essential if the RC is to solve the problem of institutional reproduction." [57] In that same year, the Regents finally approved a three-year renewable contract option for lecturers, and Douvan instantly submitted lists of long-serving RC lecturers for this more formal and slightly less insecure arrangement.[58]

Gradually and incrementally, a second iteration of the Residential College project took shape – a four-year undergraduate academic program, with a core curriculum and a limited number of interdisciplinary concentrations, staffed by a combination of part-time joint appointments and

[55] Especially February 27, 1973, RC Collection, Box 9 "Joint Board" Files.
[56] Minutes of Joint Board meeting, April 3, 1973 in the Harold Shapiro file, RC Collection, Box 25.
[57] The letter to Steiner, dated December 1, 1985 is in RC Collection, Box 16 "General Review of R.C, 1986-87."
[58] Douvan also wrote Associate Dean Meiland – also on December 1 – that "a selectively applied system of tenure in the RC, based on its particular needs and mission, would be very desirable," but she expected the new career lecturer category would supersede that possibility. RC Collection, Box 26, "Minutes of the Executive Committee."

continuing, full-time lecturers on renewable contracts. RC Directors struggled to make this configuration work, persisting in their efforts to attract tenure-track faculty into the mix, but mindful of the fact that the RC's "skeleton budget", as Marc Ross called it, could not support many on a continuing basis. The lack of any stable mechanism for the transfer of teaching resources meant that, necessarily, "much of the staffing [must] be by RC faculty with long-term commitments to the College."[59] By stages, these conditions of continuance reversed the staffing proportions recommended by the Murphey Report; by the 1980s, roughly 35% of the RC faculty were of professorial rank, anchored in LSA departments, and 65% of those teaching full-or-part-time in the RC were lecturers under an evolving series of rubrics – "continuing," "long-term," "career," and "senior." Many of these lecturers were productive scholars, performers, and artists – as well as dedicated teachers – and by the mid-1980s, Mersereau, as Director, was actively defending their access to University research funds and teaching award competitions. In the next decade, Tom Weisskopf – and the RC-LSA Liaison Committee – were lobbying the dean for a more ordered incentive and promotion structure which would allow regular reviews and salary increments for this now established contingent of the University faculty. While it is not often claimed or cited, the continuing combination of the RC's curricular needs and the LSA's inability to devise a settle means to supply teaching resources to the RC played a role, undocumented, even unwanted, in the development of the career category of lecturer on the UM campus.

A price was certainly paid for these developments. Some outside the RC saw it as willful and perverse in its non-conformity, typically without realizing the role that LSA had played in framing these conditions of survival.[60] As a large cadre of lecturers became established in the RC, some in LSA took this as a mark of second-class status or of the lack of rigorous standards, a condescension that rankled RC faculty. Some felt threatened by the severe budget cuts imposed in the recession of 1981-83, and a feeling of being under siege contributed to the outsider's view of the RC's insularity.[61] It is perhaps paradoxical, certainly ironic, that in the mid-1980s, just as coherent interdisciplinary majors were taking definitive shape and gaining the approval of Associate Dean Meiland, and just as a cadre of core lecturers – largely responsible for these curricular developments – were gaining renewable and somewhat more secure contracts, an LSA review of the RC captured a certain rising uneasiness on the part of the parent regarding its child.[62] Calling the RC "the jewel of undergraduate liberal arts education at the University of Michigan" where "one would be hard put to find a more enthusiastic, better spirited, or more interesting group of students at Michigan or anywhere else," the report went on to recommend

[59] Program Evaluation Committee report, February 1977, RC Collection, Box 3, "External Evaluation" file.

[60] As Tom Weisskopf wrote the LSA Dean, "we now have a high percentage of lecturers, and the LSA Executive Committee is perennially unhappy about this, though they have contributed to it by not giving us more tenure-track slots and by asking us to take newly hired faculty's spouses on as lecturers." Letter Weisskopf to Edie Goldenberg, February 15, 1995. RC Collection, Box 8

[61] The RC had to reduce expenditure by $36,000 as mandated by Dean Peter Steiner, but was not shut down as many feared; there were staff cuts in the Drama, Science, and Social Science programs, the Field Studies office was closed, the FIPSE research projects were largely abandoned, and a shift of teaching resources to the First Year Seminar program further weakened upper level programming. This was all discussed at a major meeting of the faculty, November 21, 1982, the complete minutes of which are in RC Collection, Box 26, "Minutes of the Executive Committee."

[62] This review – perhaps the most contentious in the RC's history – is in RC Collection, Box 16, "General Review of the RC, 1986-87" and dated April 15, 1985.

that the total number of lecturers on the RC staff be reduced by half "over the next few years." Exactly how they, or their teaching, were to be replaced was not spelled out. The implication seemed plain, if somewhat gratuitous: here was a fine program taught by the wrong people. RC faculty were quick to respond in a joint letter of rebuttal.[63] "Whatever successes may be claimed for RC teaching, it cannot simply be the effect of intellectually capable and enthusiastic students who just happen to show up in East Quad." Nor was it "the product of LS&A faculty who come over for 'exploration, testing, and refreshment', stimulating as these visits have often been." Rather it was the "rich, heterogeneous mixture of practicing scholars and artists" in the lecturer ranks "who have provided continuity and coherence to programs under less than ideal conditions [and] who have given curricular form to the RC vision of innovative education. The Report itself," they concluded, "recognizes that the RC needs a 'core of faculty primarily and permanently devoted to it.' Who might these people be if the present RC 'core' is virtually invisible?"

Thus were re-created some of the gaps of misunderstanding and limited communication that had once revolved around the crisis of the core curriculum fifteen years before. And by the late 1980s material conditions were reinforcing distance as the pay scales for lecturers, as a group, began to diverge markedly from that of ranked faculty. Whereas lecturer salaries in the 1970s had remained roughly analogous with assistant professors on tenure track, the differentials of income and incentives rapidly expanded in the spate of new hiring by LSA from the late-1980s on. Material inequities were reinforced in 1996 when LSA, in an effort to define and regularize statuses, ruled that lecturers did not do research and that, accordingly, the proportion of an academic appointment on tenure track devoted to scholarly work did not apply to the lecturer category; henceforth the lecturers' teaching load would be three courses per term. Many long-serving lecturers in the RC actually pursued an active agenda of research, performance, and exhibition, and saw this new policy as a measure of both ignorance and disrespect. While their own teaching load was often 'grand-fathered' at 2+2 for the remainder of their careers, the feelings of diminishment and marginalization were widespread. Several RC Lecturers took prominent roles in the successful organization of the Lecturers Employment Organization (LEO) in the next years.

The External Review in 1998 captured the deepening alienation affecting relations between the RC and LSA in forceful terms. Acknowledging that "lecturers have made an absolutely crucial contribution to everything the RC has achieved", it also concluded that this same lecturer cadre posed "an ongoing challenge to efforts that might draw [the two units] closer together," which along with "persistent under-funding" had turned one of the University's "greatest treasures" into an "intractable problem". With plenty of blame to go around, its conclusion was blunt:

> "…the time has surely come to accept reality and acknowledge the special role that lecturers have played in the Residential College. RC's remarkable undergraduate culture and teaching mission could never have been achieved, given the level of resources Michigan has assigned to this unique institution, without the creative input, the leadership, the governance role, the sheer hard work – and love – that lecturers have contributed at least as much as tenure-track

[63] Dated September 30, 1985 in *ibid.*

faculty members. Lamenting this situation is not only beside the point; it is an act of institutional ingratitude that needs to be rectified." [64]

To say that all was fixed thereafter would be an exaggeration. But just as this External Review produced in its aftermath sustained efforts by the RC to bring its curriculum into closer engagement and interaction with LSA, so in matters of staffing and administration some improvements were made in the decade that followed. Administratively, the RC was brought more fully into the ambit of the office of the LSA Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education: the RC Director now reports to this Dean and collaborates in the work of other units in LSA devoted to undergraduate education. In the early 2000s, the RC undertook major steps to regularize its internal process for the review and reappointment of its lecturers, and as contract negotiations between LEO and the University prodded LSA to develop a standard ladder for lecturer appointments and promotions, the RC brought its procedures into sync with the larger College. While lecturers may have come to feel less insecure and less marginal, the inequities of pay and incentives for this category of university labor have remained a serious problem.

In the meantime, the RC did more joint tenure-track hiring than ever before. These appointments came in various guises – none entirely new. Over the years, the RC persuaded several LSA Departments to review long-serving RC lecturers, who were found to have scholarship, hitherto invisible, that merited promotion and tenure. At the same time, a number of LSA faculty, already tenured in a department, moved part of their appointment permanently to the RC, and found a home in its community. The RC was also incorporated into the LSA system of targets for rank faculty which enabled it to propose and conduct national searches, jointly with LSA partners (when both units had resources). The RC made major efforts to see that jointly appointed assistant professors were successfully promoted to tenure, and in recent years, it has been able to hire a number of joint faculty who have come to Michigan with tenure. Joint appointments do not always work out, and the LSA commitment of resources for these appointments remains constrained, but since 2005, the RC has made an average of one tenure-track appointment, jointly with another department, each academic year; its CFFTE target has risen from 6 to 9.76; and the number of tenure-track colleagues on its faculty rose from 14 in 1995 to 16 in 2005 to 21 in 2015.

Lecturers remain a continuing and extremely important part of the RC's instructional mix. The nature of its curriculum and instructional needs require them. LSA has long wanted to move the needle toward more ranked faculty in the RC, and indeed the budgeted FTE for lecturers has been gradually dropping as the tenure-track faculty has grown. This trend is likely to continue, although given the undergraduate focus of the RC and its emphasis on intensive languages and the visual and creative arts, a core cadre of continuing lecturers is inevitable and remains, moreover, pivotal to the egalitarian culture and teaching success of the college. The next iteration of the RC's history will probably take shape around the personnel turn-over that has now begun, as long-serving lecturers –the backbone of the RC core and its majors, as well as its governance – reach retirement. How they will be replaced – in what admixtures and configurations – and how their central roles in the leadership of the RC and the continuity of its programs will be taken up by new colleagues is a current question and looming

[64] RC Collection, Box 8, "External Review", Report of the RC External Review Committee, April 1998.

challenge. And how this new configuration of the RC curriculum and the changing composition of the faculty will affect interactions and shared experiences with students in the living-learning community remains to be seen.

4) **The Living-Learning Experiment**

Putting the learning in the midst of the living was a key feature of the original design of the Residential College. This the planners got right. Locating classrooms, faculty offices, common rooms, studios and performance spaces in the residence hall where students lived, studied, and socialized insured close and continual interaction among students and between students and faculty. It has made the RC an intensely place-based program. Classes across the four year curriculum are all taught in East Quad, students in language and writing classes run across one another multiple times in the day, and the residential character of the learning stitches together the curriculum and makes its diversity visible. In the studios, theater, and performance spaces, students see the creative arts being practiced, and these activities become part of the learning, not merely "extracurricular" asides. Both the classes and the rich culture of the building draw students into East Quad from all over campus, enriching social and educational encounters while sharpening a sense of this place as distinctive. Students who have lived in the residence hall for two years bond with their peers and faculty and find there a home-base from which to engage the University and the wider world. From the earliest newsletters, to the oral history done in the 1980s, to the student assessment of climate done in 2015, it is clear that living and learning together forges a powerful community of friendships and solidarities that has proven to be empowering for one generation of undergraduates after another and has made teaching in the RC both challenging and delightful.

Undergraduates are the nexus of the living-learning community. That has meant that the experience of being in the RC has created RC students – even as these students have created and re-created the RC. Early cohorts were acutely conscious of inventing something new. Daily interactions within the spaces of East Quad shaped new kinds of relationships among students and between students and faculty. From the outset, moreover, members of the RC staff played a key role in fostering a supportive, even intimate environment that helped create a context for debates about curriculum and governance, especially when these became heated and sharp-edged. Razelle Brooks, who served as chief assistant to RC Directors from 1967 to 1986, recalled: "in 1967, I found the pioneer class of students stimulating and provocative, caring and loveable. How could I feel otherwise when many mornings after their showers – bathrobe clad – they marched into my office to say 'good morning' to me and Dean Robertson?"[65] Although many RC students referred to Brooks as a maternal figure, *in loco parentis* was the last thing they wanted, and it did not take long before students were chafing at

[65] "Update from Razelle, Retired RC 'Mom.' Reminiscences: a Small but Affectionate Focus on the RC's Early Years" RC News, 1994, p. 12, in Residential College Publications collection, Printed Newsletters, RC News 1993-1994 Folder, Bentley Historical Library.

University rules that regulated student conduct and social life. Consistent with the RC's invitation to take charge of their own education, students were soon challenging those rules, and they quickly gained a reputation across campus as restless and rebellious. "The East Quad was nothing like the rest of the University in every imaginable way," remembered on member of the class of 1970.[66] Newsletters of the 1970s and 1980s report various outings and camping trips, impromptu games in the courtyards, musical and dramatic performances, lectures and discussions, and late-night meals, open-mic events, and fierce debates in the beloved Half-Way Inn. The 1985 newsletter reported, "East Quad continues to retain its reputation as the dorm where more educational programming goes on than any other dorm on campus."[67]

The idea of learning through living together also entailed giving students an equal voice in college governance. Decisions were shared by students and faculty, not only about social life in the dorm, but also about curriculum (what was taught, how, and by whom). The Representative Assembly which emerged as the legislative council of the RC in the first year of its existence embodied this principle.[68] It also expressed a delicate balance: the RC "always assumed the fundamental equality of faculty and students, balanced by recognition of the fact that in the University power structure there is an inherent distrust of student governments."[69] Dean Robertson remained faithful to the founding principle, even in disagreement; his tolerance for student antics was proverbial, and his respect for student judgment was expansive: "our experience…leads us more and more to question whether a college should be negatively set against its students," he wrote in 1972.[70] Coming into the highly charged political atmosphere of the university campus in the late 1960s and finding that the RC was serious about co-equal practices, students quickly learned to take a lead in policy and in action. Out of the intense, sometimes tense, engagement of faculty and students living together in the learning community, "a startlingly new kind of collegiate institution" took shape, one sharply different from the more traditional hierarchies of LSA.[71] This was a planned experiment in action, and its traces, much modified and amended, have remained operating characteristics of the RC ever since.

In fact, however, the representative principle – like the core curriculum – soon came under strain as student numbers grew to 900 or more. Representation of the many currents and constituencies comingling in East Quad made for an unwieldy number of additional delegates to the deliberative body and disturbed the carefully crafted balance between students and faculty on the "Rep Ass." A second or third generation of students saw cliques and special interests dominating decision-making, and some launched a constitutional reform campaign that, in a general referendum in 1972, replaced the representative body with a "Community Forum" – really a mass meeting of the entire

[66] Alum Notes – John Meyerhoff, RC News, Fall 1995, p. 21, in *ibid*, RC News 1995-1996 Folder.
[67] RC Newsletter (Summer 1985), p. 4, in *ibid*, RC Newsletter, 1985-1989 Folder
[68] Mimeographed minutes of the Representative Assembly can be found in RC Collection, Box 15 (1968-71) and Box 16 (1971-77).
[69] An student memo "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" (undated, but probably from 1972). RC Collection, Box 6, "Community Government" file.
[70] Memo, November 13, 1972, RC Collection, Box 2, Robertson Administration files.
[71] Quoting Ellis Wunsch, from a "Critical Self-examination of the RC", November 1971, RC Collection, Box 12.

community, convened every two or three weeks.[72] This practice of direct democracy lasted only a year (January 1973-January 1974) and became mired in interminable debates over the proper quorum for a forum: "If we are to have a true community government, people must participate," declared one student leader, but getting the new constitution's required 150 to attend meetings every fortnight, proved impossible.[73] While the Forum continued to discuss curriculum, staffing, LSA requirements and educational policy, little decision-making was done. It was during this period that the more formal committee structure of governance recommended by the Murphey Report took definite shape, making decisions on hiring and curriculum with less representative review. The constitution was soon amended again, restoring the Representative Assembly, but with a larger student contingent, making it more a student-run institution, even as faculty found voice through institutionalized committees on which students sat.

Yet the traces of the community forum idea lingered, both in rhetoric and in a constitutional provision for a "binding referendum".[74] It was this provision that led to the notorious vote by the RC community in February 1975 to shut down classes in support of graduate student efforts to organize a union. This was not the first time RC students had voted to cancel classes; they had already done so in support of the Black Action Movement strike in March 1970. But this second time, as RC offices became the strike headquarters for GEO and RC students walked the picket lines, the college was slapped with a forceful reprimand from its parent for usurping the powers of the Regents. Marc Ross was commanded to unilaterally amend the constitution to block the right of any student assembly or town meeting to suspend classes. The students had gone too far, perhaps, although the Joint Board chairman pointed out that many RC classes had been held off-campus and attendance had been approximately 50%, which was the same rate of attendance as in LSA classes during the week of the strike.[75] But "distrust of student government" was now deeply entrenched in administrative lore, and the Representative Assembly began a gradual fade-out, as students lost interest in its dwindling power and its minutes became preoccupied with East Quad activities – funding student groups, organizing film and lecture series, planning parties, etc. – its "binding referendum" confined to "dorm policy (the control of pets, etc.)"[76] The Mersereau report of 1977 observed that the "RC's commitment to representative democracy has led to numerous – often too long – meetings, with many opinions voiced but not focused or meshed," and, with a whiff of relief, it applauded the move towards a committee structure of governance (with student representatives) in place of mass community meetings – and also the apparent lessening of student activism. The "Rep Ass" continued operations into the 1980s, was revived briefly in the 1990s, and then morphed into the current RC Republic which is entirely a student enterprise. That said, the RC administration has remained remarkably responsive to student initiatives and is regarded by students today as generous in its support.

[72] These developments may be followed in RC Collection, Box 21, "Community Government, 1968-1972, "Constitution of 1970-71, Box 6, and "Review of Governance," Box 12.
[73] From an undated, unsigned polemical response to the "Funny Thing" memo mentioned in note 41.
[74] There are sketchy records and minutes of these changes in RC Collection, Box 6, "Community Government" files
[75] Letter Professor Peter Smith to Dean Frye, June 12, 1975, cited by Hathaway, "Between two Worlds," p. 17.
[76] So Marc Ross assured Dean Frye, in a letter dated December 10, 1975, RC Collection, Box 6, "RC Constitution".

RC students were never exceptional. Newcomb's admissions process had initially sought a cross-section of the LSA incoming student body, and the first-come-first-serve policy permitted the self-selection of anyone admitted to the University. Early surveys did reveal that RC students tended to be "venturesome, intellectually motivated, non-conforming, and aesthetically inclined".[77] But while the threshold density of such characteristics in the RC and East Quad may have been unique, these were certainly not attributes missing among LSA students. What was perhaps not factored into the original design was the way that a small, cohesive learning community in residence – even if perfectly reflective of a larger LSA student cohort – would develop egalitarian values, democratic practices, and a collective voice that was distinct from, and at times in tension with, both the rather elitist "scholar-teacher" model of learning entertained by some of the planners and with the imperatives of management, budgets, and tenure review promulgated by LSA and University administrations. These values found expression in a variety of ways over the years, both within the college and on the wider campus.

RC students were frequently, even notoriously active politically. In his self-study of 1971, Ellis Wunsch pointed out that the RC had become "a lightning rod for most of the radical ideas and values current in the University and the nation," though he ventured the opinion that the politicization of East Quad was less closed-minded and prone to posturing, and more about debating and testing opinions among students who were learning to live with those with whom they disagreed. A survey of RC graduates in the mid-1970s[78] found that, along with the admixture of careers in the creative arts and human services that one might expect of RC students after graduation, there was a pronounced shift toward professional careers, especially in law and medicine, which probably reflected the general change in political mood brought on by the end of the Vietnam war and the economic tightening of the job market. But RC students remained politically active and engaged throughout the 'me-generation' of later decades; they were a vocal part of the United Coalition against Racism in the 1980s and lead organizers of the campaign against sweat-shop labor and the University's use of Nike products in the 1990s; they joined demonstrations against war and apartheid and for affirmative action; and they were animators of engagement in surrounding communities during the 2000s. If RC students' activism was part of a spectrum of undergraduate activism across LSA, waxing and waning with the times, the apparent fact that they tended to be more politically attuned, and remained so, relative to the general tenor of the LSA undergraduate population as a whole, may be said to carry traces of the enabling effects of the egalitarian ethos of the RC community and of the RC's invitation to students to take responsibility for their own learning.

What was less visible to outside observers was how actively students were involved in the shaping of majors and academic programming during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Murphey review found that students were articulate in wanting a four-year college, and it recommended the development of concentrations to insure that. The student-centered pedagogy of the RC meant that faculty, in designing interdisciplinary majors, were listening closely to student interests, considering what undergraduates brought to experimental courses, and exploring ways to develop those skills and

[77] Wunsch, "Critical Self-examiniation", November 1971.
[78] Zelda Gamson, Barbara Boyk, Gay Gipson (the latter two, RC students), "Experimental College Grads: Getting Theirs", *Change* September 1977, pp. 48-49.

learning potentials. The fact that the RC long had – and valued – a system of lengthy course evaluations written by students meant that undergraduate assessments of curricular experiments helped shaped the interdisciplinary curriculum that emerged. As decision-making devolved from the governance of the whole to a network of committees and programs, students played active roles in these sub-systems. They were the mainstays of the Field Studies office in the 1970s and of the Student-Faculty Research Community in the early-1980s; the role students played in shaping these research projects greatly impressed the external evaluator: "I have never witnessed this sense of total collaboration before."[79] While the RC Players were always a semi-autonomous student-led play production group, the faculty-led productions in Drama – whether for the semi-professional Brecht Company in the 1980s, or the highly successful Shakespeare in the Arb series in the 2000s – were tailored to student talents, with faculty developing courses in Elizabethan drama, Weimar-era expressionist theater, or *commedia del'arte* in order to enable students to become full-fledged participants in these productions. The main impetus for the creation of the Semester in Detroit program came from students in an RC class[80], and the RC Forums – interest affinity groups on such topics as film, health and wellness, dance, poetry, sustainable agriculture, photography, and urban issues, in which students can participate for credit – were entirely the invention of undergraduates, many of them seeking to extend concerns and themes in their RC majors.

Within the living-learning community, as might be expected, there was always considerable variability, both among individuals and between successive cohorts, in the degree to which students identified with the RC culture or remained committed to the RC as a distinctive entity within LSA and the University. Student publications and surveys in the archives suggest very consistent appreciation for the way a small college within LSA provided community support, manageable horizons, and close ties with peers and professors – findings confirmed by the ADVANCE climate survey of students in 2015. But for many years, the RC grading system – less the written evaluations themselves than the absence of a GPA in the transcript – proved worrisome to some students. The intensive language requirement proved an insurmountable challenge for some students, even as it built strong interpersonal bonds and community commitments among others. This remains a key concern with respect to the retention of under-represented minorities and students from high schools that have prepared them less well for college. There were occasional expressions of concern that RC requirements in general might get in the way of pursuing a pre-professional curriculum. These anxieties, together with the two-year live-in requirement, have been the main reasons some students transfer out of the RC – and it is worth noting that, in consequence, their more critical voices are less likely to be retained in the archival record than those of students who were more fully engaged in the RC program.

Among the committed, activism within the RC community has ebbed and flowed over the years. In the late 1970s, there were calls for a "revitalization" of the RC – for structural reforms to insure greater transparency and better communication – which suggested a certain borrowed nostalgia for the 1960s and perhaps also registered the instabilities of curriculum and faculty that attended the efforts to

[79] Report by Charles Muscatine (UC Berkeley) for the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education, Winter 1977, RC Collection, Box 3, "External Evaluation" file.
[80] See the file "Semester in Detroit, 2008-09 in RC Collections, Box 19

build coherent majors. In the course of the 1980s, the consolidation of programs and majors created subsets of attachment for undergraduates in the RC; students were active in particular programs or in association with faculty in their major or leading a research group. But among students, this kind of engagement may have come at the expense of a sense of the RC as a whole – its overall purpose or its philosophical and pedagogical coherence. In the mid-1990s, there were renewed calls for "community building activities" – mentoring relationships, town meetings, more vehicles for student engagement and empowerment. But it was policy changes affecting the RC in the early 2000s that fired a renewed student activism: first, in 2001-03 the Dean's order to alter the RC's grading system, and then in 2004-05 the decision by University Housing to abolish the Benzinger Library in East Quad. Students not only responded vigorously to both unilateral changes, but in response, they found new ways to articulate the meaning and purpose of their community in the RC.

We have no systematic studies of the RC evaluative grading system and its impact on undergraduate learning, but there is every indication that it remained popular with most students and a source of their satisfaction with an RC education. The initial plan was for smaller seminars, language classes, studio courses, and independent studies to be graded Pass/Fail with written evaluation and the larger lectures of the core to be letter-graded – all becoming part of a student's transcript. As the core unraveled, the written evaluation system spread across much of the RC curriculum, becoming a distinctive feature of its pedagogical practice. Together with the previously mentioned student evaluations of courses, grading by written evaluation fostered a reflective culture of mutual assessment across the community. The system was always experimental, part of a national turn in the late 1960s which eventually fizzled out. Already in 1970, the Undergraduate Dean at Chicago was writing Robertson that "your Residential College has failed to face up to the fact that grades are a convenient shorthand which is pretty widely known," and cannot be expected to change.[81] Concerns that a non-graded transcript would impede RC students' admission to graduate and professional schools did not appear to be borne out by the survey of early graduates in the mid-1970s, nor by a review during the Mersereau administration in the 1980s.[82] Students in the RC generally endorsed the system, as it reduced grade-grubbing and removed competitive pressures from the classroom. Yet some students left the RC because of the absence of grades, and LSA Dean Frye did not "accept the RC pass/fail designation with prose evaluations as 'comparable to grades'" for purposes of LSA requirements.[83] Professional schools often asked RC administrators to compute, from written texts, a GPA for applicants from the RC, and this fired skepticism about the Pass/Fail practice. The Review Committee of 1998 questioned the efficacy of the system, without making a recommendation, but the then Dean of LSA. Shirley Neuman, took its report as the occasion to order its suspension.

RC students and faculty protested and, while the dean was not disposed to discuss her decision, its implementation proved complicated enough to open some space for negotiation.[84] Students played

[81] Letter George Playe to James Robertson, December 29, 1970, RC Collection, Box 3, "Academic Evaluations" file.
[82] RC Collection, Box 16, "Graduate Survey Reports, 1976-1981, and Box 3, "Survey Results of Graduating Class, 1975, 1976, 1980."
[83] Letter, Billy Frye to Marc Ross, October 23, 1975. RC Collection, Box 3. "Ross Administration" file.
[84] This may be followed in the first of several files of the Liaison Committee, RC Collection, Box 9, and in Box 17, "Student Government."

a vocal role in these exchanges, and the RC Republic came into its own as a "voice of the people". They organized town meetings, conducted a survey of student opinions, and formulated suggestions about what to change and how – working "towards a consensus grading system that we (the students) support." The underlying tenor of student involvement was not to block change, but to own it by "controlling the grading system utilized within the RC in the future." They felt the dean had taken the RC evaluative grading system as "a sign of inferiority" without understanding its pedagogical purpose. "The RC is like the ugly red-headed stepchild of LSA…It needs more control over itself."[85] In the end, and with the active involvement of several LSA professors on the Liaison Committee, a few concessions were managed: the practice of entering written evaluations into student transcripts was retained along with the addition of letter grades, and the old Pass/Fail system with evaluation was retained in the intensive languages, where grades were seen to interfere with collaborative effort and mutual assistance. But efforts to have the same exception apply to courses in the visual and performing arts, where similar pedagogical concerns were present, did not succeed. The real issue was probably not grades – for RC P/F courses were "graded by evaluation" – but the absence of a GPA, which the Registrar refused to compute for RC student records, because of the "excessive" number of P/F courses. In so far as the single letter might drive out the many letters of a prose assessment, the educational ethos of the RC had been affected and one element of its distinctive non-conformity had been normalized.

RC students have long exhibited a deep attachment to East Quad itself. Through the years, students, along with faculty and even external reviewers have voiced concern about the physical plant, calling for upgraded facilities, more studio space, better lighting, and adequately equipped classrooms. For some students, the basement, with its labyrinthine pipes and dark hallways, was always creepy, while for others, as they learned to navigate the maze, its quirky turns and dead-ends became a source of nostalgia, even affection. Periodic renovations and fix-ups may have addressed some complaints, but beyond grievances, RC students also demonstrated a real sense of stewardship towards the building where they lived. This was expressed, for example, in 2003 when University Housing began converting residence hall libraries into study centers.[86] The next year, RC students returned from the summer to discover that in their absence, Housing had sold all the CDs and suspended circulation in the Benzinger Library at East Quad. Even the library's venerable name was changed to a Community Learning Center (or CLC). The RC Republic immediately issued an eight-point manifesto calling on students to take responsibility for the library themselves – to organize the circulation of media and books and to maintain the bulletin boards. When Housing refused to make any exceptions to their new CLC model, RC students organized a Benzinger Library Co-operative, held demonstrations and sit-ins, issued public appeals, and, wearing orange armbands, met with Housing officials to seek redress. When Housing refused to parley, the students mobilized against the "machine of literary liquidation", occupied the Benz, and conducted a fund-raiser to replace the CDs that had vanished. The Co-operative got slapped

[85] Quotes are from student flyers and manifestos and a *Michigan Daily* editorial in *ibid.*

[86] There were 12 residence hall libraries on campus, managed by graduate students from the School of Information's Library program, who oversaw the circulation of books, DVDs and CDs, as well as reserve material and did programming in the dorms. In 2002 these librarians affiliated with GEO and participated in collective bargaining in the Winter of 2003. The union contended that Housing's decision to phase out the libraries (and their employees) was in retaliation

with a letter of reprimand for violating Housing's Solicitation Policies: "if your group is found to be in violation with our policies in future, financial penalties will occur, and future access to our student residence halls by your group will be forfeited."[87] The possessives in this last sentence signaled the issue. As a *Daily* article had put it, "The efforts of the Benz Library Co-Operative are indicative of other attempts among East Quad residents to maintain control over their own living space… [A] dorm is a student's home and…no amount of amenities can make up for the feeling of ownership and community that come from being able to exercise control over one's surroundings." [88]

Although a compromise was ultimately worked out, in which the RC took responsibility for staffing the library (still called the Benzinger) with work-study students who supervised circulation and maintained reserve and magazine racks (a solution that continued until the renovation of the building in 2012), the activism of RC students did not abate: a number got involved in LSA student government to sustain communication and coalitions they had established with other undergraduates; the Benzinger action saw the birth of a student-led Book Forum, which became the first of a series of affinity group, called Forums, which students have continued to form as vehicles to organize conversations and relationships in their community; and most recently, the complete renovation of East Quad, which scattered students and classes across central campus for a year and a half, prompted both intense reflection among students about the nature of their community and intentionally organized efforts to sustain solidarities and commitments during the diaspora. Upon returning to a completely new interior space, faculty, students, and staff have had to devise new ways to occupy and own their building – including a move to "take back the RC" by students who proceeded to paint a large dragon on the pristine wall outside a classroom. The level of student engagement in RC community life, as well as their sense of stewardship for East Quad spaces, is currently very high, as the ADVANCE climate survey of 2015 revealed.

5) **Conclusion**

The RC has always been a part of LSA, subject to its whims and dependent on its support. It would never have survived in isolation and it has worked best when it has been aligned with the larger College in a mutually beneficial relationship. But as Ellis Wunsch observed in 1971: "difference must be there." The RC is not like the Michigan Learning Communities (first year programs tied to Housing and Student Affairs); it is a full-fledged academic program, but not like disciplinary departments which principally serve undergraduate majors in their advanced careers at the University. It is a four year program, like Honors, but without the threshold requirements for entry. These are features consistent with the initial vision.

In redevising the founding plan in the 1970s, the RC did not over-program the first years. There are still core requirements – First-year Seminars, intensive languages to proficiency, and the Arts Practicum – but not all students take the same courses to meet them, nor do they taken them in the

[87] Letter from Lee Evilsizer, dated November 7, 2005 in RC Collections, Box 17, "Benzinger Library" file.
[88] "Guerrilla Librarians", dated March 7, 2005 in *ibid.*

same sequence. The multiple options for fulfilling these basic requirements have this in common, however: they demand that students commit to their education and take a proactive stance in shaping it. It is impossible to do the intensive writing and language courses without stepping forward and taking risks, making mistakes and helping one another fix them; it is impossible to fulfill the Arts Practicum without getting hands dirty, putting feet in motion, and presenting the results of trying for others to critique. There is no way to hide. That this is uncomfortable for some students goes without saying, and the intensity of the entry program causes some students to transfer out. So does the requirement that RC students must live in East Quad for two years. Yet this commitment, coupled with the lively cultural and arts scene in the building, has given a place-based framework for the entire program; as successive cohorts of students have occupied and owned the building and the spaces where they study and live, continuities, associations, and friendships are forged that are both enduring bonds and a foundation for engaging the larger University. When in 1977, the Mersereau review committee asked why RC students, with the exception of a couple of first-year halls, preferred to be scattered around the building in which a third of its occupants were not in the RC, the response they got was unanimous: concentrating RC students in special halls would promote cliques, even antagonism; interaction with non-RC students in the building facilitated a broadening of the RC's own culture, encouraged the "occupation" of the entire space by the "RC spirit", and put its activities – its music, plays, poetry readings, and art work – into a general circulation that made the character of East Quad distinctive. If RC students had a reputation for being politically active and academically engaged, East Quad had the profile of an interesting, slightly weird, 'happening' place.

Proactive students who learn to own their education within a community of learners are then encouraged to move out along multiple vectors and trajectories of development over the upper-class years. The call of the 1998 External Review for RC and LSA to move closer together actually missed the existing and dense traffic, back and forth, among students, who care little for disciplinary distinctions or faculty status. RC and LSA students stitch the communities together, especially in the upper-level of their undergraduate careers, crossing boundaries and recombining available elements in a myriad of ways. LSA students take RC courses, minors and majors; RC students do LSA majors and minors; all RC majors require their students to take appropriate LSA courses; its minors are built on such combinations with LSA offerings. A grounding in the core curriculum and the bonds of solidarity framed in East Quad enable students to experiment – with themselves and their potentials as they shape academic careers that make sense to them, whether in the RC or in the LSA or in both. In this respect, the RC does not own its students; it challenges them, interrogates their choices, and then supports them in forging their own agendas wherever these may take them: if 15% of its students major in a foreign language, another 15% major in hard sciences; if a third of its graduates major in an RC concentration, the rest go all over the LSA, sometimes returning to East Quad for an upper division course taught by an RC faculty member long-known to them – but sometimes not. In recent years, RC students have been found to have declared more than 70 different majors and minors across campus. Yet all remain part of the community and many who have moved far afield return for the annual RC graduation exercises to cheer their classmates and celebrate their college. This is how the founding vision has been reconfigured and preserved for nearly fifty years.

The original plan for a highly structured and required curriculum leading to the free-formation of learning under the direction of wise faculty volunteers had its backward looking proponents who were perhaps nostalgic for a remembered college life of yore. But for others in the planning process, the challenges of higher education offered an invitation to experiment which opened new, even radical possibilities for change. James Robertson was wont to say that the most radical alternative education might just turn out to be, also, the most traditional. What that actually means – and how its elements are convened and implemented – will be at the heart of how the liberal arts engage the challenges ahead. How will changing learning strategies among students re-shape curriculum and the delivery of knowledge; how will classical tradition find footing in a digital age; how will social media revamp residential community; how will the renovated spaces of East Quad realign the living-learning experiment; what forms of engaged practice will emerge, with what political or social commitments behind them; how will changes in the larger context of the University – diminished resources, reduced graduate training, more emphasis on undergraduate education – rearrange the terrain the RC occupies on campus; how will a new generation of faculty formulate these challenges and devise responses – not as "the" solution, but as a contribution to the on-going struggle to make education relevant, compelling, collective, and life-long? These questions will condition the next iteration of the Residential College, now an established institution with a simple mission: to enable students to find their voice in whatever idiom or medium and to practice their speech in whatever language – whether in writing or movement, performance or practice, reflection or action, orally or signed – in college and in their lifetime beyond. How this is done, while always changing, remains at the heart of a liberal arts education and the pedagogical practice of the Residential College.

Charles Bright
Michelle McClellan
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