Better Dead Than Coed?

Telling the Story of Coeducation at Goucher College

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"The historian is one who prevents history from becoming merely history" — Pierre Nora
Introduction: Locating Goucher's Story

Walking into Heubeck Hall from Van Meter Highway, visitors to Goucher will inevitably step over the College seal, inscribed on the second floor of the building. The Goucher seal, which was designed in 1910 by President Eugene Noble, Janet Goucher Miller, and Dean Van Meter, presents a perfect introduction to the College’s founding mission and identity. Three white Della Robbia lilies, which represent womanly grace, stand against a blue background beside the Maryland state flag. Above them stands an open bible on a golden background turned to Thessalonians, chapter five, verse 21 and below them are written the Latin words, “Gratia et Veritas,” meaning grace and truth. Taken together, these symbols imply that Goucher College was chartered in the state of Maryland on a religious foundation, seeking to cultivate womanly grace, as represented by the lilies and blue background, and elevation of the mind, as represented by the color gold. Perhaps most important though is the biblical verse cited at the top of the seal. This specific verse of Thessalonians reads, “Test all things. Hold fast to that which is good.”

Throughout the College’s 125 year history, Goucher has lived by this motto and introduced many substantial changes to its mission and identity while holding on to key elements deemed most good. Goucher has grown from a small, Christian women’s seminary in Baltimore City, which graduated just five students in 1892 to a secular, liberal arts college of nearly 1400 students in suburban Towson. Despite these changes, Goucher has retained its mission of offering a hands-on, transformative liberal arts education to quirky and independent minded individuals. Of Goucher’s many changes though, the College’s decision to admit men in 1986 has been possibly the most significant and the least examined. This paper will explore the causes and context of
coeducation at Goucher and outline the major academic and social changes which coeducation has brought about at the College. The decision to admit men, which was implemented at Goucher in the fall of 1987, has been a mixed blessing for the school. Coeducation has succeeded in creating the livelier classroom and social environment which Goucher lacked as a women’s college in the 1970s and 1980s, but it has also introduced an unequal gender dynamic between men and women and distanced Goucher from its history and traditions as a women’s college. Today, Goucher is a dynamic and trendsetting institution but it has retained little connection to its past and continues to struggle with forming a concrete mission and identity today.

The heart of the content for this paper comes from oral history interviews conducted with various community members, including current and former students, professors, coaches, admissions staff and one former president, who lived with and through Goucher’s transition to coeducation. While every interview touches on the subject’s experience of coeducation at Goucher, a range of other topics are also covered, including prior educational background, career goals and aspirations, and most defining memories of Goucher. Taken together, these interviews constitute an educational portrait of each subject and can be used in a wide variety of educational or historical research projects. Audio recordings of these eleven interviews can be found in the Goucher College Archives. In addition to these original interviews, the primary source documents in the Coeducation section of Goucher’s Archives, specifically the meeting minutes and reports from the Trustee Task Force, survey results from Alumnae and Student polls on coeducation, and popular press articles on the effects of coeducation were enormously helpful in writing this paper. I am also indebted to the works of Anna Heubeck Knipp and
Thaddeus P. Thomas, and Frederic O. Musser who wrote the first two official volumes of Goucher College’s history from 1885 to 1985.¹ My hope is that this paper might serve as a starting point from which the third volume of Goucher’s history might be written.

This paper includes five chapters. The first two chapters provide the background and context for understanding the critical issues involved in Goucher’s transition to coeducation. Chapter One explains the history of women’s colleges transitioning to coeducation and provides a review of literature of the major sociological and educational research conducted between the mid-1970s and mid-1990s on the debate between single versus mixed-sex coeducation at the college level. Chapter Two begins by describing Goucher’s early mission and identity, starting with its incorporation as the Women’s College of Baltimore City in 1885 and continues on through the 1960s when enrollment at women’s colleges across the country began to decline. In Chapter Three, Goucher’s own decision to begin admitting men is discussed at length. This chapter outlines both the 1973 and the 1986 votes on coeducation, other measures which Goucher considered to boost enrollment including a possible merger with Johns Hopkins University, evidence on the declining enrollment and popularity of women’s colleges, and the feedback of faculty members, students and alumnae on the possibility of coeducation. Chapters Four and Five, which are based primarily on testimony from oral history interviews and popular press articles, outline the immediate effects which coeducation has had on Goucher’s academic and social environment.

This paper constitutes the most comprehensive research to date on the history of coeducation at Goucher and its immediate effects on the social and academic life of the

College, yet it is not intended to be the definitive, objective analysis on the subject. \(^2\) Such a study, which would be incredibly useful to Goucher as it plans for its future, would require years of extensive, interdisciplinary research conducted by scores of individuals. Rather, this paper is meant to serve as an introduction to that larger study. It both tells the story of coeducation at Goucher while revealing the immediate effects that admitting men has had on the College’s academic and social environment. Above all, this study is intended to spark debate, dialogue and further inquiries into this momentous but often over-looked event in Goucher’s history. Only by examining and discussing coeducation in a public discourse which involves all community members will men and women achieve equality within and outside the classrooms of Goucher College.

This paper relies heavily on testimony provided in oral history interviews, a genre of evidence which is sometimes criticized by more traditional historians for being overly impressionistic and subjective. I chose to incorporate evidence from oral histories simply because there are few other published sources on the topic of coeducation at Goucher. Goucher professors of Psychology, Richard Pringle and Katherine Canada, published two articles on the effects of coeducation on classroom behavior and the 1992 Ms. Goucher pageant. \(^3\) Apart from these articles, historians must turn to the documents in the College Archives, which are an excellent source for dates, official reports and statistics. To understand the actual experience of coeducation, however, the day to day obstacles and triumphs of Goucher’s community members, we must ask them to describe it in their own

\(^2\) See Julie Roy Jeffrey, “Afterword: The Transition to Coeducation,” in Musser’s volume for a published account of Goucher’s decision to admit men.

words. It is true that oral history deals heavily in individuals’ subjective and sometimes flawed recollections and impressions. The terrain of memory can be a tangled thicket. Yet when waded through carefully and checked for facts and inaccuracies, individual memories can yield dazzling insights into past events which the historian can gain from no other source. By virtue of being present at Goucher when it began admitting men, the community members interviewed for this paper represent the world’s leading experts on coeducation at the College. Nobody knows the story better than they do.

To those individuals who believe that oral history constitutes nothing more than the anecdotal stories of unqualified individuals, I would counter that history itself is a form of storytelling, albeit one grounded in the careful analysis of evidence by the historian. True, the evidence obtained from oral histories is often subjective and anecdotal, but as Donald A. Ritchie states in his guide, *Doing Oral History*, “Anecdotal is not synonymous with apocryphal, meaning spurious or unverifiable information.”4 The anecdotes and assertions made by individuals in these interviews were not only cross checked with the testimony of other individuals but also with documents from the Goucher College Archives. The history of coeducation at Goucher would be very dull indeed if it were written merely as a collection of dates from Board decisions, statistics from alumnae surveys, and names of administrators and researchers, all of which are easily obtained from primary source documents. It is the stories, memories, and opinions of individual community members, subjective though they may be, that give life and meaning to the story of coeducation at Goucher. As historians, we must let go of the notion that all evidence must be objective for it to be valid. Historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, citing the seminal work of Edward Carr in *What Is History?*, asserts that while

there is an objective truth about the past, we as historians are not capable of knowing it. Rather than striving for an unobtainable truth, historians must accept the fact that "objectivity, which we are committed to seeking, but which we can never attain, lies at the sum total of all possible subjectivities." This paper, which combines the testimony of many individuals who have lived with and through the transition to coeducation, represents the sum total of many possible subjectivities about Goucher's history. As a student currently enrolled at Goucher, I will never be a completely objective researcher of the institution's policies and history. I chose to attend Goucher over a more highly ranked women's college and, throughout the research process, was forced to confront my own opinions and biases about single-sex education. It is because of these experiences though, not in spite of them, that I felt drawn to the story of coeducation and compelled to research its effects on the social and academic life of Goucher. Coeducation is part of my story as a student at Goucher, and it is the story of every individual interviewed for this project.

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Chapter 1: What's Sex Got To Do With It?

The Coeducation Debate Among Scholars and Women's Colleges

The debate surrounding single versus mixed-sex education at the college level was largely spurred by the declining number of women's colleges in the 1960s and 1970s. At that time, women's colleges in the United States began closing their doors for political and financial reasons. The women's liberation movement and the transition of elite former men's colleges to coeducation gave many women their first chance to enroll at the nation's leading universities and compete with men in the college environment. As more and more female students took advantage of this option, enrollment dropped sharply at women's colleges around the country, leading many to question their single-sex status and others simply to close. Of those women's colleges that chose to admit men in order to remain competitive, Skidmore, Connecticut, Vassar and Manhattanville College served as influential examples in Goucher's own decision to become coeducational in 1986. This chapter will explore the history of women's colleges making the move to coeducation and how the national climate influenced policy making at Goucher. It will also describe the scholarly research that has been conducted in the last thirty-five years on the reported advantages and disadvantages for women at both single-sex and coeducational colleges, and criticisms of the existing research as it relates to this study of Goucher College.

The precipitous decline of women's colleges in the second half of the twentieth century can be attributed to several political and financial factors. Historian and Barnard College professor Rosalind Rosenberg notes that while coeducational colleges have been in existence since Oberlin began admitting women in 1841, the trend towards
coeducation did not begin in earnest until the women’s movement of the 1960s demanded increased access to higher education through coed institutions. Even the elite “bastions of male exclusivity,” Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, reluctantly opened their doors to women and began siphoning off the intelligent, high achieving students who previously could only attend women’s colleges.⁶

Former Goucher College President Rhoda Dorsey remembers the impact that the move to coeducation by former men’s colleges had on Goucher’s applicant pool.

_There were other, major big forces at work, and one of the big forces at work of course was the fact that the male colleges were going coed and that in the eyes of most of the women who would have wanted to go to women’s colleges, the coed option seemed preferable. Now, if that’s the reason, you have to look underneath it and say, “Why is that? What happened at this time?” because it’s a very complex situation. You’re at the time here in the 1970s too when feminism was a very strong force and was making a positive impact in many areas of American life. In my first years, we bet on feminism, and tried to push the fact of being a woman’s college. It didn’t cut it! . . . The minute the big men’s colleges, the establishment colleges, go coed, a lot of women who would automatically have gone to women’s colleges would go where their father went. Nice to go to Wellesley, better to go to Princeton, or better to go to Yale. . . . That meant that the premier women’s colleges were left with fewer [applicants]. In order to fill their ranks, they dipped, so the second tier of women’s colleges, which is where Goucher had traditionally been, suffered inordinately._⁷

Dorsey’s comments highlight the central crisis facing schools such as Goucher in the aftermath of the 1960s. They could either lower their admissions and curricular standards in order to maintain enrollment, throw in the towel entirely and close their doors, or make a clean break with their historical legacies by choosing to admit male students alongside females.

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By and large, women's colleges chose the latter two options. Of the 233 women's colleges in existence in 1960, only 116 remained open into the 1980s, and only 74 have survived into the twenty-first century. However, Emily Langdon, in her study of women's colleges, notes that those single-sex schools which were able to remain open often emerged from this era of struggle with an even stronger sense of mission and purpose, while those that switched to coeducation "quickly reverted to traditional gender roles and male-dominated cultures despite their heritage as women-oriented institutions."

Education researchers Mikyong Kim and Rodolfo Alvarez are quick to note that popular opinion among female students at this time was hardly informed by empirical research or evidence suggesting that coeducational colleges were superior to or more effective than women's colleges. Rather, the spirit of the 1960s women's movement simply maintained that women could and should compete alongside men in academic and leadership positions. According to Elise Seraydarian, who applied to work in Goucher's Admissions Office in the mid-1980s, even top level administrators such as President Rhoda Dorsey felt less than optimistic about the survival of women's colleges. She recalls speaking with Dorsey in her job interview about her professional goals and their likelihood of occurring.

At one point she said, "Where do you see yourself in five to ten years?" and I said, "Well, don't laugh, but my ultimate goal is to be the president of a women's college." . . . By the time I'm fifty I want to be president of a women's college. She said, "Yeah. Good luck finding one by the time you're fifty." And I cracked up, and then she cracked up, and I could relax and just continue with the interview.  

The fact that Dorsey, a women’s college graduate and long time supporter of women’s colleges herself, would reply in such a cynical manner speaks volumes about the shaky situation of single sex colleges during the era following the 1960s.

The decision of many former women’s colleges to abandon single-sex education generated considerable debate among sociological and educational scholars. As many single-sex institutions have been forced to close their doors, the debate over single versus mixed sex higher education has continued in journals devoted to educational research. Coeducation may have won the battle for supremacy in the college classroom, yet the war still rages among scholarly sources. No matter where researchers fall in the debate over single versus mixed sex education, there can be little dispute over the impressive professional and academic track record of graduates from women’s colleges over the last fifty years. Education researcher Elizabeth M. Tidball, a leading proponent of women’s colleges, has published numerous articles from the 1970s to the present on how single sex education leads to higher achievements for women following graduation. Tidball became well known for her 1973 study linking graduates of women’s colleges with increased listing in elite professional registries such as *Who’s Who of American Women*. Overall, her study found that women’s college graduates were two to three times more likely than female graduates of coeducational colleges to be listed in national career achievement registries.\(^\text{11}\)

Defending her findings against criticism, Tidball explains how she carefully disaggregated results by female graduates’ social background, personal qualities, degree, and area of study to demonstrate that there was no difference “between the two collegiate

\(^{11}\) Elizabeth M. Tidball, *Taking Women Seriously* (Phoenix, 1999), 34.
groups of achievers as people: an achiever is an achiever is an achiever.”12 In other words, achievers did not differ significantly from non-achievers with respect to important demographic factors, such as socio-economic background. Women’s colleges simply produced more high achievers. Sociology professor Cornelius Riordan challenged Tidball’s findings by stating that even in his own studies on the success of women’s colleges, “students who attended single-gender colleges had higher initial cognitive ability and came from homes of higher socio-economic status than did students who attended mixed-gender schools.”13 These cognitive and socio-economic differences may simply be a function of the fact that single-sex colleges are private, and private institutions attract more affluent applicants. Regardless of whether the success of women’s college graduates rests on their superior academic experience or prior educational advantages, a significant body of research from the last thirty-five years attests to the fact that women tend to earn more, pursue more graduate degrees, and hold higher positions in professional fields when they graduate from women’s colleges.

Why do women’s colleges boast such an impressive degree of post-graduation success? Tidball’s thesis argues that women’s colleges offer students a variety of academic and leadership opportunities unique to single-sex institutions. Researchers such as Emily Langdon, Leslie Miller-Bernal, Fred A. Mael, and Mikyong Kim and Rodolfo Alvarez attribute the success of women’s colleges to four specific ingredients, namely strong female role models and mentors, considerable leadership opportunities, encouragement to pursue typically “sex-typed” subjects such as math and science, and a

12 Ibid., 35.
supportive non-competitive environment that puts women’s education at the center of its mission.\textsuperscript{14}

As long as women in our society earn less, pursue fewer graduate degrees, and continue to be valued primarily in terms of their attractiveness to men, having strong female role models during the college years remains essential to closing the professional and academic gender gap. Women’s colleges offer numerous role models to female students by typically hiring more female faculty members than coeducational colleges, and electing far more female presidents and upper level administrators. Langdon argues in her retrospective look at “Women’s Colleges Then and Now,” that having professional female role models in college is key to teaching young women to take themselves seriously as scholars.\textsuperscript{15} Similarly, Kim and Alvarez report in their study on the unanticipated consequences of “Women-Only Colleges,” that strong mentoring relationships contribute to the fact that women at single sex colleges score higher on rates of growth over the course of four years in academic ability and social self-confidence than women at coed colleges.\textsuperscript{16} As an example of how even the most basic mentoring or encouragement can impact students’ success post graduation, Goucher History professor Julie Roy Jeffrey, recalls a particularly rewarding experience with a student during Goucher’s single-sex years.

\textit{A student came back after years and years away, and she visited me in my office and said, “Do you remember me?” I didn’t at first and she said,}


\textsuperscript{15} Langdon, 17.

\textsuperscript{16} Kim and Alvarez, 649.
“Well, I decided to take your class pass/fail, and you handed back a paper, and you wrote on it, ‘Why ever are you taking this class pass/fail? You’re doing a fantastic job,’” and she said that was the comment that encouraged her to go on to graduate school in History. When she described it to me I could just vaguely remember that I had written that for a student, and you know most times you teach, and if it was successful you never know. ‘Cause students go away and don’t come back, and you never know anything you said that might have touched them, but that was just such a great thing to think that something that was really a toss off for me, “How come you’re taking this pass/fail? You’re a really good student,” made a difference in her life.”

While anecdotes such as Jeffrey’s are certainly not unique to women’s colleges, Goucher’s low teacher to student ratio and high number of female faculty members during its single-sex years made exchanges such as this possible, and most likely frequent.

For women to become achievers after graduation, leadership must not only be modeled through faculty and administrative mentors, but also learned through experience. Because women are rarely socialized from a young age to be leaders in the same way as men, leadership development for women takes practice, and women’s colleges offer the perfect forum for rehearsal, according to Langdon, especially in typically male-dominated positions such as president of student government or editor of the student newspaper. Critics of single-sex education make the claim that women limit their prospects in the real world if they have only learned to be leaders of other women. However, Langdon counters this argument by stating that “experimenting with leadership roles and skills in same-sex groups allowed …[women] to be successful in leadership endeavors in mixed-sex groups and that working in both kinds of groups allowed them to

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17 Interview with Julie Roy Jeffrey, 8 Dec. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 52:47.
18 Langdon, 18.
better understand gender-related differences in leadership."¹⁹ Adding to these benefits, Miller-Bernal finds that in addition to gaining valuable leadership experience, women who hold office in college clubs and organizations tend to report higher levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Leadership then, becomes "an important mechanism whereby women students learn to value themselves."²⁰

In addition to leadership, students at women's colleges tend to receive more support and encouragement in the hard sciences and other typically male-dominated, or "sex-typed," fields than students attending coeducational institutions. However, some women's colleges, such as Seton Hill and Saint Mary's College have recognized that women in the sciences must be cultivated from an even younger age and have started mentoring programs for middle and high school girls in an effort to build the next generation of female scientists before they even reach college.²¹ Strangely, few studies on the benefits of single-sex math and science classes for women have been completed in the United States, but Mael cites a variety of studies from countries such as Australia, England and Thailand which suggest that women score higher in sex-typed fields and have more positive attitudes towards the subject when men are removed from the equation.²²

Above all, researchers note that the supportive, woman-affirming environment of women's colleges plays an enormous role in their success at graduating high achieving women. This supportive environment may include anything from employing feminist pedagogies in the classroom wherein power is shared between teacher and student,

¹⁹ Ibid., 19.
²⁰ Miller-Bernal, 46.
²¹ Langdon, 22.
²² Mael, 108.
funding women’s resource centers on campus, offering women’s studies courses, and
generally making women’s education a valued and integral part of the school’s mission.
The support students receive from professors, mentors, and administrators at women’s
colleges is reflected in their higher levels of class participation. Women at women’s
colleges are given the freedom to be talkative and assertive in class discussions and are
rewarded by professors with greater attention outside of class.

In a 1992 compilation of 1,331 studies of girls at all levels of schooling, the
American Association of University Women found that when women compete with men
for attention in coed classrooms, they tend to lose. Women in single sex classes were able
to circumvent many of the problems associated with classroom inequality while receiving
much needed attention in and outside class from professors. Some examples of how
teachers can help female students avoid the pitfalls of low classroom participation are to
encourage a cooperative rather than competitive classroom environment and emphasize
the occupational benefits of abstract course material, such as math.23 On the issue of
classroom participation, Kim and Alvarez quote Alexander Astin’s book *Four Critical
Years*, which states that “women are much more likely to be verbally aggressive … if
they are not in the presence of men: Men seem to deter women’s assertiveness during the
undergraduate years.”24

Declining enrollments in the 1960s led a number of women’s college to look into
a move to coeducation. Several studies, including one described below, conducted in
1986 for Goucher by Ethel Viti include ringing endorsements of coeducation. Yet other
scholars in the 1980s and 1990s, some from within Goucher’s own ranks, have

23 Mael, 113.
24 Astin qtd. in Kim and Alvarez, 644.
challenged the reported benefits of coeducation and devoted themselves to chronicling
the institutional, academic, and interpersonal challenges experienced by women at mixed-
sex colleges. Using a broad sample of data from a variety of institutions, gender and
education researchers Roberta Hall and Bernice Sandler’s 1982 study for the Project on
the Status and Education of Women describes how female students are treated differently
by both male professors and peers, and how this “chilly” classroom climate limits the
intellectual growth of all students. In a similar, but far narrower study conducted between
1987 and 1991, Goucher Professors Katherine Canada and Richard Pringle observed 125
classrooms and recorded the number and type of interactions between teachers and
students in both mixed-sex and single-sex classrooms. These two studies are integral to
the study of coeducation at Goucher because they demonstrate how classroom behavior is
quantitatively and qualitatively different when men and women are asked to share the
classroom.

Both studies by Hall and Sandler and Canada and Pringle present a portrait of
classroom behavior in which prescribed gender roles for men and women are ingrained
from an early age. Pringle and Canada describe how even in elementary school, males are
socialized to be “agentic” in the classroom, exhibiting a more forceful and talkative
leadership role, while females are taught to be “communal,” the listening, care-giving,
and advice-taking followers. When men and women attempt to reverse their learning
styles, Hall and Sandler state, their peers and professors generally view such behavior as
an aberration worthy of ridicule. For example, a woman who is vocal and assertive with
her opinions might be labeled by her peers as overly ambitious or unfeminine, while a

25 Katherine Canada and Richard Pringle, “The Role of Gender in College Classroom
JSTOR (18 Oct. 2009), 165.
man who sits back and lets others interrupt him is too passive, a sissy.  
This unequal gender dynamic undermines the intellectual development and freedom of expression of not only women but also men. To be relegated respectively to the roles of performer and audience member at an early age, men and women are handicapped in any attempt to work together as equals before they even reach the college classroom.

The behavior produced through the enforcement of these classroom gender roles is evident in everything from when professors and students initiate interactions with each other, to how male and female students speak, to what kind of questions professors ask students. Canada and Pringle found that both female students and professors behave differently when men are introduced into formerly all female classrooms. Female students who had previously been the most talkative in their single-sex classrooms, spoke less in their coed classes and initiated fewer interactions with their professors. Overall, Pringle and Canada concluded that the introduction of male students into formerly single-sex classrooms creates a consciousness of gender and an unequal gender dynamic between professor and student where none existed before.

Perhaps as a result of this unequal gender dynamic, Hall and Sandler found that women in coed classrooms were less likely to speak and more likely to be interrupted by professors and male peers. Further, when actually given the chance to voice their opinions, female students tended to be hesitant, overly polite, making frequent use of qualifiers such as “maybe,” and a questioning intonation denoting lack of self confidence.


\[27\] Canada and Pringle, 177.

\[28\] Ibid., 180.
in their comments. Men on the other hand, were found to use a more impersonal, and assertive style, always ready to defend their position with confidence. These disparate styles of speaking may, in turn, affect what sort of questions professors think male and female students capable of answering. In addition to observing that professors tended to give men more time to answer questions than women, Hall and Sandler noted that professors asked women more factual or “lower order” questions, while directing more analytical or “higher order” questions at men. Overall, Canada and Pringle and Hall and Sandler’s research must be approached with caution. Neither study provides evidence of controlling for academic ability or demographic differences in its participants as Tidball did in her seminal 1973 work. Additionally, both studies are based on information more than fifteen years old. While the age old problems of sexism and discrimination have not disappeared, Goucher’s campus has seen significant changes since the time when Canada and Pringle conducted their study.

Outside of the classroom, coeducational colleges have been accused of limiting women’s social development by propagating what Anthropology and Education professors Dorothy C. Holland and Margaret A. Eisenhart refer to in their 1990 book as a culture of romance. In Educated in Romance, their study of romantic and sexual relationships between men and women in college, Holland and Eisenhart argue that coeducational colleges reproduce society’s hierarchical structure of gender in which women grant physical intimacy to men, and men bestow either good or bad treatment depending on how attractive they find their partner. Students at coeducational colleges, in Holland and Eisenhart’s view, are enormously preoccupied with finding romantic

29 Sandler and Hall, 11.
30 Ibid., 5.
31 Dorothy C. Holland and Margaret A. Eisenhart. Educated in Romance (Chicago, 1990), 96.
partners, and by extension, maintaining their own attractiveness. In this view, relationships between women merely serve as a support for women’s pursuit of men thus making it difficult for women to take either their coursework or their female friendships very seriously.32 While the culture of romance described in Holland and Eisenhart’s book may be somewhat generalized and hetero-normative, it does give credence to the theory that coeducational campuses recreate our society’s traditional gender roles rather than challenging students to redefine them.

Despite the considerable body of recent research touting the academic and leadership advantages of women’s colleges, not everyone is sold on the benefits of single-sex education, namely the young women meant to apply to them. For the past four decades, women’s colleges in the U.S. have suffered declining enrollment, stagnant social life, and in Goucher’s case, the threat of closure. Langdon’s article speaks to the issue of disappointing social life at women’s colleges, stating that even when students acknowledged the advantages of attending an institution which valued their growth as scholars, they still bemoaned the lack of campus parties and social events. Sounding much like a concerned parent, Langdon argues that the lack of social life at women’s colleges, which prevents many alcohol-related problems such as binge drinking and drunk driving, is in fact beneficial to providing a “safer, healthier,” environment for young women.33 She fails to note that such social activities, which adults deem dangerous, are considered experimental, exciting, and even expected by the average college applicant. Many graduates of Goucher College, writing letters in support of coeducation in 1986, complained that without platonic male friendships during their

32 Ibid., 109.
33 Langdon, 15.
undergraduate years, they had difficulty seeing men as anything other than professors or boyfriends.\textsuperscript{34}

In the decades following the 1960s, Goucher faced many of the same existential crises as other women’s colleges: stagnant social life, lower enrollment, and declining quality of applicants. The College looked to four other former women’s colleges, all small, liberal arts schools, for guidance in navigating the rocky terrain of coeducation. These colleges, which included Skidmore, Connecticut, Vassar and Manhattanville, would serve as examples for what might lie ahead should Goucher approve coeducation.

In April 1986, Goucher dispatched Ethel Viti, assistant to President Rhoda Dorsey, on a fact finding mission.

Like other women’s colleges of the 1960s and 1970s, the four schools described in the Viti Report faced mounting challenges to enrollment as increasing numbers of women chose to attend newly coeducational colleges. In an effort to stem the tide against coeducation, women’s colleges attempted a number of tactics. Between 1967 and 1969, Vassar College lobbied strongly to become the coordinate college of Yale University in nearby New Haven, but failed in the face of mass protest from its own alumnae.\textsuperscript{35} In other collegiate alliances, however, such as the one between Radcliffe and Harvard in 1963, merging a women’s college with a larger all male institution proved successful for at least several decades. Before opening its doors to men as an officially coed institution in the fall of 1971, Skidmore College had attempted to increase enrollment by setting up semester and winter term exchanges with both all male and coeducational colleges.

\textsuperscript{34} “Pro Letters, Spring 1986,” General Series 2 Coeducation, Subseries C, Box 2, Goucher College Archives Baltimore, MD.

\textsuperscript{35} Ethel Viti, “Report on Coeducation at Other Formerly Women’s Colleges, April 5, 1986,” General Series 2: Coeducation, Subseries B: The Decision Box 2, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 20.
During the 1970-1971 school year for example, Skidmore hosted a total of 222 visiting male students. The already established presence of men on campus made Skidmore’s transition to full coeducation relatively smooth compared to other institutions.\(^{36}\)

Once the decision to admit men had been implemented, former women’s colleges faced another set of challenges in their newly coeducational status, namely trying to reach parity of the sexes in admissions numbers. At Manhattanville College, which began admitting men 1969, total enrollment actually fell following the move to coeducation and did not begin to increase until 1977. Like many other former women’s schools, Manhattanville administrators later admitted to having no real plan for recruiting men in its early years as a coeducational school.\(^{37}\) Viti emphasized this problem in her report’s conclusion and argued that without an aggressive and immediate plan for recruiting men in place at its outset, coeducation at Goucher could have no hope for success.\(^{38}\)

Manhattanville’s enrollment woes were only augmented by its nearly simultaneous divorce from its Catholic roots in the order of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in 1971. To alumnae and faculty of Manhattanville, these two major changes in the school’s traditional mission and identity were difficult to stomach.\(^{39}\)

Newly coeducational schools faced the challenge of defining a new identity to reflect their new student populations. To what extent would they assimilate the traditions and legacies which had defined them as women’s colleges into their new identities? Of all the schools Viti examined in 1986, no school made preserving its traditions and identity as much a priority as Vassar College. However, Vassar’s attempt to maintain a

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 6.
\(^{37}\) Ibid., 23.
\(^{38}\) Ibid., 25.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 23.
connection to its history as a women’s college sometimes hindered its mission as a coeducational institution. In a 1984 report from Vassar’s Advisory Group on Coeducation, administrators admitted that while they perceived themselves as a successful and solidly coeducational college, outsiders still thought of Vassar as a women’s college and were unwilling to believe that male students could get a quality education there.\(^{40}\) Acknowledging this weakness, the Advisory Group made a number of recommendations including an intensive public relations campaign targeted at guidance counselors, prospective students and alumnae to promote Vassar’s current identity as a quality institution for women and men.\(^{41}\) The Advisory Group also proposed an overhaul in student life programming that would “encourage in any way it can the development of new traditions that reflect its coeducational status.”\(^{42}\) These two recommendations are particularly interesting because they raise the question of how a college creates its own identity and traditions. This question becomes particularly important after a college experiences a major shift, such as the decision to admit men after over one hundred years of educating only women. The fact that Vassar administrators even chose to examine these questions, however, speaks to their foresight in building an equitable and successful coeducational environment. Overall, the Viti Report offered a ringing endorsement of coeducation and advised Goucher to make the transition as swiftly as possible “with no apologies, no regrets.”\(^{43}\) Her report appears to favor those colleges which, unlike Vassar, focused their attention on creating a plan for the future rather than preserving and remembering their past as a women’s college.


\(^{41}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 6.

\(^{43}\) Viti, 25.
The debate over coeducation among scholars and women’s college administrators provided the context in which Goucher considered its own move to coeducation in the late 1980s. Despite the fact that scholarship on higher education tends to favor women’s colleges for their success rate in graduating women of achievement, many women’s colleges have either closed or transitioned to coeducation due to low enrollment. As more women’s colleges make the transition to coeducation, scholars warn of the male tendency to dominate class discussion and leave women on the margins in terms of participation and teacher interactions. In examining the body of research on coeducation, we should remember that these studies offer only quantitative data and statistics. While they may include the occasional quote from students or professors, they are primarily a study in numbers. This type of research certainly expands our understanding of the academic debate surrounding single versus mixed sex education, but it cannot be expected to tell the whole story of why so many women’s colleges, including Goucher, went coed. In order to understand Goucher’s approach to coeducation in 1986, we must examine how the College defined women’s education at the time of its founding and early years. For this we turn to Goucher’s mission and identity as a women’s college during its first eighty years of existence.
Chapter 2: Goucher’s Mission and Identity, 1885-1970

From the time of its inception in 1885 until the decision to admit men in 1986, Goucher defined its mission in terms of providing women an equal, but separate education from men. While the College’s founders viewed this mission in terms of fostering a sense of domestic responsibility and femininity in their students, Goucher’s students often rejected the traditional gender roles prescribed by society and defined their identity in terms of being outspoken individuals, active leaders and political activists. Although Goucher’s move to coeducation was hailed by many as the most significant decision in the College’s history, this assessment overlooks the fact that Goucher has always been a dynamic and transformative institution which continually redefined its role in its first eighty years. However, prior to the decline in enrollment in the 1970s and 1980s, traditions and celebrations honoring Goucher’s legacy played a greater role in campus life and were observed each year by students, faculty and administrators. Today, certain elements of Goucher’s original mission and identity, such as the focus on community involvement and fostering individualism remain alive, yet many of its early traditions and legacies have fallen by the wayside, leaving the College disconnected from its past. To better understand Goucher’s origins as an institution, let us turn our attention to how Goucher defined its mission and identity during its first 85 years.

Incorporated in 1885 to celebrate the centennial of the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Women’s College of Baltimore City was one of the first institutes of higher education for women located in the southern United States. The Women’s College of Baltimore City, which would change its name to the Women’s College of Baltimore in 1890 and finally Goucher College in 1910, was founded with the
mission of providing a Christian education to qualified young ladies and preparing them for a life of domestic and social service. Dr. John Franklin Goucher, a Methodist minister, overseas missionary, and philanthropist was an integral leader in not only the financial foundation of the college, but also in shaping its founding ideals and values.

As the first Methodist institute of its kind in Maryland, the Women’s College of Baltimore City was intended to mold young women into loyal Christians, compassionate social stewards, and perhaps most importantly, dutiful wives and mothers. Contemporary scholars may find it ironic that the same Women’s College which originally tried to hedge its pupils into the domestic box in 1885 would go on to become a “bastion of feminism,” as one alumna described it, by the end of the twentieth century. Dr. Goucher was a complex man who opposed women’s suffrage and urged women to stay at home but also planted the seed of equal education which would eventually allow women at his College not only to question traditional gender roles, but to abandon them entirely.

During the late nineteenth century, the work of Dr. Goucher and his wife, Mary Fischer Goucher, in founding schools for women and girls around the world was considered revolutionary. Dr. Goucher’s enthusiasm for women’s education extended beyond America’s borders and into Japan, India, China and Korea, where he provided financial

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45 In the History of Goucher College, published in 1938, Dr. Goucher is portrayed by Anna Heubeck Knipp, an alumnae and trustee, and Thaddeus P. Thomas, a Goucher History professor, as a man of nearly mythical greatness. Knipp and Thomas’ effusive praise of Dr. Goucher extends so far as to credit him with heroically rescuing passengers from a sinking boat off the Atlantic coast and evading capture by “hostile Arabs,” in the Sinai desert. Far too much has been written about the life and work of Dr. Goucher to be explored in great detail here. Interested persons should refer to the third chapter of Knipp and Thomas’ volume which, with the exception of its overly sentimental tone, provides excellent background material on the College’s founder and patriarch.

46 Caroline Bauerle Interview.

47 Knipp and Thomas, 91.
support for scores of women-only institutions. Interestingly, Dr. Goucher’s views on the benefits of single-sex education for women, which he described in his oft delivered speech, “The Advisable Differences between the Education of Young Women and That of Young Men,” seem to foreshadow the work of late twentieth century researchers and educators such as Elizabeth M. Tidball, Roberta Hall and Bernice Sandler. In the speech, Dr. Goucher takes an essentialist view of gender, arguing that men and women are essentially defined by inherent and radical differences. He goes on to assert that when men and women are educated together in a coed classroom, they are always treated unequally. To overcome the educational restrictions placed on woman, such as limited access to athletic facilities, Dr. Goucher recommended that the sexes be educated separately. Despite the need for men and women to be educated separately, Dr. Goucher along with his colleague and fellow Methodist minister, John Van Meter, advocated for a curriculum at the women’s college which would be just as rigorous as that taught to men. Few educators during this era felt that women needed or were capable of pursuing the same course work as men, and Goucher and Van Meter’s educational plan for the women’s college was, by comparison, quite radical.

Both financially and ideologically, Goucher College’s early mission was largely shaped by the influence of the Methodist Episcopal Church. While the Church itself did not give money directly to the College, wealthy members of the Church, including John and Mary Fisher Goucher, gave money simply because of the College’s association with the Church. Goucher College’s religious roots in the Methodist Episcopal Church are

48 Ibid., 49.
clearly spelled out by Dr. Goucher in his address to the school in June of 1906. In his speech he describes his original purpose of establishing “a College, Christian in ideal and atmosphere,” where only those faculty members with a “Christian personality, experience and aptness to teach” would be employed, and the student body would be “thoroughly sane, enthusiastic, reverent and Christian,” in character. 50 After a brief dispute with President William Guth in 1922 over the college charter, the Methodist Episcopal Conference retained its right to nominate one third of the members of the College’s Board of Trustees, thus maintaining a considerable degree of influence over the school. Additionally, four of the College’s first seven presidents, John F. Goucher, Eugene Noble, John Van Meter, and William Guth, were ministers in the Methodist Church, only further demonstrating the importance of Christian values to the college’s early mission.

In conjunction with this Christian mission, the Women’s College of Baltimore encouraged its students to contribute to the wider community through missionary work, community service, and charitable donations. Through these activities we can see the beginnings of the hands-on, experiential learning style which Goucher continues to value in its curriculum today. The commitment to helping the disadvantaged is evident in many early college promotional materials and publications. A 1915 admissions pamphlet for Goucher, “Six Reasons Why A Girl of Even Moderate Ability Should Go to College,” lists reason number six as awakening “a sense of responsibility in helping to solve the many problems of human relationships in the world at large.” This impulse towards social service was often considered an extension of women’s natural ability to empathize and nurture. The pamphlet touches on the traditional view of women stating that they

50 Goucher, John Franklin, “The Woman’s College of Baltimore, a Statement, June 5 1906,” Office of the President Record Group 3, Subseries 1.2, Box 3, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 4-5.
“are more naturally sympathetic and easily touched by the suffering and misfortunes of others. The new age beckons the college woman, with her trained mind and sympathetic insight, to aid in the warfare of the spirit against poverty, ignorance and all forms of evil.” In 1896, the second edition of *Donnybrook Fair*, the college yearbook, listed at least four student clubs devoted to the promotion of social welfare, including a chapter of the College Settlement Association, which shows that students were involved in the burgeoning Progressive movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In addition to organizing special religious services, the Goucher College Christian Association, established originally as a branch of the Y.W.C.A. in 1894, organized numerous fundraising efforts throughout the early twentieth century for such diverse charities as the Isabella Thoburn College for women in Lucknow India, which was endowed by the John and Mary Fischer Goucher, the Student Loan Fund of Goucher, and the Delta Cooperative Farm for Share Croppers.

While community service and Christian ideals were important College goals, the real centerpiece of Goucher College’s early mission was to encourage students to contribute to the world after graduation by becoming wives and mothers. Unless the college had scrupulously impressed upon its young charges that domestic responsibility came above all else, it had failed them. Dr. Goucher referred to marriage and motherhood as “the highest function,” “the supreme adjustment,” and exalted the home as the most “important influence … in developing the unit factor of civilization.” In the college’s 1915 promotional pamphlet “Six Reasons,” potential applicants are reminded in reason

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52 Knipp, 495.
53 Ibid., 499.
54 Goucher, 14.
number five that “A college training is a good basis upon which to build the careers of
wifehood and motherhood.” The pamphlet goes on to state that

The intelligent housekeeper must know something of the composition and
purity of foods, of sanitation, of domestic economy, scientific purchasing;
the mother must know how the schools are conducted, whether the
environment in which her children grow up is sanitary, moral and
altogether wholesome. There are many lines of training, many avenues of
opportunity, which the college brings to the attention of future home-
makers, and the college graduate takes up domestic responsibility more
seriously, yet more enthusiastically than the narrowly trained young
woman.55

Although civic involvement played a role in the school’s mission, the Women’s College
did not intend to train its graduates for lives devoted primarily to academia or political
leadership, and indeed, there were very few professional opportunities open to women in
these fields during this era. The heart of the college’s early mission was to return its
students to the same domestic sphere where women had spent most of history, but first to
educate and train them in the spirit of modern rationalism and efficiency. However, by
enforcing rigorous academic standards, hiring female faculty members, and encouraging
civic involvement, the Women’s College actually sowed the seeds of modern feminism.

Harder to define than the college’s early mission and principles, student life and
identity at Goucher have defied simple classification and remain among the most difficult
aspects of Goucher’s history to understand through archival research. Knipp and Thomas’
volume on Goucher’s first fifty years would have us believe that student life at the
college involved a constant flurry of parties, meetings and social activity and portrays
Goucher’s students as veritable social butterflies. Certainly, Goucher’s early students
embodied a strong spirit of social engagement, but more than this, they stood out as

vocal, independently minded and often unconventional young women who defied commonly held attitudes about the role of women in society.

The outspokenness and individualism of Goucher’s early graduates is surprising in light of the college founders’ views on the attributes of the ideal woman. While the college did not go so far as to proclaim that women should be meek and mild, promotional literature from the early twentieth century does ask for applicants who are “gentle and self-controlled,” “reverent towards accepted truths,” and above all, devoted to “the formation of womanly character for womanly ends,” a phrase which we can assume to refer to domestic duties. Yet numerous examples in Goucher’s history prove that Goucher women were often just the opposite of this docile description. Knipp and Thomas describe a particularly volatile debate over women’s suffrage in an 1894 Sociology class in which supporters of suffrage “swooped down on their opponents with an avalanche of arguments,” and “broke into a resounding hiss at ... a mild maiden, who said she coincided with a popular belief that ‘women are guided by sentiment, not reason.’” In response to these anti-suffrage arguments, Knipp and Thomas quote supporters as replying passionately,

What is this sickly sentimentality about sentiment and reason? Women’s sphere is not fixed immutably. A thousand years ago it was wholly different from the sphere of today. Then it was not consistent with woman’s sphere to learn to read and write. A thousand years from now there will be another sphere. The proper sphere of woman is in doing what is right. When you say that women are not fit to vote and that men are, you admit that we are inferior.

The ensuing debate resulted in a tie over suffrage. To cite another example from the Suffrage Movement, during the 1906 meeting of the Woman’s National Suffrage

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56 Ibid., 4.
57 Knipp and Thomas, 90.
convention in Baltimore, students convinced Dr. Van Meter, who was acting as head of
the College in Dr. Goucher's absence, to allow them to act as ushers at the event despite
Dr. Goucher's known opposition to the women's suffrage movement. Dr. Van Meter,
who was no great lover of suffrage himself, explained his actions to his superior.

This will be an important occasion for college women. Bryn Mawr,
Wellesley, Smith, Mount Holyoke will be represented on the program by
prominent members of their respective faculties. The Women's College of
Baltimore should have a place in the program and I have taken the liberty
of selecting a representative group of our students to act as ushers."58

If we take the above examples from the Suffrage Movement as an indication of a
pattern, it is clear that even within the first decade of its existence, Goucher was home to
outspoken young women eager to challenge the status quo of women's place in society.
In addition to being outspoken, Goucher women were known for their unconventional
thinking and tendency to differ from social norms. A report from the Preliminary
Committee of the Towson Campus Building Program in 1938 addressed the quirky side
of Goucher's student identity, stating that, "There is no attempt to force the Goucher
student into a mould, and this is for two reasons: first, there is no mould and second, there
is no force. ... Goucher is Goucher precisely because the whole educational program is
planned in terms of individuality rather than conformity to type."59 Coming from a later
era than this report, Marilyn Warshawsky, class of 1968, recalls outsiders tending to think
of Goucher women as tending to be a little different and a lot more outspoken.

My husband always says that Goucher women always have something
interesting to say, and they're always very vibrant and vivacious. He's
attended a lot of [Goucher] activities, probably has more experience than
most alums of being part of Goucher. I think that is true, that wherever

58 Ibid., 91.
59 "A Vital Move for Goucher College as it Enters its Second Fifty Years, 1938," Preliminary Committee of
the Towson Campus Building Program of Goucher College, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD.
you go, meeting these women, you continue to learn from them and through them.\textsuperscript{60}

As Goucher considered the decision to admit men in the mid-1980s, this reputation for being unconventional, quirky and individualistic was one aspect of student identity that opponents of coeducation feared the college would lose.

Along with outspoken individuality, political activism has been a hallmark of Goucher student identity since the women’s suffrage movement. During the 1960s, students lobbied administration officials for self-scheduled examinations, greater involvement in college decision making, and the end of parietal rules.\textsuperscript{61} Rhoda Dorsey, who made the move from teaching History at Goucher to serving as an administrator during the 1960s, recalls the difficulty of dealing with student protests.

\textit{Things at Goucher were tame compared to what they were at Columbia or Berkeley, but there was stuff here. There were teach-ins, there were sit-ins, there were strikes of various kinds. They protested parietals. [What are parietals?]} In the old days, it meant that the College was viewed in loco parentis, that is, in the place of parents, and so they had all kinds of regulations about what you could and couldn’t do, particularly when you could be in and when you could be out, when men could be around and when they couldn’t be around, what people could do and where they could do it. Students wanted all of that, virtually all of it, eliminated. And there were curricular issues. At that time the curriculum featured comps, General Comprehensive Examinations at the end of four years in your major.\textsuperscript{62}

In addition to objecting to parietal rules, Goucher’s students participated in many of the progressive political causes of the 1960s and 1970s, including opposition to racial segregation, the draft and the Vietnam War.\textsuperscript{63} Marilyn Warshawsky, class of 1968,

\textsuperscript{60} Interview with Marilyn Warshawsky, 15 Dec. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 24:19.
\textsuperscript{61} Musser, 154.
\textsuperscript{63} Musser, 154.
remembers that some members of Goucher’s student body were politically active during her era, but certainly not all of them.

*That’s not to say that students weren’t involved, because they were involved in community service. There were a couple women in the class of ’64, because Baltimore was in many ways still segregated although not officially, but there were some students in the early ’60s who went to sit-ins at certain coffee houses, places downtown. There was a story that the police officers always knew the Goucher students because they came with book bags in case they got arrested so they could study in jail until they got bailed out. [Did you know anyone involved?] No, not personally, a sister of one of my classmates I knew was involved.*

If anything, this political consciousness is something that has grown on Goucher’s campus, not diminished, since Warshawsky’s days as a student at Goucher.

Warshawsky’s comments touch on the issue of racial segregation and the fact that Baltimore was long considered a southern city and Goucher was, during its first sixty-five years, a racially segregated southern women’s college. The possibility of racial integration had been raised at Goucher a decade earlier in the early 1950s during President Otto Kraushaar’s administration. Black students did not earn the right even to apply to, let alone attend, Goucher until 1951 when President Kraushaar raised the issue of racial discrimination before the Board of Trustees. His concern was prompted by a meeting with the mother of a black high school student, herself a well-educated woman and graduate of Radcliffe, who was “understandably indignant,” that the college had not established a clear policy regarding applications from black students. Although that woman’s daughter did not in the end apply for admission, the college did accept a different black student in 1951 after a special vote on racial integration from the Executive Committee of the Board had taken place. In addition to ending racial

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65 Musser, 126.
discrimination at Goucher, the College's quota on the number of Jewish students who could apply was abolished during the administration of President Robertson, who served from 1930 to 1948.\textsuperscript{66}

Another dimension of Goucher's early identity was its devotion to upholding college traditions and fostering a welcoming social environment on campus. The friendly community spirit of Goucher is described in a 1921 pamphlet entitled "The Family Spirit at Goucher," written by Professor Thaddeus P. Thomas, co-author of the first volume of Goucher's history. Thomas addressed concerns that with the growth in enrollment over the last thirty-five years, Goucher had lost its familiar, amicable atmosphere. He dispelled these concerns stating that, "Good fellowship and friendly relations between all those in the college from the highest to the lowest, is a fact in the present even more than in the past."\textsuperscript{67} This family spirit included events where both students and faculty were allowed to throw dignity aside through "ludicrous stunts," and faculty plays where professors entertained students.\textsuperscript{68} Among the most prominent college traditions in Goucher's first fifty years were the Opening Chapel Service, or Convocation as it now called, Thanksgiving Dinner, Sing Song, a class singing competition, Alto Dale Day, when Dr. and Mrs. Goucher invited the senior class to their rural Pikesville home, the Junior-Senior Banquet, now known as Gala, and of course the May Day Festival, an exuberant event filled with rituals and references to Greek, Norse, and English mythology.\textsuperscript{69} Commencement week alone was filled with a myriad of social traditions including a Daisy Chain presented by the sophomore class to the seniors, step singing, in which

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{67} Thaddeus P. Thomas, "The Family Spirit at Goucher, October 6, 1921," \textit{Admissions Series 2 Recruitment Material 1890-1970 Box 1}, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 1.
\textsuperscript{68} Thomas, 2.
\textsuperscript{69} Knipp and Thomas, 528.
seniors sang their final class song while being showered with rose petals, a Lantern Chain in which freshman presented a masked torch parade to seniors, and the Funeral Pyre, at which seniors burned books and other symbols of their most hated classes while chanting a funereal dirge.\textsuperscript{70}

While some of these traditions have merely evolved into new incarnations today, such as with Opening Chapel Service and Junior-Senior Banquet, few of these festivities and rituals survived the college’s rebellious climate of the 1960s and 1970s and the ensuing move to coeducation in 1986. Many feminists in the middle of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century rejected Goucher traditions as too stereotypically feminine, while civil rights activists denounced the College’s policies of racial discrimination. The end of Goucher’s discriminatory or offensive traditions is certainly no reason to mourn, but in rejecting practically all of the College’s early traditions, Goucher has weakened its commitment to its legacy and its past. Today, the College’s most notable tradition is GIG (Get Into Goucher Day), which is itself a recent development dating back only to mid 1980s. While other, more prominent, liberal arts colleges, such as Vassar and Haverford, tout their history and traditions as accomplishments, Goucher tends to bury its past, choosing instead to focus on the future and innovations it has made.

In its first eighty-five years, Goucher underwent major transformations, from a small Christian women’s college in Baltimore city, which graduated just five students in 1892, to a secular liberal arts college located on a wooded campus in Towson. Throughout these changes though, Goucher retained its central commitment to providing a first-rate liberal arts education for women. Though originally intended to train women for a life of domestic Christian responsibility, Goucher’s liberal arts education

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 535.
contributed to the development of generations of independent minded, outspoken women.

The rebellious climate of the 1960s brought many changes to Goucher, including the beginning of racial integration, curriculum reform, the end of parietal rules, and the abandonment of traditional rituals. Within this environment of change, coeducation may be viewed as yet another transformation initiated by the social revolution of the mid-20th century. The move to coeducation in 1986 was one of the final steps away from the traditions and values on which Goucher had been founded in 1885 and left only the College’s commitment to providing a quality liberal arts education as a lasting connection to Goucher’s past.
Chapter 3: Goucher's Decision to Become Coeducational

Of the many changes which Goucher has made in the last 125 years, the decision to admit men in 1986 has been perhaps the most significant and the least well examined in the College's history. This chapter will explore the climate in which coeducation was considered, other options for boosting enrollment which Goucher considered and rejected, the evidence which influenced the Board's final vote, and the opinions of faculty, students, and alumnae on coeducation. Coeducation was considered at Goucher first in 1973 and again in 1986 as a solution to the College's critical decline in enrollment. In the spring of 1986 Goucher chose to preserve its mission as a quality, undergraduate, liberal arts institution by abandoning what had long been one of its highest priorities: the commitment to educating women in a single-sex environment. Administrators at Goucher wanted to preserve this central part of the College's mission for as long as possible and delayed the vote on coeducation until no other viable options for improving enrollment remained. As a result, Goucher's transition to coeducation was conducted in a rushed and nontransparent manner which gave little meaningful consideration to the opinions of community members outside the Board of Trustees.

While the final vote on coeducation at Goucher occurred in May of 1986, this was not the first time in the College's history that the issue had been debated. The Committee on the Future of the College (CFC), formed in 1968 under President Marvin Perry's administration to study Goucher's comprehensive plan and make recommendations for the future, raised the possibility of coeducation for the first time in 1970 when declining enrollment and a $77,000 deficit from the 1968-1969 school year plunged Goucher into
financial crisis. In its 1970 final report published in the winter edition of the *Goucher Alumnae Quarterly*, the CFC laid out the educational, financial, and social arguments in favor of and against coeducation at Goucher. Ultimately, the CFC did not offer a positive recommendation for coeducation at Goucher in 1970, concluding, “We think that many years of sustained effort would be needed to turn Goucher into a coeducational institution and that the chances of success in this kind of endeavor are questionable.” However, the CFC urged Goucher to revisit the question of coeducation in five years time after a more formal assessment of the issue had been made. This assessment, which was undertaken by Goucher’s Executive Committee, not the CFC, occurred sooner than expected and culminated in a vote by the College Assembly in October 1973. The motion in favor of coeducation was defeated by a vote of 61 to 36 with 4 abstentions.

The October 1973 assembly also considered the possibility of either a merger or partnership of greater cooperation with Johns Hopkins University. The possibility of a Goucher-Hopkins alliance had been examined by the Goucher-Johns Hopkins Committee on Increased Cooperation which met over the course of ten meetings between May and July of 1973 and published its final report in August of that year. The report outlined two possible courses of action, the first calling for “extended cooperation” between the two institutions and the second calling for a total merger. Under the first plan, Hopkins and Goucher would synchronize academic calendars and credit systems, create an open course and faculty exchange, and open their libraries, extracurricular activities, gymnasiums,

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72 “What’s In Goucher’s Future?” *Goucher Alumnae Quarterly* Winter 1970 vol. 48 no. 2 General Series 6 Committees Box 4 (CFC), Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 25.
health centers and housing to students of the coordinating institution. Both Hopkins and Goucher would retain their autonomy as separate institutions under this plan and issue separate degrees, forming an alliance somewhat similar to that between Barnard College and Columbia University. The second plan outlined in the Report called for a legal merger of the two institutions, with Goucher becoming a separate division within the Johns Hopkins University system. Because Hopkins had transitioned to coeducation in 1970, Goucher would become coeducational under this plan by default. Goucher’s Committee rejected the merger plan as unworkable for a number of reasons. Hopkins, located in the crowded, urban Homewood neighborhood, was attracted to Goucher’s sprawling, suburban campus for its real estate possibilities, but was not willing to grant Goucher faculty tenure or the opportunity to teach upper level undergraduate classes. Overall, administrators feared that a merger would force Goucher to abandon its identity completely and become subsumed by the large, bureaucratic University system. Ultimately, Goucher’s College Assembly voted in October 1973, by a vote of 59 to 7 with 2 abstentions, in favor of further discussion with Hopkins about a plan for increased cooperation. While some of the recommendations for increased cooperation were implemented, such as forming a rapid shuttle system between the two institutions, the overall plan outlined in the Committee’s Final Report, including synchronized curricular calendars, and shared athletic and health facilities, was never completely enacted.

By the early 1980s, Goucher’s enrollment numbers for incoming freshman had dropped to such frighteningly low levels that the College began once again to examine its mission as a single-sex institution. Goucher’s decline in enrollment mirrored a larger

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74 Ibid., 20.
75 Musser, 172.
trend towards coeducation across the country which was attributed primarily to lack of interest among high school women in single-sex education. The decline in the number of college bound students nationwide, and accompanying increase in the number of college bound women seeking specifically coeducational institutions, spelled disaster for many small women’s colleges. By the early 1980s Goucher began seriously to consider its enrollment problems in relation to its mission and identity as a single-sex institution.

What were the symptoms of Goucher’s declining enrollment? With recent improvements to the College’s endowment, Goucher faced no immediate financial threats by continuing on the path of single-sex education. However, as administrators looked down the road of falling admissions, both decreased revenue and lowered academic caliber created cause for concern. Even greater than these two looming problems though, the most significant casualty of Goucher’s declining enrollment was the quality of campus social activity. By the fall of 1985, withdrawing students cited social life more frequently than any other factor, including academics, financial situation, and single-sex status, as their primary reason for leaving Goucher.\textsuperscript{76} Numerous community members recall that by the early to mid-1980s, student life at Goucher had quieted to barely a peep. Sally Baum, then a member of the Athletic Department staff and coach of the women’s tennis team, recalls this atmosphere of inertia.

\begin{quote}
It was dire. It was so quiet around here, and every year there were fewer students on campus. You would walk around here in the middle of an academic day, and it was like a ghost town. We maybe had 600 [students] living on campus. It was just, it was dead. I say dead, and I recognize that it was quiet then. But looking back it was just dead. It didn’t have the fire, there wasn’t a whole lot going on. I don’t think people were tied to the campus in the same ways they were earlier on, when there were more kids or more of a... I don’t know. More of a focus on Goucher. I really do.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{76} “Draft Senior Staff Report to Trustee Task Force, 1985,” \textit{General Series 2 Coeducation, Subseries B, Box 1, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD} , Amendment B, 2.
think it was the sheer numbers. You’d have an event, and it was a great event if five people showed up. Horrible for morale, just terrible.  

Baum’s recollections of inactivity on campus reflect the constant refrain of criticism heard by women’s colleges around the country: great academics and supportive environment, but lousy social life. This stereotype of women’s colleges as social “ghost towns,” to quote Baum, affected the thinking of potential applicants such as Caroline Bauerle, class of 1989, who initially recoiled at the thought of attending a single-sex college. Bauerle, who described her high school experience as “social, primarily,” worried about the lack of student engagement on campus at Goucher.

*It [Goucher] was not on my radar at all, although I do remember getting something in the mail from Goucher. I certainly didn’t want to go to an all women’s college. I was really socially involved in high school, and women’s colleges did not top any on my list at all. . . . Like most women you’ll speak to from the eighties, I don’t know about the sixties and the seventies, I came here despite the fact that it was a women’s college. It [single-sex education] was not at all on my list of important things for a college.*

After weighing her options and deciding to attend a women’s college, Bauerle was able to develop an active social life though not on Goucher’s campus. She remembers very few parties or well attended social events on campus in the mid-1980s and sought out friendships and events at Johns Hopkins University, the Naval Academy, or in the nearby cities of Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

*There was no social life on campus. If you wanted any sort of social life at all you looked off campus. . . . There were girls who were Naval Academy girls. There were girls who were Hopkins girls. And there was everybody else who had boyfriends or friends at other schools. I spent a lot of time at Hopkins, went to a lot of fraternity parties at Hopkins. . . . My social life was really at Hopkins, or we used to go downtown a lot, to Fells Point, we went out a lot downtown. We used to go to D.C., we’d drive down to D.C. once every couple weeks. It was really, everything was off campus. I can*

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77 Interview with Sally Baum, 11 Dec. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 24:30
count three times maybe there were parties on campus I attended. Very infrequent. . . . If you didn’t have a car, or a friend who had a car, that was not good. ⁷⁹

Bauerle’s social experience at Goucher, or lack thereof, encapsulates the feeling among many Goucher women that male relationships were an essential ingredient in an active social life, and an ingredient that could only be obtained off campus. Marilyn Warshawsky, class of 1968, who attended Goucher before its enrollment decline, recalls that the phenomenon of seeking social life off campus was not specific to the 1980s. Even in the 1960s, Goucher was sometimes known as a “suitcase campus,” because students so frequently left on the weekends to visit boyfriends at more lively colleges. ⁸⁰

In response to the “ghost town,” atmosphere on campus, Goucher administrators began considering a number of options for boosting enrollment, none of them terribly appealing. They examined curricular changes, such as expanding graduate and continuing education programs or adding more professional training degrees in fields such as nursing and accounting, to boost enrollment. While the adult continuing education program has remained successful to the present day, any wider curricular changes would have resulted in drastic alterations to Goucher’s mission as an undergraduate liberal arts college. Though these changes may have been successful at boosting enrollment, they would have altered the Goucher experience just as much, if not more, than coeducation.

In the mid-1980s, Goucher launched a Trustee Task Force to investigate the causes of the enrollment crisis and look for possible solutions. In September 1984, at the request of President Rhoda Dorsey, Janis Boster, Director of Admissions prepared a status report on the “Development of the Admissions Market,” for the Board of Trustees.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 19:56.
Although the report charts a small increase in enrollment between 1980 and 1983, the number of total freshman enrollees in 1984 fell sharply from the previous year’s total of 239 to a disappointing 180.\footnote{“Status Report-Development of Admissions Market, September 1984,” \textit{General Series 2 Coeducation, Subseries B, Box 1}, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 36.} Perhaps even more alarming, the Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs predicted that the total number of enrolled Goucher undergraduates would fall even further for the remainder of the decade, from 701 total undergraduates in 1985 to as few as 655 in 1989.\footnote{“Draft Senior Staff Report,” 16.} In light of this decline, admissions staffers proposed a number of initiatives for Goucher to improve its enrollment and retention rate, including improving technology on campus and crafting savvier marketing campaigns which would predict the needs and desires of students of the 1990s. In this 1984 report no mention was yet made of coeducation as a possible solution to Goucher’s enrollment crisis.

By the fall of 1985, however, the Trustee Task Force devoted to examining enrollment had begun to at least consider the possibility of altering Goucher’s single-sex status. The first draft of the Senior Staff Report to the Trustee Task Force in October of 1985 admitted that the model of single-sex education at the collegiate level, “is becoming an anachronism,” and might require revision.\footnote{Ibid., 6.} Indeed, the remainder of the report reads as somewhat defeatist in comparison to documents and opinions on the 1973 vote, which roundly denounced the possibility of coeducation at Goucher. By 1985, Goucher’s administrators could hardly deny the overwhelming and pervasive trend towards coeducation in the nation’s colleges, and their report makes coeducation at Goucher sound like a foregone conclusion. For example, in prefacing its discussion on the
strengths and weaknesses of coeducation, the report reminds its readers that coeducation “is perforce an inexorable strength,” and that “every trend in the primary and secondary systems are to continued dismantling of single sex institutions.” Like the findings of many educational researchers, the report asserted that the strengths and weaknesses of coeducation lie in the fact that it more realistically reflected actual society. This was both a weakness, in light of remaining prejudices in academic and professional spheres against women, and a strength, as modern women became less and less in need of the protection which single-sex institutions were meant to provide.

Following the momentum for coeducation set in place by the October 1985 meeting of the Trustee Task Force, the report for the November meeting included a section in which President Dorsey built the case for coeducation even more strongly. Dorsey argued that coeducation was essential to maintaining the academic quality of the college, boosting enrollment, and encouraging Goucher to reflect changes in society over the last few years. Finally, in a confidential memo sent to members of the Trustee Task Force on December 17, 1985, President Dorsey called for the Board to “reopen the question of coeducation at Goucher for consideration by faculty, staff, students, alumnae,” in the spring of 1986. This move effectively forced a Board vote on coeducation by the end of that semester and left only a few months for community members to submit their views to the Board of Trustees. This decisive move by President Dorsey and the Trustee Task Force ensured that the community-wide debate on

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84 Ibid., 7.
85 Ibid., 8.
coeducation would take place during a brief, rushed window of time, giving opponents of coeducation little opportunity to mount a substantial defense.

With the scheduled vote on coeducation set for spring of 1986, Goucher's Board of Trustees began to gauge the opinions of Goucher community members regarding the possibility of admitting men to the College. Several key factors influenced the Board as to when public debate on coeducation at Goucher would be reopened. First, administrators recognized the importance of allowing the community to celebrate Goucher's one hundredth anniversary in 1985 without the disruption of a looming vote on coeducation on the horizon. Rhoda Dorsey remembers the one hundredth anniversary celebrations which took place around the country in 1985:

_There was a certain amount of pressure on all points to look at the situation and make a decision [on coeducation]. But, the college had a centenary in '85. The then chair of the board wanted to move to get some kind of decision making process going, and he was a man. The vice chairman of the board was a Goucher graduate, and she and I felt very strongly that it was important to have a hundredth anniversary party, celebrate the hundred years. They had been terrific years, ups and downs, but terrific. Let everybody give everybody a chance to celebrate, and do that, and then look hard at the decision. And that's exactly what happened. We had, in '84 and '85, a wonderful celebration all over the country of alumnae groups, much as alumni are doing now with the 125th. It was a chance to get together, to remember the past, to think about some of the hardships that the college had gone through, some of the triumphs, some of the great people who had been here. It was a wonderful party! And then we had to settle down, and look at the future. The discussion took place beginning in the fall the next year, and on to the decision._

While administrators may have felt that they were doing alumnae and students a favor by delaying the debate on coeducation until after the centenary celebrations, the decision backfired on them in some instances. Some individuals who opposed coeducation felt doubly betrayed by the fact that the coeducation debate followed so closely on the heels

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of the centenary celebrations and its accompanying "Women of Promise" campaign.

When viewed from this perspective, it appeared that coeducation had been in the works behind the closed doors of the Board room for some time, and the community had simply not been informed. The timing of the coeducation debate after Goucher's centenary celebrations contributed to the lack of transparency and inclusiveness with which administrators handled the debate.

The impending vote on coeducation was influenced by three primary factors: inside studies such as Ethel Viti's report on former women's colleges, outside market research such as the Krukowski Report in 1985, and the numerous responses of faculty, students and alumnae which were conveyed to the school in spring of 1986. Viti's report, which was discussed at length in Chapter One, generally concluded that, compared to other former women's schools such as Skidmore, Vassar, Manhattanville and Connecticut College, Goucher was "well positioned," to make the move to coeducation in 1986. The report also advised that Goucher make the transition to coeducation, "with no apologies, no regrets," a statement which may have discouraged the Board from preparing any strategy to preserve Goucher's legacy as a women's college.89 The date of Viti's report, so close in time to the scheduled Board vote on coeducation, suggests that it was not intended to sway Trustees' decisions in favor of or against coeducation, but to advise the college on what mistakes to avoid in their inevitable move to coeducation. Like the timing of the centenary celebrations, the release of Viti's report so close in time to the scheduled May 1986 Board vote adds greater weight to the argument that

89 Ethel Viti, "Report on Coeducation at Other Formerly Women's Colleges, April 5, 1986," General Series 2: Coeducation, Subseries B: The Decision Box 2, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 25.
coeducation at Goucher was a foregone conclusion merely waiting for the Trustees’ stamp of approval to make it official.

Ethel Viti’s report was written in her capacity as the special assistant to President Dorsey, but the College also contracted out to private marketing firms to research how Goucher’s mission and identity could be marketed more successfully and how coeducation might affect marketing. The 1985 Krukowski report on “How Goucher College Perceives Itself,” influenced Board members on the issue of coeducation by making the case that coeducation would improve the College’s ability to market itself. Krukowski’s report, which was prepared from interviews with Goucher faculty, students and staff, offered eight major conclusions on how Goucher community members perceive the college’s mission and identity. Their conclusions include statements confirming the academic strengths of the college and overall satisfaction of faculty, as well as evidence of the declining quality of students and social life at Goucher. Perhaps most importantly, the report’s authors point out the common sentiment among faculty and students that Goucher lacked a successful and distinctive quality to distinguish it from other small liberal arts colleges. Although Goucher’s single-sex status certainly set it apart from most other liberal arts schools of the same size, this facet of the Goucher’s identity was also one of its biggest liabilities in limiting the number of potential applicants and contributing to a dreary campus social life.⁹⁰ Overall, the report concludes that, “All sectors of the on-campus Goucher community seem willing to consider coeducation,”⁹¹ yet it also warns that coeducation might not be “an expedient solution to Goucher’s

⁹¹ Ibid., 27.
recruitment concerns." The Krukowski report offered only lukewarm support for coeducation, but strongly urged Board members to change something about Goucher’s mission and identity or risk further enrollment woes.

Although the Board of Trustees saw this market research study as an integral piece of evidence in the coeducation debate, other community members treated them with skepticism. Goucher Psychology professors Richard Pringle and Katherine “KC” Canada, initially questioned the validity of these reports, citing the haste and lack of intellectual rigor with which they were prepared as cause for concern. Pringle remembers thinking,

*It would only be rational, to me, at the time, I’m thinking back to young Rick, it would stick in my craw unless they could make an argument that was convincing that this [coeducation] is what we had to do. And so the two pieces of the argument are, is it going to solve the problem we’re in, the financial enrollment problem, and can we really maintain our commitment to women if we do that? So KC and I were both saying, “Where’s the data? Where’s the research?” We were articulating to the community the politics of, “Wait a minute! You can’t possibly do this quickly. You’ve got to look at this carefully.” And no one was interested, clearly no one was interested. There was a little bit of research out there, some of the stuff I wanted to get into, but it was just surface level stuff. They weren’t willing to go much further than that. We were angry at our colleagues because they were willing to turn it on a dime. Jean [Bradford] was one of those who wasn’t, who felt, “No, this is a special place, we can’t move on here.” And there were others, there were maybe twenty or so who felt “What are you doing? This is nuts.”*

Motivated by the lack of sufficient research in the coeducation debate at Goucher, Pringle and Canada would later publish their own studies on the effects of introducing male students into a formerly all female college environment. Their two studies, “The Role of Gender in College Classroom Interactions,” published in 1995 and “Interpreting Cross-Dressing on a College Campus: A Social Context Approach,” in 1997 provided the kind of data on coeducation which Pringle and Canada felt the College had needed before

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92 Ibid., 31.
making the decision. Although their own published research was not considered in Goucher’s coeducation debate, both articles include valuable data and insight on the changes wrought by coeducation.

Pringle distinguished himself in the 1980s as a vocal critic of the manner in which Goucher was pursuing coeducation. Along with other faculty members, particularly those in the Psychology and Women’s Studies departments, Pringle questioned the rhetoric surrounding coeducation. To these long time supporters of women’s education, the College’s official line of reasoning, that women didn’t want to attend women’s colleges anymore and that coeducation would double enrollment, proved unconvincing. Pringle recalls these feelings stating that,

Looking back on it, it was really complicated to get a sense of the politics [of coeducation]. Administration has to tell its alumnae and everyone that it’s taking their fears very seriously, that it’s going to maintain its commitment to the education of women, even while extending it to men. So there’s this bullshit stuff that’s going on that has a narrative from the standpoint of the college. “Oh, of course we’re going to still do everything we’ve done.” The real story is they felt they had to do it because they were trapped financially. . . . This is what they’re telling the community, “We’re gonna go down, because women are not interested in coming to women’s colleges anymore. Our enrollments are in a slide. We’re on a precipice in terms of maintaining sufficient enrollment,” and that’s true. And so they created this mythology, and I’m not saying it wasn’t true. Well, I am saying it wasn’t true, but I can certainly see why someone might think it’s true. It’s credible. There are still plenty of people who will tell it this way, and I believe they believe it. I just don’t believe it. Which is, “The College is gonna sink if we don’t do something drastic, and this is one drastic thing we can do immediately.”

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95 Pringle, 26:54.
Since Pringle agreed that Goucher was in a dangerous decline financially and in terms of enrollment, many of his colleagues wondered what, if not coeducation, he would propose to improve the situation. To this he pointed to the lack of a dynamic environment on campus, the quiet, unappealing social scene described by Bauerle and Baum above, and proposed measures to change it.

*Why don’t we build an athletic powerhouse? Why don’t we build a new gym? Why don’t we build soccer fields? Why don’t we become international? Why don’t we launch the arts? All of which we did after coeducation. Why? Because when we went coeducational we had a blip in enrollment, and said “Ah, we made it.” And the next year we were down the tubes. So it [coeducation] didn’t do anything without all that other stuff.*

We will never know if these measures alone, implemented by Goucher after coeducation as Pringle points out, could have saved the College from enrollment decline and closure. The argument presents an interesting historical conjecture though because it challenges the widely accepted belief that coeducation was the last and best option available to Goucher in the mid-1980s.

While Pringle represented the most prominent voice among critics of coeducation, student, faculty, and alumnae offered more divergent views on the issue and fought equally hard to make their voices heard in the debate. Faculty response generally favored coeducation, a trend which was perhaps motivated by fear of lowered student quality and more tenured faculty firings or salary cuts if enrollment did not improve. At two faculty forums held in April and May of 1986 prior to the vote on coeducation, professors expressed their approval by a substantial margin to begin admitting men. At the first forum, 72% of the 54 attendees voted in favor of coeducation while the second meeting,

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96 Ibid., 1:02:55.
which drew 89 individuals, saw approval for coeducation fall slightly to 61%. Julie Roy Jeffrey, a Professor of History at Goucher since 1972, remembers the fearful climate of declining enrollment and the feelings of faculty members towards coeducation:

Departments were eliminated. The Classics department was eliminated, and people lost their positions, and some were retrained to go into other departments. Then Goucher was censured by the AAUP [American Association of University Professors]. I'm not sure the students were aware of it. We were all aware that it was important to have as many students in your class as possible because if the axe was going to fall, and you didn't have enough students in your class, that was one of the reasons why you could be terminated. It was a very fearful time. . . . Some [professors] were in support [of coeducation] but some were real holdouts. They were really convinced by the evidence of women doing better in women's schools, keeping to the tradition of Goucher as a single-sex college, and history. There were some people in the Psych department who supported single-sex, and probably Women's Studies supported that. I don't know whether I saw any natural breakdown of departments. I think people approached it, for the most part, on a very individual and personal level, and what they thought would maybe save Goucher. The students didn't realize, the ones that were in these last classes, how perilous Goucher's situation as a single-sex school was. So I think a lot of students who graduated as the last classes were, I understand from the Alumnae office, the hardest ones to get back to come to reunion. They feel like they've been, in a sense, cheated, or betrayed is a better word.

As Jeffrey points out, student opposition to coeducation was strong and emotionally charged. Their opposition did not come as a surprise. Since all of the students in the mid-1980s had chosen to attend Goucher as a women's college, it made sense that they didn't want to see the school's single-sex status change. At a series of meetings conducted by the Dean of Students in February 1986, students from practically every sector of campus life, including commuter students, resident assistants, members of the Recreation and Athletic Council, the Student Organization, and House Council, as well as residents of every dormitory, were given the chance to offer feedback on the

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97 Office of the President, "Faculty Forums, May 1, 1986," General Series 2 Coeducation, Subseries B, Box 2, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD.
proposed move to coeducation. Overall, of the 523 students who attended these meetings, 72.4% voted against coeducation, 12.8% supported coeducation, and 14.7% were undecided. Many of their comments expressed the sentiment that Goucher wasn’t trying hard enough to advertise itself to prospective high school students, as well as the fear that Goucher would lose its “specialness,” if it went coed. One student put it bluntly, stating that “If Goucher were to go co-ed it would change from a distinctive women’s college to an overpriced, dinky college.” Others worried about what type of men would come to Goucher, and how they would act once here. One person pointed out that, “Vassar is only 30% men and they’re all wimps,” another stated, “Our campus is beautiful; men will ruin it,” while one individual warned that, “the threat of violence will now exist internally.”

More than anything, students feared that a coed Goucher would lose the commitment to women’s education and development which had been the College’s central mission for one hundred years. They also expressed excitement though, that coeducation would boost participation in athletics and campus events.

Bauerle, who was just beginning her second semester as a freshman at Goucher when the coeducation debate was reopened, remembers that student feelings on the topic were often divided by class year. Upperclassmen, who had attended Goucher longest and received the most exposure to single-sex education, were most strongly opposed to coeducation and felt betrayed that the decision was being made, as they perceived it, behind their backs. Underclassmen, Bauerle recalls, were mostly just confused.

*I was really just learning about how important it was to go to a women’s college. I only had one semester of college at all. I remember they said there was an announcement at the Alumni House, well Alumnae House at the time. We all came to the Alumnae House and Dr. Dorsey, Rhoda, came

out and announced that Goucher was going coed, and upperclassmen were crying, and really just, really going berserk. Everybody had a “Better Dead than Coed,” t-shirt. My friends and I... we didn’t understand the importance of it being that we were so new, but at the same time we were kinda like, “A few months ago, you recruited us and said it was really important to come to an all women’s college, and six months later you’re saying we’re going coed. I’m not really quite sure I understand how this is happening.” So I think the mood on campus was everyone was very nervous before, but I think everyone knew that we were gonna go coed. The older classes were definitely more upset than we were. We were kinda like “Huh? I don’t really get it. You spent all this time telling us how important it is to be here, and in one sentence you just negated all of that.”... We were more questioning and quizzical about it. The older classes had got it much more than we could. They understood the importance of this women’s college, this women’s education. They were much more upset than the freshman class.100

Alumnae responses to coeducation fell somewhere between the pragmatism of the faculty and the sense of betrayal of the students. Their opinions, which were sent in response to a January letter from President Dorsey announcing the upcoming vote on coeducation, ranged from brief notes jotted at the bottom of a pledge form, to multi page, in-depth letters full of questions, opinions, arguments and newspaper clippings. Official tallies of the over 670 letters sent in state that two thirds supported coeducation and one third opposed, however, slight discrepancies between numbers listed on the tally sheets and the actual number of letters contained in the Archives brings this ratio down to 61% in favor and 39% opposed.

In general, older alumnae were more likely to support coeducation, which may seem counterintuitive if age is associated with conservatism and traditionalism. However, alumnae from the first half of twentieth century had already witnessed many changes at Goucher, from the move to the Towson campus, to the end of the Christian curriculum, to the admission of Black and Jewish students. By comparison, coeducation perhaps did not

100 Bauerle, 33:19.
seem like such a radical transition. Indeed, many older alumnae were extremely modern in their views. Mrs. Jesse Phillips from the class of 1924 stated that “all girls’ schools are as outmoded as the corset,” while Priscilla Murdoch Caine, class of 1961 effusively wrote, “GO FOR IT!! There is no benefit in becoming a dinosaur for the sake of a principle that is no longer viable.” Still, some older alumnae clung to traditional sentiments even while casting their vote in favor of coeducation. One graduate from 1923 wrote that she supported a coed campus, but opposed coed dorms. “That is only asking for trouble!” she cautioned.101

Additionally, many older alumnae, having witnessed their daughters and granddaughters choose mixed-sex over single-sex colleges, accepted coeducation as the way of the future. Lois Black Booth, class of 1953, echoes this sentiment, stating,

I watched each of my three daughters select coeducational colleges. All three pursued science degrees yet I failed to interest them in Goucher’s fine science and math program. I didn’t take their reason seriously then, but in retrospect, I believe they were right. They needed a coeducational college. I listened to their conversations about mixed dorms as well as classes. I believe they have an edge now in this competitive world because they have a better understanding of men as people, not just “dates”. One child is a doctor, another an engineer and the third involved in sports medicine. They work in what was once a “man’s world”. While college life is in no sense the real world, the coeducational experience seems to have helped in the transition from college to career.102

Other mothers expressed the desire to see their sons attend Goucher as well as their daughters, and while many felt sad to see their alma mater change, proponents of coeducation deemed it inevitable.

At least one third, and possibly more alumnae however, did not share this sentiment, and refused to see Goucher become coeducational without putting up a fight.

102 Ibid.
Their letters ranged from logical, carefully articulated arguments, to passionate, angry entreaties meant to cajole and threaten Board members into changing their minds. Alumnae expressed a variety of emotions, including disappointment, confusion, skepticism and anger. Not surprisingly, younger graduates, who had attended Goucher most recently and still felt closely tied to the College, opposed coeducation most virulently. Lisa J. Biskin, class of 1985 just one year prior to the decision, fumed, “You get none of my money since you have already decided to give up & go co-ed, flushing 101 years of tradition down the toilet.” 103

However, anger over coeducation was not limited to recent graduates. Mary Carroll Abell, class of ’46 expressed her displeasure with equal force as many younger alumnae.

What a low blow! After a more than successful Centennial celebrating Goucher’s being a woman’s college we now, within the flash of an eye, are asked to consider that Goucher becomes coeducational! Incredible!!! I suppose with the ‘over 40 million dollar endowment’ Goucher will build a new Gymnasium housing an in-door track, hockey rink and Olympic swimming pool; making certain to also include football, baseball & soccer fields. More important: once Goucher is co-educational does one truly believe that student offices will be headed by women? The U.S. is still a patriarchal society. I get the impression that Goucher is being pressured to become co-ed by all sorts of outside influences. This college is unique-keep it that way. No more contributions from me if Goucher goes co-educational. 104

Abell was surprisingly accurate in her predictions for a coed Goucher. Within just four years of admitting men, Goucher had not only broken ground for a new Sports and Recreation Center, but had also seen women cede the highest offices of student leadership in the school to their male peers.

104 Ibid.
Many of the alumnae who opposed coeducation expressed skepticism that admitting men would improve enrollment and sought to logically make a case for the inherent strengths of women's colleges. Letters of this ilk were frequently printed on the formal letterheads of law firms, university departments and other professional fields. In contrast, many of the pro-coeducation letters were hand written by women on their husbands' stationary. Sarah Fenstermaker Berk, class of 1971 and Professor of Sociology at University of California Santa Barbara, wrote that,

...as a teacher in a coeducational setting, I can testify to the ordinarily less supportive, and sometimes downright hostile intellectual atmosphere in which women must carve out an education. My students only get brief glimpses of what I took for granted: namely a nurturant yet challenging intellectual environment where I was valued by virtue of my talents and efforts, and was never made to feel less than my own performance warranted. It was a heady atmosphere, one in which creativity flourished and one that is extremely difficult to establish or maintain in today's coeducational settings. . . . I urge the Board to reaffirm its commitment to the education of women at Goucher College.\(^{105}\)

More than anything, opponents of coeducation expressed the feeling that they couldn't support a coed Goucher because it simply would not be the same school they had attended. Whether they chose to express this sentiment neutrally, apologetically, or angrily was merely a difference in style.

For all community members who weighed in on the decision, coeducation served as a kind of focusing event, a unique opportunity in which faculty, students and alumnae were directly asked to submit their opinions on one of the most significant decisions in Goucher's history. Although some alumnae responded to coeducation by withholding donations from the College, others, even the angry ones, became more involved in Goucher's affairs by attending meetings of their local Goucher Club, writing letters, and

\(^{105}\) Ibid.
making phone calls. One alumna from Pittsburgh described organizing a meeting of her local Goucher Club in response to coeducation which was the largest in the history of the Pittsburgh chapter. Many women who had never even attended a Goucher Club turned out that night to voice their opinion on coeducation, either pro or con.

While the high level of participation among community members in the coeducation debate was exemplary, it remains unclear to what extent their opinions influenced the Board of Trustees’ actual decision. For instance, while all of the alumnae letters were carefully responded to, counted, and placed on file in the Goucher College Archives, no summary report or other document exists on record to assess the impact of alumnae opinion and how it might have affect the Board’s ultimate vote. Most likely, the call for letters and opinions was a risk assessment strategy designed to determine how upset community members would be in the event of coeducation, not a democratic process of inclusion. As long as the majority of community members did not appear to be disastersly angry with coeducation, and as long as alumnae still supported Goucher with their financial contributions, the Board could go ahead with the vote.

On May 10, 1986 the Board of Trustees, by a vote of 30 supporting, 7 objecting, and 1 abstaining, approved a change in the Goucher College charter which would open admission to men as well as women. Although it appears that many administrators’ opinions on coeducation had been formed long before May 1986, the final vote was still a difficult and emotional step for many. Even Rhoda Dorsey, one of the most adamant supporters of coeducation at Goucher, remembers feeling a tinge of sadness to see the College change.

*People need time to think about change, and if change is going to be drastic they need time to mourn. My feeling about this is that they should*
mourn. This had been a wonderful institution that they knew, and you'd hate for it to change without anybody caring. The bulk of the students were opposed, but I take that as a complement. They liked it, and they didn't want to change. . . . It was very hard for me to accept the notion [of coeducation]. I went to a women's college, two women's colleges in a row. I thought they were terrific. I got a wonderful education out of them, and I could see the education students were getting here. I was willing to try almost anything. It took me a couple of years before I would seriously consider coed, but I think after you've tried everything that seems appropriate under the circumstances, and nothing is changing, you begin to think you better change your own point of view, and I did. But it was not easy.106

Dorsey's sadness at seeing Goucher lose its identity as a women's college illustrates the reluctance with which many administrators approached the decision to admit men. It was not that they had stopped believing in the relevancy or success of women's education. Administrators simply wished to delay Goucher's move to coeducation for as long as possible. In so doing, however, they consigned themselves to a decision making process which was rushed, not transparent, and not inclusive of community members opinions on coeducation. Although Goucher asked faculty, students and alumnae to submit their opinions in person or by letter, this was done more as a risk assessment strategy than a genuine and democratic call for contributions. Goucher had considered coeducation in 1970, 1973, and 1986 in a nearly two decade long debate which culminated in the College admitting its first class of men and women in the fall of 1987.

106 Dorsey, 50:36.
Chapter 4: You Have to Have a Story

The Effects of Coeducation on the Mission and Academic Life of Goucher College

What do we mean by coeducation? There's a difference between being coeducational mindlessly and being coeducational deliberately. And if you are an institution that is mindfully coeducational, you’re really recognizing that you have men and women present. ¹⁰⁷

As Rick Pringle states, there are different ways for a college to be coeducational. More specifically, there are different claims which a college can make about coeducation as an institutional mission. Pragmatic institutions tend to make a cautionary claim and point out the potential problems and pitfalls associated with educating men and women together. Institutions which are optimistic use a reformist claim to argue that coeducation creates the space for students to transcend traditional gender roles and foster a new kind of gender equality. Goucher Psychology Professors Pringle and Canada argue in their mid-1990s study of coeducation entitled simply, “Gender Research,” that Goucher administrators in the mid-1980s tended to make a negative claim about coeducation, which argued that in an educational setting, gender is a difference that makes no difference. ¹⁰⁸ However, the actual experiences of community members, as recorded through oral history interviews and newspaper articles, reflect just the opposite. Gender does make a difference in educational settings, and coeducation has altered the way students at Goucher interact with both their professors and their peers.

This chapter will explore how coeducation has affected Goucher’s mission as an institute of higher learning and will investigate the question posed by prospective students from the late 1980s into the present: What is the point of a Goucher education,

and how, if at all, has it changed since the college began admitting men? Has Goucher ever been particularly clear about how it defines its mission? If the negative claim about coeducation is true of Goucher, and gender really does not make much difference in the classroom, then very few changes in Goucher’s mission will be found. But if we reject the negative claim, as scholars such as Tidball, Hall, and Sandler have done, then we find a variety of areas in which Goucher’s mission has changed since coeducation.\textsuperscript{109} To answer the question of what Goucher means by coeducation, this chapter will examine the effects of the school’s 1986 decision on the classroom environment, curricular changes, and the College’s overall mission.

As a small liberal arts college focused on undergraduate academic development, Goucher had always tried to encourage an engaging classroom environment and placed strong student-teacher interactions at the center of its mission. With the admission of men to the College beginning in spring of 1986, classroom dynamics shifted, though not always in the ways that studies such as “The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?” predicted. This well-known 1982 study argued that women in coed college classrooms are frequently disparaged for being less serious students than their male counterparts and are elbowed out of class discussions by their professors and peers. Conversely, researchers of single-sex education, such as Tidball, argue that women educated only with other women are more talkative, assertive, and better prepared for the professional world after graduation.

These sentiments are echoed by some Goucher community members, including Pringle and Canada, whose 1995 study, "The Role of Gender in College Classroom interactions," examined a total of 125 Goucher classrooms over the course of four years, bridging the College’s transition from single-sex to coeducation. Canada and Pringle assert that the number of in-class interactions professors and students initiate with each other in single versus mixed-sex environments illustrates how coeducation can lead to an unequal classroom dynamic. Not only did male and female students behave differently in the coed classroom, so too did male and female professors. What’s more, the same group of female professors behaved differently depending on whether or not there were men in their class. Changes in behavior were also observed in students. Female students who previously had been the most talkative in their single sex classrooms spoke less in their coed classes. Specifically, they became less likely to initiate prolonged interactions with their professors as the number of men in the classroom increased. The fact that changes in behavior were observed in both students and professors indicates that the introduction of male students into Goucher’s formerly single-sex classrooms created a consciousness of gender and an unequal dynamic between professor and student where none existed before.

Other community members though, present a divergent opinion from Pringle and Canada on how Goucher’s classrooms changed with coeducation. Julie Roy Jeffrey, a Professor of History at Goucher since 1972, remembers Goucher’s students before coeducation as a far cry from the assertive, outspoken women described by Tidball as populating women’s colleges. She describes the students of the 1970s as,

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110 Canada and Pringle, 177.
111 Ibid., 180.
Silent. Very silent classrooms, really hard to get things moving. I was actually talking to Tina Sheller, who's in our department who was a student here . . . and she said, "How do you remember it?" and I said silent. She said that as a student that’s how she remembered it. It was funny because all this research that I came across said how great women's education was and how women would have courage in the classroom that they wouldn't have had when they’d had men in the classroom, but I just didn’t see that. I saw a few women talking and a lot of women being silent. I think there was also a kind of traditional gender role playing out here that women are quiet and studious. . . . I wouldn't say exactly submissive, but they didn’t see that their place was to participate. Their place was what they always say about “Girls are good at taking notes.” I don’t know whether this a good example of anything, but I got confused about one of the student’s names, and, I don’t know, called her Mary or something for the whole semester, and she answered to it. The last day, she came up and she said, “You know, my name isn’t Mary, it’s Victoria,” and I was just astonished. First of all, it was very embarrassing . . . but why hadn’t she come up and told me way earlier? Even if I had made the mistake several times I was just so amazed that she would wait ‘til the very end, and say “Well that’s not my name.” That’s a pretty big mistake to have a professor make by not using your name correctly. If she had seen herself in a different role in the classroom, I’m sure she would have come up and said, "Look, you gotta get my name straight." 112

Jeffrey’s story about calling her student by the wrong name highlights the changing type of woman attending Goucher in the 1970s and 1980s. As many ambitious, intelligent women began choosing coeducational colleges during this era, Goucher began to see a more “quiet and studious,” type of student as Jeffrey put it, perhaps one more in need of the protection of a women’s college.

With coeducation, not only did men enter Goucher’s classrooms but also a different kind of woman, one who was prepared to compete with and learn alongside men. In the early years of coeducation, Jeffrey remembers, this transition led to tension.

It did impress me that, since you sometimes got one or two men in your class, they were completely uninhibited about speaking up. I thought that was really interesting. . . . I had, for a History class, a pretty large class, maybe in the thirties, thirty five. We had several powerful men in that, and

112 Interview with Julie Roy Jeffrey, 9 Dec. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 18:06.
one was a fairly obnoxious guy, I would have to admit. A group of women came to me, and they said, “The men are dominating the discussion,” and I said, “What do you expect me to do about it? You really need to take some power in your own hands and some responsibility if they’re the only ones with their hands up,” so that was pretty revealing. It was about two or three years into coed.\textsuperscript{113}

Now that the gender ratio among students at Goucher has equaled out somewhat, Jeffrey finds that having men and women in the classroom leads to more interesting discussion and increased participation. Students no longer look only to their professors for insight, she states, but more frequently to each other. Julie Collier-Adams, who served as Dean of Students from 1976 through the era of coeducation, reflected on the assertiveness of Goucher’s new female students in an article printed in the Towson Flier in December 1987. She had been conducting freshman academic orientation at Goucher for the last 11 years, an event which typically elicited very few responses or questions from incoming students. In 1987 when Goucher admitted its first coed class, Collier-Adams stated, “This year 10 hands immediately went up, and eight of those belonged to women. There’s an excitement in the air around here this semester that I haven’t felt in years.”\textsuperscript{114} Her anecdote is one example in a greater pattern of increased liveliness and participation in academic life at Goucher following the move to coeducation.

While the accounts and memories of Jeffrey and Collier-Adams point to a more equitable gender dynamic within the classroom, current students at Goucher disagree in some areas. Jill Bratt, class of 2010, disagrees with Collier-Adams and Jeffrey’s assertion that male students are inherently more outspoken in class discussion. She reflects on the “silent man” phenomenon sometimes seen in classes where women outnumber men.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 36:13.
Matthew Cohen-Price is someone who strikes me as having an extremely male presence in the classroom. . . . He will look at me while I'm speaking and give me a nod of affirmation in a way that seems very fatherly, and that makes me very self-conscious about how I speak. In the feminist philosophy course, in the "Race, Gender, and Sexuality" course I took with Margret Grebowicz, there would be these boys [names deleted] who would rarely speak, sitting back, silently. I didn't see them taking fervent notes either, which is something I noted on myself. I always do that. They seemed . . . as if they already had a dominance over it, as if they were [saying], "OK, let's let these women talk this out . . . Let the cat fight settle down, and I'll go home and think about this. [Do you think that lack of participation is common for male students here?] Yes, I do. This lack of participation is contrary to what I think is the common belief where . . . boys rule the classroom. I don't see that here, but in a way the same dynamic plays out where I still feel stupid sometimes with them making no comments because I feel like I'm being judged by them and them still having this upper hand.115

The "silent man," phenomenon, which Bratt describes, can be interpreted in different ways. A feminist reading of this behavior might argue that male students in an overwhelmingly female class feel a sense of entitlement which negates the need to participate verbally. Through their gestures, body language, and "fatherly" nods, male students imply that they still have the "upper hand," even when outnumbered by women. A different reading of this phenomenon might interpret it as just the opposite: an expression of male intimidation, not male privilege. In a class populated by many intelligent, outspoken women, particularly if the subject matter of the class relates to gender or feminism, outnumbered male students may simply feel frightened to speak. The "silent man" phenomenon then becomes a shifting of traditional power dynamics, away from those described by Julie Roy Jeffrey or researchers Hall and Sandler, and towards one in which women, not men, dominate the classroom. We should, however, be careful about reading too far into this phenomenon without quantitative research to back up either hypothesis. After all, two or three quiet men in a class of fifteen may just be a

115 Interview with Jill Bratt, Nov. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 53:58.
fluke. It also may be that men, cushioned by their privileged status and the added attention of being in the minority, may not be acutely aware of the effects which their actions and inactions have on others. Matthew Cohen-Price, class of 2010, admits to being somewhat oblivious to this matter in class discussions.

As an extroverted male who is a good student and who has leadership experience, I very likely was very blind to the effect I had as a male in the classroom. I’ve always been a presence in the classes that I’ve been in. I talk. I share opinions, and I do so forcefully. In group projects I tend to lead. So, is there a gender component to that? Yeah, sure. It’s not one that I’ve ever studied. . . . I think that I connect that presence to my extrovertedness and how much I speak and separated that from my gender, in part because other males in these classes have tended to be very quiet, and other women have been very loud. . . . The gender aspect of that ratio never was apparent to me, even though I admit that it probably could have, probably was there.\textsuperscript{116}

This admission is revealing of a number of things. First, it demonstrates how different individuals can hold vastly different perspectives on the same phenomenon.\textsuperscript{117} For Bratt, the classroom dynamic meant one thing while for Cohen-Price it meant another, and for their professor it may have meant something wholly different. Second, Cohen-Price’s reflections are an example of the manner in which a privileged group tends to be unaware of their privileged status. For Cohen-Price, the ease with which he talks, argues, and leads in the classroom is a function of his extroverted personality, not his gender. For researchers such as Pringle though, Cohen-Price’s feelings are indicative of how the effects of gender in a college environment can be so pervasive that they practically become invisible.

\textit{When KC and I were doing our research, we sort of began to construe the culture of romance and the gendered components of our culture at large}

\textsuperscript{116} Interview with Matthew Cohen-Price, Nov. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 44:54.

\textsuperscript{117} The variety of perspectives which subjects present in interviews can make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to base hard and fast conclusions on oral histories, but the testimonies from Bratt and Cohen-Price are demonstrative of the complexity of gender dynamics within the coed classroom.
as like water to a fish. Does the fish even know there's water? It's in it, and maybe unaware of it, and I think gender's like that. We're in it, and we're in it so profoundly. It's so easy for the young male . . . just to enact being male, without ever really second guessing what that means. What it means to be big, take up space, narcissistic, all those things. I think it's very difficult to get out of the water and look at the water, and say, "Oh, that's what's going on." We began to construe what would happen when Goucher went coeducational as letting the water back out. In a way, unless Goucher were really intentional about it . . . then Goucher was going to lose something. It's gonna lose something that was happening at Goucher without intentionality as a women's college, and I think that's what Goucher didn't get. That it didn't have to be intentional about gender when it was a women's college. It had to be when it was a coeducational college, because the water is so easy not to see. It's so easy not to see what's male about the male and how maleness is being enacted, and how femaleness is being enacted along the cultural prescriptions.118

Pringle describes Goucher as a place where the effects of gender are difficult to discern, much like water is to a fish. However, this fact itself is sometimes difficult to discern. Since adopting coeducation in 1986, the College has prided itself on creating an equitable environment for men and women where gender does not stand as a barrier to any student's academic achievements. To these ends, in many ways, Goucher has succeeded. Yet in choosing to declare itself coeducational without taking time to examine the possible negative implications of gender in the classroom, Goucher lost the opportunity to transcend our society's prescribed, but sometimes unnoticed, roles for men and women. As an example of this point, Jennifer Jordan, class of 2011, speaks about how her Goucher peers often express surprise at her achievements in the Math and Science departments.

I don't think anyone ever expects what comes out of my mouth and what I do to be me. I mean, I'm a tiny blond girl. It's just not the stereotypical math major who's doing this crazy high end research. So people are always surprised, and a lot of people take a lot of pride in being bad at math, more than most subjects. "Oh, I'm so bad at math!" that's what I

118 Pringle, 1:25:22.
always get, like “Oh, I can’t believe you do that.” So everyone’s always surprised, but I kind of enjoy it. It’s a good shock effect sometimes.\footnote{119}

This sense of surprise or disbelief is not limited to Jordan’s peers, but also sometimes extends to her professors. While Jordan states that most professors in the Math department make little distinction between students based on gender, one male professor was particularly skeptical of her abilities as a woman.

I had a lot of really kind of weird experiences with him. Like, I’d go in and ask him for help on something and he’d be like, “Oh no, that’s all wrong. Let’s erase it and try again.” Then I’d get it back and he’d give me zero points and be like, “Nope, this is the way you do it,” and I’d say, “That’s what I had originally!” And that would be really annoying because then I’d get zero points for something I originally had right and he told me to erase. So sometimes I felt like . . . he didn’t think I belonged in such a high level class. And I don’t fit the stereotype for a math person, and he’s an old man, so some of those stereotypes are real engrained by now.\footnote{120}

Jordan’s experiences encountering skepticism and surprise over her choice of major in a male-dominated field are indicative of how assumptions about women’s academic abilities have changed and possibly regressed since coeducation. While still a women’s college, Goucher was known for its strong math and physics programs, but now these programs are among the smallest at Goucher. This may, however, have nothing to do with gender, since students majoring in math or science often cite Goucher’s study abroad requirement as an impediment to completing their degrees.

The effects of coeducation on Goucher’s curriculum and course offerings are more difficult to discern and generally less drastic than changes in classroom environment. In the five years following coeducation, there were no changes to Goucher’s General Education requirements. Even departments such as Women’s Studies, which one might expect to shrink following a move away from single-sex education,

\footnote{119} Interview with Jennifer Jordan, Nov. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 40:03.\footnote{120} Ibid., 37:53.
actually grew. According to Goucher’s course catalogues only 9 Women’s Studies
courses and 17 cross listed courses were offered during the 1983-1984 school year while
by 1990-1991, after the last single-sex class had graduated, the department boasted 16
Women’s Studies courses and a whopping 49 cross listed courses.\textsuperscript{121} Clearly these
numbers indicate a growth of interest in Women’s Studies following coeducation, not a
decline.

Yet the number of courses listed in any given department does not tell the whole
story of how Goucher’s curriculum changed with coeducation. Caroline Bauerle, who
graduated in Goucher’s last single-sex class in 1989, remembers that while Goucher was
a women’s college, a woman centered or feminist perspective was not just part of
Women’s Studies courses. It was part of practically every course.

\begin{quote}
I always joked that there was the feminist indoctrination here at Goucher. We had a lot of classes that had a lot to do with women. A lot. . . . The perspective given a lot of the time was a female perspective, which I’m quite sure my friends at other colleges didn’t get at all. That’s why I say it was kind of a feminist bastion. It was one of the few places still fighting for the feminist agenda. . . . I took a class called “The Goddess in Every Woman.” . . . feminism was alive and being taught to us constantly in every class, not just Women’s Studies, but in English or in a Literature class. I read a lot of Anaïs Nin. You weren’t getting that at Syracuse. You might have taken a class where they might have mentioned Anaïs Nin, but there wasn’t a class on Anaïs Nin. It really was one of the few places around that was still focusing a lot on feminism, which I think is what made it so difficult [to] transition. That made it very difficult the day they announced we went coed.\textsuperscript{122}
\end{quote}

Bauerle’s comments on the feminist perspective offered at Goucher are difficult to verify
by simply searching through course catalogues from the years before and after
coeducation. To begin with, the total number of classes in nearly every department has

Archives, Baltimore, MD.
\textsuperscript{122} Interview with Caroline Bauerle, 5 Jan. 2010, Baltimore, MD, 30:15.
increased as Goucher itself has grown, making comparisons from one era to another difficult. Second, gender studies has taken off around the country in the last twenty years in a way that might make the contributions of the 1980s appear less substantial. Finally, the general perspective or lens of interpretation, in this case feminism, in a class is not always listed in the brief title or description printed in the catalogue. To truly confirm Bauerle’s assertion, a researcher would have to speak with dozens of professors from a variety of departments and review the class syllabi from many different classes. Such a study does not fit within the confines of this paper, but it would be a worthwhile endeavor for future investigation.

Even if we cannot conclusively prove Bauerle’s observation, her comments raise a significant question. If offering a woman-centered education was a central pillar of Goucher’s mission in the 1980s and earlier, what is the point of a Goucher education today? There are a number of possible answers to this question. Kathy Lally’s 1990 article, “Big Men on Campus,” printed in the Sun Magazine lists three of Goucher’s goals for its mission in the coming decade, among them improving financial aid, cultivating an international focus, and integrating information technology into the liberal arts curriculum. Since Lally’s article was written, Goucher has succeeded in implementing all three of those goals. Of the four current students interviewed for this project, two received full tuition scholarships, while the other two were granted substantial financial aid packages that solidified their decision to come to Goucher. According to the Goucher College website, 85% of students receive some level of financial aid, with the average award for the 2008-2009 school year totaling $23,449 out of an approximately $40,000

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total cost of attending the College. Since instituting the study abroad requirement in fall 2006, Goucher has distinguished itself as a leader in training students to have an international focus. This requirement was almost certainly motivated, at least in part, by Goucher’s desire to improve its distinctiveness and ability to market itself. It could also be argued that the study abroad requirement is merely an extension of Goucher’s focus on experiential learning which, through internships, fieldwork, social work, and missionary trips, has been part of the College’s mission practically since its inception. As for Goucher’s third goal of integrating information technology into the classroom, no evidence from either the interviews or the College Archives indicates that Goucher has distinguished itself in this regard as compared to other small, liberal arts colleges.

In early 1986, Rick Pringle served on the College’s Maypole Committee, an advisory group charged with drafting two potential mission statements for the College. One mission statement would provide direction for a coeducational Goucher and one would provide direction for a single-sex Goucher. The adoption of either statement would depend on how the Board voted in May. Pringle remembers the Maypole Committee discussing how Goucher had always had difficulty defining its purpose and distinguishing itself as a small liberal arts institution.

*My sense of who I am is like a story. Well, it’s also true that an institution’s sense of who it is is like a story. . . . That begs the question of who have you been in the past? And you’re hitting right on it, I think in some ways what we on the Maypole Committee were dancing around that issue of us not having a pole around which to dance. Part of it is, “What’s the institution’s mission? What distinguishes us from Loyola, from Notre Dame, from Haverford?” Not just demographically but in terms of intentionality. Goucher’s always had a hard time with that. It’s not like the issue doesn’t come up. It comes up frequently, and I’ve been here long enough to know that it may seem infrequent, but it has come up many times. . . . How can you define a mission without knowing your past? How*

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can you honor the mission that’s rooted in the past without having traditions? What traditions, why, what do they mean? What’s precious to this institution? I don’t think it knows. 125

Pringle’s questions for the Maypole Committee touch on the very heart of the controversy surrounding coeducation. How can Goucher develop a sense of purpose for the future while suffering a major break in continuity with its past? Goucher’s struggle to maintain continuity with its traditional mission and identity is discussed by Athletic Department staff member, Sally Baum.

It’s a very dynamic place. Adding buildings makes it obvious, but it’s happened in programming, it’s happened in every aspect since I’ve been here. Some people can’t stand all that change. There’s too much change, it’s too dynamic, and people want to stay the same. You know, other colleges have their traditions that never change, “This is how we do it. This is how it’s going to stay.” But this place just keeps constantly reevaluating. Are we doing things well? What could we do better? It’s just constant. It’ll drive you crazy sometimes. Here we go again. It’s to critically assess and keep moving forward and “Are we getting the best out of what we have?” and “Are students having the best experience?” and “What can we do to improve?” It just never stops, and I think that’s a good thing. 126

While Baum may be right that Goucher’s dynamism keeps the College up to date on the latest trends in higher education and boosts enrollment numbers, there is a downside to the onslaught of change embraced by Goucher. Goucher’s break with its legacy as a women’s college has forced it into an identity crisis. As a result, Goucher has become a place that is so busy staying ahead of the next new thing that it often fails to honor its past legacies and traditions.

Amidst all of Goucher’s changes, however, from an urban, Methodist, all women’s college to a wooded, suburban, secular and coeducational institution, Goucher has maintained some aspects of its original mission. More so than many of its more

125 Pringle, 1:09:47.
prestigious competitors, Goucher has distinguished itself by focusing on transformative education as a central facet of its overall mission. Instead of recruiting the most elite and accomplished applicants, Goucher attracts mid-level students, or so called “diamonds in the rough,” and cultivates their talents and ambitions to reach their full potential. Rick Pringle describes his experience of transformative education in the classroom.

I would say that Goucher, since I have been here, has been a place where we don’t get “those” students that would naturally end up at Swarthmore. Now, I have real problems with what I mean by “those” students, but clearly all of the conventional measures of quality that schools are looking at, they are scoring high on those things. . . . We get students who are amazing on paper, and if they had a resume, it would be amazing already. Some of them are just astonishing. But we [also] get students who are diamonds in the rough. The problem with the diamond metaphor . . . is that it lets us believe that the teachers and the institution are the ones that are gonna do all the polishing. We really need a metaphor that’s more vital: a seed, a plant, a shoot. Something where the plant itself has its own character, its own direction, its own sense of being. So I keep thinking of weeds. . . . We get weeds, but weeds are beautiful and weeds are incredible, and who decides what’s the flower and what’s the weed? We do something, we permit something, and of course something happens with students who are moving from junior to senior. They just flower out or they become that polished diamond or something happens, and I think that’s what we do best. How do you market that? I think Goucher is amazing at that. I’ve been to Haverford, and they don’t do that at Haverford. They do not do transformative education. That’s what we do.

With the transition to coeducation in 1987, Goucher began to place greater emphasis on transformative education as an enrollment strategy to attract male academic late bloomers. Elise Seraydarian, director of Admissions in the late 1980s, describes the many male applicants whose academic credentials might not have passed muster at similar colleges.

We certainly took more academic risks on boys. Those were boys who traditionally were capable but perhaps not challenged, had very good test scores but perhaps not great GPAs and therefore maybe not great study

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127 Pringle, 1:13:34.
skills. KC Canada and Rick Pringle did a lot of the data research on coeducation, and in the first four years, they were tracking those kids’ GPAs and the boys’ went way up steadily from where they started as high school seniors to where they graduated as college seniors. Their GPAs went up steadily and surpassed many of the women, so we felt pretty good about retention.\textsuperscript{128}

It is difficult to know for sure whether the improvements in these early men’s grades were a function of greater attention received in the classroom, but previous research on gender and education points to a positive correlation between student-teacher interactions and higher student grades.

For Joseph Cowen, class of 2010, Goucher has been a place that transformed him from a mediocre high school student more interested in sports and parties, to a well-rounded, competitive and engaged student. Cowen describes Goucher as one of his “reach” schools, and admits that his talents as a lacrosse player, not a scholar, were what got him admitted.

\textit{My parents were always a little worried about me. . . . My grades weren’t too terrible. My dad was always worried. He said, “You know once you get into college, you’re really going to have to buckle down and study and everything.” Actually, after I passed my first semester of college, he came up and we went out to dinner and everything. He was really happy because I pulled like a 3.8 my first semester, and he was like, “I’m impressed cause I really didn’t think you were gonna make it through. I thought you were gonna fail first semester.” Well thanks, Dad. After my high school career I wouldn’t put it past him to think that either.}\textsuperscript{129}

Cowen’s story adds weight to Pringle’s theory that Goucher as an institution cannot be wholly credited with the success of its students. For Cowen, peer role models were as significant a part of academic success as his professors, and he recalls competing with fellow members of the lacrosse team to see who could get better grades. His story is evidence of Goucher’s ability to encourage transformation in its students and even, as his

\textsuperscript{128} Interview with Elise Seraydarian, 5 Jan. 2010, Baltimore, MD, 16:33.
\textsuperscript{129} Interview with Joseph Cowen, Nov. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 3:42.
description of competing over grades implies, make academic success a socially desirable achievement.

Overall, the experiences of community members in the twenty years following coeducation at Goucher provide many examples of how gender does make a difference in the college academic environment. Coeducation has contributed to a new and sometimes unequal gender dynamic in the classroom which is more reflective of our society’s prescribed roles for men and women. Not only did coeducation introduce men to the College, it also attracted a new type of woman, one who is more assertive, talkative, and less in need of the protection of an all female environment. The effects of coeducation on Goucher’s curriculum are difficult to discern through short term, qualitative studies such as this one, but the College has emphasized its focus on international education and study abroad while at the same time deemphasizing its former focus on offering a feminist perspective across disciplines. With the decision to admit men, Goucher lost its strongest connection to its historical mission and legacy, which was its commitment to women’s education. As Goucher looks ahead to its future, the College continues to struggle with defining its mission and grapples with the identity crisis brought on by coeducation. Goucher’s study abroad requirement and focus on transformative education are two of the College’s most distinctive qualities, but it has yet to truly solidify its mission as a coeducational institution.
Chapter 5: Boys Being Boys

The Effects of Coeducation on the Identity and Social Environment of Goucher

Perhaps even more obvious than the changes which admitting men brought to Goucher’s mission and academic life, coeducation has had a profound effect on the social fabric of the college. In the fall of 1987, what was once a quiet campus of several hundred undergraduate women was host for the first time to 37 men, or “boys, eighteen, seventeen year old boys,” as Caroline Bauerle, class of 1989, more accurately remembers them. In the early years of coeducation, Goucher’s first men garnered a variety of reputations and labels, among them “entertaining,” “disrespectful,” “pioneers,” and “wiseass.” Whether community members felt irritated or amused by the first male students, few were ambivalent towards them and most could agree that coeducation created a liveliness on campus which was lacking before.

Today, coeducation continues to be a mixed blessing for the College. Goucher has yet to achieve parity of the sexes in admissions, and the unequal ratio of men to women has given men increased power in relationships even as it has subjected them to criticism and prejudice as athletes. Overall, coeducation has changed the campus social environment not only through the introduction of men but also through the introduction of a different kind of woman. Where close-knit, supportive bonds between women were once the norm, today women compete for attention both in the classroom and social arena. Some community members feel that Goucher’s social scene is still a welcoming and friendly environment, yet in negotiating the unequal gender ratio, men and women on campus continue to grapple with forming a more perfect union with each other and with themselves.

130 Interview with Caroline Bauerle, 5 Jan. 2010, Baltimore, MD, 43:51.
Prior to the vote on coeducation in the spring of 1986, the question on the minds of nearly all alumnae, students and faculty, whether they supported or opposed the decision to admit men, was, “What kind of man would attend a former women’s college?” Admissions staff were faced with the challenge of recruiting male students who would be both confident enough to compete alongside intelligent, independent minded women, and sensitive enough to build mature, respectful relationships with their peers. Elise “Lee” Seraydarian, who began working at Goucher as the Director of Admissions in fall of 1987, remembers the difficulty of recruiting men to a college which already suffered from enrollment and marketing problems.

It seems silly, but we were looking for pioneers. We were really looking for young men who were confident enough to float in a sea of women for a while. I remember being at college fairs in the first few years and talking to boys, and they were like, “Yeah we wanna come here! We hear there are like 800 women and 10 men.” And I would look at them and say, “Uh huh. And with those odds, how will you feel if you can’t get a date on Saturday night?” And they would look at you, and go [makes crashing airplane sound]. So that shouldn’t be the reason. Thinking you’re gonna get babes shouldn’t be the reason you’re considering our institution. But we did talk about the kind of guy who could be confident enough to weather that, to not be overwhelmed by the odds, to not be cowed if he couldn’t find a girlfriend if that’s what he really wanted, and to be able to, obviously, hold his own academically, because the faculty weren’t going to make any concessions to fellows not being able to keep up with the rigor of the program.\textsuperscript{131}

Although Seraydarian states that she specifically discouraged men only interested in “getting babes,” from applying to Goucher, Sally Baum and Rick Pringle remember the early coed classes as being populated by exactly this type of man. Even Seraydarian admits that when admissions staffers thought about Goucher’s early male students in hindsight, she admits that, “We kicked ourselves. We kicked ourselves for a while.”\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{131} Interview with Elise Seraydarian, 5 Jan. 2010, Baltimore, MD, 13:47.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 13:36.
What kind of men actually attended Goucher in the early years? Opinions are mixed. John Monheit, Goucher’s first fulltime male student, entered the college as a transfer in the spring of 1987 one semester before the first official coeducational class enrolled that fall. By most accounts in interviews and popular press articles, Monheit was mature enough to understand the sensitivity of Goucher’s struggle with coeducation and handled himself accordingly. In a special article printed in a July 1987 edition of The Sun, Monheit described his experiences the previous semester as Goucher’s first male student. “I felt like I was on display,” he wrote and cited constant scrutiny from the media and his female peers as a distraction and annoyance. People wanted to know everything about Monheit: who he was dating, how it felt to be the only man, whether he was gay. Often, security guards and staff members refused to believe that he was a Goucher student and barred him entry from buildings at night. Monheit recalls a conversation at the dining hall in which his female friends had to vouch for him.

“Get out of here; you’re not a student, you’ve got to pay to get in.”
“He really is a student, he’s our first one.”
“No kidding. All right, man. It’s about time. I want to shake your hand.”

Despite awkward situations like this, Monheit wrote that he had no regrets about his experience at Goucher. After just one month of being at the College, Monheit applied for and was approved to be Goucher’s first male Resident Assistant for the fall 1987 semester. With this position, Monheit gained the added responsibility of acting as a role model, and one of the only male role models, to Goucher’s incoming male freshmen. Like Monheit, Goucher’s early male students received substantial attention for their role as “pioneers,” and were treated as something of a novelty by community

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134 Ibid., 2.
members. Caroline Bauerle remembers the men of the first coed class to be impish and sometimes destructive but ultimately inoffensive.

Now that I think about it, they did wreak a little bit of havoc. This school was not prepared for boys. . . . Here come these boys just doing boy things, throwing footballs around, knocking windows out. This was almost like a shock to the system here, just their presence was a little shocking, just their physicality, and their knocking things down, knocking holes in walls, normal boy things that boys do. . . . No one really knew how to handle that, the fact that they would go into the woods and light things on fire, stuff boys do. I'm the mother of a boy now; I understand it a lot more. . . . I don't think there was any maliciousness. I think it was just boys being boys. I remember them climbing up, there was a balcony outside of Bennett, where my room was. I remember one of the boys climbing up on the balcony. Girls don't do that. One guy was a rock climber, so he had all his rock climbing equipment. He was, like, scaling the wall of the dorm in Jeffrey. Everyone was having a canary over that. They were a little monkey. For us, it was very entertaining, that is for sure.135

Bauerle’s description of male behavior as destructive and physically reckless is a surprisingly gendered assessment for someone educated at a so-called “feminist bastion.” A brief perusal of the campus security blotter today will show that climbing balconies, breaking windows, and lighting things on fire are not normal activities for college students and are certainly not limited to male students when they do occur. Perhaps early Goucher men felt entitled by their sense of being “pioneers,” and the lack of any precedent for male behavior at the College encouraged them to act in more daring and outlandish ways than would normally have been accepted.

Jonah Goldberg, class of 1991, was the poster child for this type of hyper masculine bravado. Goldberg was quoted in a number of newspaper articles on coeducation at Goucher and gained notoriety for his campaign for freshmen class president. His campaign signs, which featured the slogan, “You let me into your school,

135 Bauerle, 49:57.
now let me be your president,” earned him a reputation for immaturity and chauvinism.

The Towson Flier featured Goldberg’s campaign controversy in its December 1987 issue.

Lighten up, Goldberg told the “militant feminists” and “handful of
lesbians,” he perceived to be his critics in a letter to the Quindicim. To
those “who treat men as if we have done you a personal disservice by
being born with genitalia: find your history-of-women textbooks and look
up the definition of ‘discrimination’ and learn it.”136

While Goldberg lost his campaign, other early male students quickly filled Goucher’s
highest student leadership positions. The Sun Magazine reported in December 1990 that
although men represented only 21% of the total student body that year, they occupied the
offices of Student Government president, Junior Class president, editor of the yearbook,
editor of the student newspaper, and editor of the campus literary magazine.137 Only five
years earlier Goucher had prided itself on its numerous leadership opportunities for
women and had made cultivating female leadership a key facet of its mission as a
women’s college. This sudden decline in female leadership after coeducation was
regrettable, opined Goucher Psychology professor Katherine Canada, particularly since
female students represented the largest body of voters. Canada was quoted in The Sun
Magazine saying that women who voted for male candidates were simply “conforming to
what they see in our national leadership positions. Women are in the majority, and yet
they elect mostly men.”138 The decline of female leadership in the early 1990s also
conformed to the fears and predictions of many Goucher alumnae who had opposed
coeducation in 1986.

Coeducation Subseries E The Aftermath, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 18.
137 Kathy Lally, “Big Men on Campus,” The Sun Magazine 2 Dec. 1990 General Series 2 Coeducation
Subseries E The Aftermath, Goucher College Archives, Baltimore, MD, 8.
138 Ibid., 9.
While Bauerle remembers Goucher’s first men as somewhat destructive but essentially entertaining, other community members viewed them more critically. Attracted by Goucher’s disproportionate ratio of women to men, some men capitalized on the opportunity to date or have sex with as many women as they could. Sally Baum, tennis coach and Wellness teacher, remembers that,

_The first two years of coed weren’t that fun. I mean the kind of guys we got here weren’t exactly [hesitates] what we have now. Obviously, they weren’t coming here because they wanted the coed experience. Lord knows why they came here, but it’s a very different kind of guy than we have now. Hanging out the window, whistling at girls, loved the ratio, kind of thought it was funny._ 139 . . . _A lot of the early Goucher men took advantage of Goucher women. It’s all hearsay. [What did you hear from athletes?] That the guys were only interested in, no commitment, no relationships, they were only interested in having sex with the women that were here, and they were counting and all that wonderful stuff. Not all the guys here, but some of them._ 140

A prime example of this immature and disrespectful male behavior was the Ms. Goucher Pageant which offended many women as well as men and sparked a controversy which lasted for years following the event.

The infamous Ms. Goucher pageant of 1992 provided a platform for men to objectify and degrade women’s bodies under the guise of satire and revealed the latent hostility and sexism of many male students on campus. Ms. Goucher began in the spring of 1990 as a Student Government Association sponsored fund raising event in which male students dressed up as female students and competed in a mock beauty pageant for the title of “Ms. Goucher.” Always somewhat sexually explicit, the third annual Ms. Goucher pageant in 1992 moved from the realm of questionable taste to obviously poor taste. The events and aftermath of the pageant were documented by Katharine Canada

139 Interview with Sally Baum, Dec. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 17:36.
140 Ibid., 27:24.
and Rick Pringle in a 1997 study entitled, “Interpreting Cross-Dressing on a College Campus.”

During the “talent” portion, two of the male participants dressed as females performed fellatio on plastic tubes, through which they sucked milk. This performance embodied objectification and sexual submission and was greeted by cheers and screams. Although performers protested their innocence, some audience members publicly denounced the event, claiming it had crossed the line from “play,” to ritualized humiliation.\textsuperscript{141}

Adding to the controversy of the event, the 1992 Ms. Goucher pageant was attended by a number of prospective students, some of whom were so offended by the proceedings that they called their parents to be taken home. In the aftermath of Ms. Goucher, many students wrote letters to the student newspaper, The Quindecim, alternately supporting and condemning the event. One individual wrote,

\begin{quote}
"I remember the flushed, contorted faces of many men in the audience, leering and screaming at the participants on stage. I remember many of the men leaping to their feet in anticipation, bellowing ‘Suck it bitch!’ as two of the participants...performed fellatio on plastic tubes. I remember a fellow behind me...shouting at the performers with glee, ‘If you can suck that through a hose I’ll marry you!’...Quite simply, Ms. Goucher was not funny. The atmosphere was charged with hate and violence. It was a rape atmosphere. And while many of the women, disappointingly enough, were complicit and laughed along with the men, it was mostly the men who were on their feet cheering. It was mostly the men screaming obscenities at the participants. It is the men on this campus who are sponsoring violence against women. And it is men who can stop the violence."
\end{quote}\textsuperscript{142}

The 1992 Ms. Goucher pageant represented the most hostile moment in Goucher’s transition to coeducation and sorely tested the ability of men and women to live and learn together on campus. However, lest we believe that Goucher was populated solely by promiscuous, immature teenage boys in the late 1980s and early 1990s, we must remember that the type of male student described by Baum, Canada and Pringle can be

\textsuperscript{142} Qtd. In Canada and Pringle, 343.
found at colleges across the country and is not specific to Goucher. Some men at Goucher actively opposed the sexism and objectification perpetrated by their peers, including the male student whose letter is quoted above. When remembering the era immediately following the move to coeducation, it is easy to lump all male students into one category of immaturity, but such an assessment is not only sexist but historically inaccurate.

Since the early years of coeducation at Goucher, male students have grown in number and retained some of their old reputations while developing new ones. When asked how to describe the typical “Goucher Man,” many community members interviewed for this paper balked at simple classifications and stated that no Goucher student, man or woman, is typical. However, Matthew Cohen-Price, class of 2010, outlined a number of general categories to describe the social skills of Goucher men.

*I think that there are a couple of different sort of genres of men on campus. I think there were the men who were sort of socially awkward and not hugely accepted in high school. . . . With that, stereotypically, comes a sexual frustration and to an extent, lack of experience. Then that group comes on to campus, and splits into two: those who all of a sudden figure out how to become popular or how to become known and become almost like the sexual, I don’t even know what the word is. “They get a whole lot” sort of people. And then there’s the other segment who was sort of socially awkward and sexually frustrated who remain that. [How does that split occur?] I think that there’s some choice and kind of some randomness. . . . Different people succeed in different environments. The randomness comes from, is there some part of your personality that wasn’t working in the high school social structure that does work here? And then the choice part is, how much do you jump on that? How much do you capitalize on that? . . . If you were the sort of black sheep in high school, and you’re very used to that, and you come to Goucher and all of a sudden people think you’re real cool, you either say, “Cool! I’m not the black sheep anymore,” and you use that. Or you don’t, you never break out of it because you imagine yourself as the black sheep.*

Cohen-Price’s assertions speak to three major aspects of Goucher’s social environment. First, his description of people who come to Goucher as the “black sheep” of their high

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schools is echoed by many community members of many eras. Goucher has long been considered a haven for quirkiness and a place where individuality is supported and valued. Second, Cohen-Price refers to the infamously promiscuous Goucher men who use the gender ratio to their advantage, even at the cost of hurting those around them. Throughout his interview though, Cohen-Price stresses the fact that not all Goucher men fall into the categories of either playboy or nerd. There are those men who both treat women respectfully in relationships and are socially skilled and experienced. There are also women at Goucher who choose to play the field and act promiscuously, but limited by the number of desirable, single men on campus, they are by far the exception and not the rule. Cohen-Price states that, emboldened by the unequal gender ratio, men at Goucher hold a certain degree of power in relationships which women lack.

*People call you when they want you. I think there’s a lot of that. I think there is enough sexual frustration among enough of the female population at Goucher that men who want to capitalize can choose to have women at their beck and call.*

These changes in campus social environment reflect not only the impact which men have had as a new ingredient in the social mix at Goucher, but also the fact that a different kind of woman, perhaps more focused on social life and relationships, now attends the school. The “sexual frustration” which Cohen-Price attributes to women on campus is partially an invention of the coeducation era. As Marilyn Warshawsky and Caroline Bauerle describe, women who attended Goucher as a single-sex college were hardly tearing their hair out for want of male relationships on campus. They simply pursued relationships with men off campus or funneled their energy into other pursuits such as schoolwork, sports, or extracurriculars. According to Pringle and Baum, women

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144 Ibid., 42:32
at Goucher before coeducation pursued different kinds of relationships with each other and were more supportive and less competitive toward other women. This in itself is somewhat of a gendered assessment which reflects how our culture socializes women to be more nurturing and enabling. Sally Baum remembers that the spirit of camaraderie among students was distinctly different before coeducation.

There was a real sense of unity that was here. I also will say it sort of brought a lot of “high school-y” with it, some of the sing-a-longs. You know, pure women type stuff was here that I’d never seen in coed. People would stand up on tables and sing Happy Birthday. You’d never see that in a coed environment. And the freedom to walk up and down in your PJs. I mean back then it was still, “What’s a coed dorm? We don’t let them coexist in dorms.” . . . There was a difference. It was feminine. I don’t know how else to describe it. It was different.  

Baum’s description of female relationships at Goucher was echoed by Angie McBrien, an upperclassmen and co-editor of The Quindecim when Goucher began admitting men in 1987. She was quoted in an article in the Towson Flier in December 1987 saying that coeducation had brought an end to “The Goucher Tradition,” in which women affirmed other women. This “attitude of cooperation and mutual support,” was part of Goucher’s identity before coeducation, the article asserts, and McBrien stated that “there were a whole lot of barriers that one could cross in the classroom because we were all women.” The article presents a somewhat idealized depiction of female relationships at the College, stating that, “at Goucher women never climbed over one another to reach the head of the class. When solving classroom problems, they worked together so that everyone understood, contributed and learned.” It would be unrealistic to infer from this that all Goucher women loved each other before coeducation. However, McBrien’s

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145 Baum, 16:47.
146 Kelly, 16.
comments point out a common tendency among opponents of coeducation to emphasize the close relationships between women and perhaps even exaggerate or romanticize them.

For Pringle, this close knit sense of fellowship between women before coeducation had another name: relational connectedness.

There's some space in our culture where women find it hard to be friends with women. Not hard necessarily in elementary school, but in middle school and high school it becomes really hard. Goucher was, it seems to me, and this is through KC's eyes and then validated by my conversations with other women, that this was a place where that issue was contested, disrupted. Women came through Goucher with friendships that endured forever. If you talk to the alumns, and ask them what was special about Goucher, they don't necessarily name that, but they have friendships that endure forever. They take it for granted. And that's the other thing, if a woman comes to an all-female school she doesn't know that that's what she's getting because she didn't go to the coeducational school. It takes someone, like KC, who went the other route and came through and said, "Oh my god, what's going on here?" Faculty can't necessarily see it because they're in a different place in their lives. They're not going to the damn dances and they're not really aware of that.147

To cite an example of the unique bonds between women at Goucher before coeducation, Pringle recalls a story which Katherine Canada, his colleague in the Psychology Department, told him.

When she would go to some of the student dances, and no, there weren't very many men there, but the women would dance with women. Of course, that could be a gay or lesbian issue, but that's not what she was seeing in its entirety. She was seeing women having interesting friendships with women that she personally had never experienced before. So here's a woman who grew up female in America, in the heartland, in Indiana I believe, had gone to . . . [a school with] fraternities, small school, bigger than Goucher. She'd never seen this before. Pure, pure bonding.148

It would be farfetched to conclude from Pringle's statement that women at Goucher stopped being friends with each other after coeducation. Indeed, all of the current female students interviewed for this project attest to the many close friendships they've

148 Ibid., 50:49.
developed with other women in their time at Goucher. However, coeducation brought out a certain competitiveness between women which has been researched on other college campuses by scholars Dorothy C. Holland and Margaret A. Eisenhart in their book *Educated in Romance*. According to their work, women on coeducational campuses tend to seek validation through their relationships with men rather than through academic achievement or platonic relationships with women. Further, *Educated in Romance* asserts that women place their relationships with other women on a lower level of importance than those with men, and often treat their female friends simply as a resource base for meeting men.149

In addition to impacting student relationships, coeducation has had a profound effect Goucher’s athletic program. The unequal gender ratio on campus may allot more power to men in terms of personal relationships and in-class attention, but it has also subjected men to increased scrutiny as athletes and weakened the support of the Goucher community for its athletic program as a whole. Goucher’s men’s athletic program has been a relatively recent development, springing up at the College only within the last twenty years. Some athletes, particularly male athletes, criticize the College for its less than enthusiastic support of the Athletic Program. Varsity Men’s Lacrosse player Joseph Cowen, class of 2010, spoke throughout his interview about the lack of support among community members for Goucher’s Athletic Program, a sentiment which is evidenced by low attendance at games and social branding of athletes, particularly male athletes, as “dumb jocks.” He states that in high school,

> I was never looked down upon for being an athlete. I’ve seen that here in some cases. Once people get to know me, they’re like “Oh, OK. You’re fine.” But sometimes when they first meet me, they say well this guy’s just

an athlete, he's just a big, dumb animal. . . . It's not fun, I'll tell you that. It's something that was new to me when I came to Goucher, which is one of the things I really didn't like. . . . Sometimes you get looks from people. When I first came here, I had no idea what to expect. I was all smiles. I was talking to everybody, introduced myself to everybody. I was kind of a nut. [laughs] but after a while you kind of start to notice that people aren't responding to you the way you're used to. . . . I remember one time it was my freshman or sophomore year, I was at a bonfire out on the equestrian field, and . . . I was the only athlete there, and I was sitting around talking to all these people, and having a great time, and it somehow came up that I was lacrosse player, and all these people were like, "What?! You're a lacrosse player? I can't believe that. I thought you guys were all just a bunch of idiots." Like really, they couldn't believe I was a lacrosse player because I came off as an intelligent person or as an open-minded person. So that was kind of an eye opener.\textsuperscript{150}

Cowen's comments about being judged for being an athlete are interesting because across the board, individuals interviewed for this project applauded Goucher for its tolerance and inclusive community. Many students at Goucher pride themselves on attending a college that embraces the weird, wacky, and unconventional. Why, then, does it not embrace its athletes? Perhaps the prejudice towards athletes, particularly male athletes, and lack of support for the Athletic Program are a residual effect of the college's resistance to coeducation in the mid-1980s. Many opponents of coeducation during that era stated that they feared Goucher would be overrun by "big, dumb, animals," and the culture of masculinity which men's sports often bring. Today, even though most individuals at Goucher embrace coeducation, many remain resistant to men's sports.

In the years following 1987, coeducation established a certain level of gender inequality between students but also improved campus life by bringing a level of energy and activity to Goucher's social environment in a way that had been lacking before. This surge in campus social activity can be attributed not only to the men who began attending Goucher in 1987 but also to a new kind of woman, one more in search of a college

\textsuperscript{150} Interview with Joseph Cowen, Nov. 2009, Baltimore, MD, 34:24.
experience which balanced academia with social life. When Elise Seraydarian began working at Goucher in fall of 1987, she remembers administrators' excitement at seeing Goucher's campus come back to life after many years of inactivity.

Senior women did still wear their "Better Dead than Coed," t-shirts, and it was mostly the senior women, but that didn't last long either, because they realized pretty quickly that the campus was more lively. My husband and I were living in New Jersey when I took the job and... I lived in a guest room in one of the dorms for about a month... The first night I stayed and then the next morning I saw Rhoda on my walk across campus to work, and she said, "How was your night?" and I said, "Well, I really didn't sleep much. The dorm was really noisy," and she got this big grin on her face and she said, "Really? That's GREAT!" I looked at her horrified and said, "Excuse me?" and she said, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry that you didn't sleep well. But," she said, "a year ago you could walk through any of those dorms at 10 o'clock at night, even during opening week, and you wouldn't hear a sound. Everyone would be behind their door," and she said, "I'm glad that it's lively. I'm glad that it's noisy. I'm glad that there's life on campus. That's what we were hoping to achieve." So I think that it wasn't just the men, it was the kind of women that were being attracted to a coed Goucher that made the campus a little more vibrant.

If the stories and recollections of Goucher's community members are any indication, coeducation has clearly been a mixed blessing for the College's social environment. Just as coeducation has introduced greater challenges to Goucher to remedy gender inequality on campus, so too has it increased the level of liveliness, energy and activity in social life. With the move to coeducation, Goucher's social environment has become more reflective of society's prescribed gender roles for men and women. This is a departure from the era of single-sex education when women were encouraged to think deliberately about gender and challenge their traditional roles as women. In general, Goucher has not been very intentional about creating the space for people to question and experiment with gender. Coeducation introduced an unequal gender dynamic between

151 Seraydarian, 9:35.
men and women on campus in both classroom dynamics and personal relationships which, twenty five years later, is still in the process of being resolved. As students at Goucher conform more closely to society’s prescribed gender roles for men and women, Goucher moves further away from the feminist identity which defined it as a women’s college.
Conclusion: The Next Step in the Transition

*The Goucher Campus is alive with activity and energy these days. Freshman classes are filled to capacity, and pick-up Frisbee and soccer games are a common sight on the quad. This renewed vigor on campus may be attributed in part to the arrival of our largest freshman class since 1970. On opening day, we welcomed 287 new freshmen, including 32 men.*

Rhoda Dorsey penned these words in her letter to the Goucher community several months into the College’s first semester as a coeducational institution. While it is true that the freshman class of 1987 was one of the largest Goucher had seen in years, it was also an anomaly in size compared to the coed classes which followed. The first three years following Goucher’s move to coeducation saw enrollment decline even more precipitously, causing some community members to wonder whether coeducation had been the panacea to Goucher’s financial problems after all. However, by the mid-1990s, enrollment once again picked up, and Goucher has been growing steadily to the present day.

The small blip on Goucher’s enrollment radar immediately following coeducation was, altogether, not very surprising. A first year coeducational college with several hundred women and 30 men is a novelty. A second and third year institution with those stats is simply unappealing. In order to move forward as a successful and vibrant liberal arts institution, Goucher left behind its legacies and traditions as a women’s college and chose to transition to coeducation as Ethel Viti advised in her 1986 report, “with no apologies, no regrets.” By treating coeducation as nothing exceptional, Goucher lost the opportunity to deliberately examine the effects of gender inequality in and outside the classroom and continues to grapple today with an identity crisis brought on by the mixed

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blessing of coeducation. Goucher is a dynamic and trendsetting institution but it has retained little connection to its past and continues to struggle with forming a concrete mission and identity today.

With the decision to admit men in 1986, Goucher gained and lost certain aspects of its mission and identity. The College gained a greater liveliness in campus social life and activity, but lost the studious atmosphere of supportive female bonding which characterized Goucher as a women's college. Overall, student identity at Goucher has become more reflective of our society's prescribed gender roles for men and women. While this might be a more realistic representation of how men and women interact with each other outside the Goucher community, it also has introduced a level of gender inequality in the College classroom and social environment, and manifests itself through events such as the 1992 Ms. Goucher pageant. In transitioning to coeducation, Goucher has reinforced our society's unequal constructions of gender, rather than challenging men and women to break out of them.

Despite the negative implications of coeducation though, the time to proclaim the mantra of "better dead than coed," has passed. The decision to admit men has been made. Moving on to the future, Goucher can only benefit from examining coeducation in the deliberate and thorough manner which it failed to do in the late 1980s. Only through further dialogue and further discussion will Goucher be able to form a more perfect union between men and women and become an intentional and egalitarian coeducational institution.

The lack of published material on the College from the last twenty years, aside from Pringle and Canada's articles, indicates that Goucher has only just begun to
examine itself as an institution. We need more studies on both coeducation and on Goucher history which transcend the boundaries of individual disciplines and combine quantitative and qualitative data to tell the College’s story. This study focused on the impact of coeducation on Goucher’s mission and identity, but future studies might examine, for example, how the study abroad requirement stands to shape the College’s future, or whether Goucher should revisit or retain any of its traditions or legacies from when it was a woman’s college. Perhaps it does not, but if this is the case, then Goucher must make that decision intentionally and allow all stakeholders to contribute to the debate.

There are other steps which Goucher might take to encourage greater dialogue about coeducation. Research prizes or fellowships for studies examining either the history of Goucher, coeducation, or gender dynamics on campus would encourage students to examine these issues more critically as part of independent projects. Coeducation at Goucher can be studied from almost any disciplinary perspective, including history, women’s studies, peace studies, sociology, psychology, anthropology, or economics. Administrators might consider creating a Summit or Symposium on Coeducation which would bring together all of these perspectives and connect alumnae/i, students, faculty, staff and administrators in order to examine gender dynamics at Goucher from a variety of perspectives. Another step would be to establish an interdisciplinary curricular requirement for students to participate in a project, class, or event related to Goucher history before they graduate. A Goucher History Club could connect current and former students of the College through social, networking, or volunteering events, and might even help reconnect those alumnae who felt betrayed by coeducation. This would build
on the success which the Alumnae/i Office has had in introducing opponents of coeducation to current male students at Goucher.

To remain competitive in the future as a dynamic, liberal arts institution, Goucher will need to call on the support and talent of all its community members, and to confront head on the implications of its most controversial decision. The move to coeducation was a contentious and complex issue at Goucher because people feared how it would change the College’s mission and identity. Steve Zimmer, class of 1991, was perceptive enough to recognize the impact which being part of Goucher’s first coed class would have on the College’s future. In Kathy Lally’s 1990 article on coeducation for The Sun Magazine he stated, “It [coeducation] is the most scary and stressful and exciting experience I’ve ever been part of. We’re going to define the identity of Goucher for 20 to 30 years from now.”153 As Zimmer suggests, Goucher is still evolving as a result of coeducation. The decision to admit men in 1986 was one of the most divisive and painful in the College's history, but in the continuing transition to coeducation, students and scholars, alumnae/i and administrators have the opportunity to revive Goucher’s past and write its future for the next 125 years.

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