

AMERICAN LEADERS IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION: AN ORAL HISTORY

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Victor Hugo, the renowned French poet and novelist, believed nothing in the world was more powerful than “an idea whose time has come.” As though its hour has struck, a new idea emerges and the special men and women who represent the idea are not often unduly remarkable or superior beings; they need not be the most brilliant and ablest of their time. Their particular distinction — the unique quality that sets them apart from all others — lies in their dedication and commitment to the refinement, development, and perpetuation of an idea whose time has come.

Dean Herman Schneider was such a person. In 1906, at the University of Cincinnati, he gave voice and substance to *cooperative education*, an idea whose time had come. Since then, numerous men and women in such vital roles as educators, administrators, coordinators, research specialists, employers, and student-employees have contributed substantially to the growth and success of the movement.

Among these are a select few who are approaching or have entered retirement, whom we should recognize for the especially prominent and positive manner in which they have forwarded the idea and ideals of cooperative education. Moreover, since the outstanding leaders possess valuable experiences, insights, and historical perspectives, I believed that a permanent and personal record should be developed. I felt that these leaders should be interviewed — in person if possible — and their responses taped and preserved for the benefit of those who will champion cooperative education in its fourth quarter century.

A proposal to that effect was submitted to Harry N. Heinemann, Editor of *The Journal of Cooperative Education*. In turn, he presented the proposal to the Cooperative Education Association Board where it was enthusiastically endorsed and partially funded (July 7, 1978).

Present space does not permit me to relate in detail the wealth of historical data and astute insights eventually recorded. Nor can words adequately convey the warmth and inspiration I experienced as I listened to them. Thus, copies of the

tapes have been donated to the CEA Board (c/o E.R. Pettebone, CEA Executive Secretary, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809) and to the Cooperative Education Research Center, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115 where they are available for review. This paper outlines the procedures, identifies the participants, and provides a synthesis of the findings.

The Procedure

CEA Board members were asked to recommend individuals whom they felt should be included in the study. The initial 19 names submitted were co-op professionals.

I then asked each participant in the study to identify two or three employers who, over the years, have made significant contributions to the movement. They, along with others who do not appear in this report, will be included as I extend the study in the future. Space considerations dictated that several outstanding co-op supporters could not appear in the present study, but no person was arbitrarily or intentionally omitted.

James C. Chambers, President of CEA (1978-1979), invited and encouraged all 19 persons to participate. About two weeks later, I forwarded relevant details and materials. Since travel monies were not available, I provided cassette tapes and interview sheets. Participants were instructed to state their names and then record and answer each question in the order presented. I asked for responses that were thorough, candid, conversational; recommended the use of examples and experiences and included a final question that permitted a discussion of concerns not covered in previous responses.

Questions

Interview questions sought to elicit information about the career development of the co-op leaders as well as their perceptions regarding the history and future of cooperative education:

- A. What are some of the factors *and* who were some of the "significant individuals" that made an early contribution to your career and life?
- B. What were some of the critical choice points and decisions that influenced the direction your career development has taken?
- C. How and when (approximate date) did you first become involved in cooperative education?
- D. Since that time, how have you been involved in cooperative education?
- E. What are some of your earliest and fondest memories of the movement?

- F. What were some of the predominant feelings about co-op among students, faculty, and employers during those early years?
- G. What were the major problems or issues facing co-op then, and how do they compare to those faced today?
- H. In your opinion, what will be the critical issues that cooperative education leaders will have to address in the future?
- I. What do you consider to be the high point in your professional life?
- J. What do you consider to be your major contribution(s) to co-op?
- K. What are your retirement plans?
- L. Is there anything else about yourself or the co-op movement that you would like to discuss that has not been covered in your answers to the preceding questions?

Participants

Fifteen of the 19 invited persons agreed to participate; a sixteenth agreed to supply a tape but it has not arrived in time to be included in this report. Another, not yet retired, was on sabbatical leave and his office staff indicated that he was not available to contribute at the present time. A third individual who has been retired for several years apparently misunderstood the nature of the study. He felt that others who are currently active as leaders were better qualified than himself. Only one person failed to respond at all, even after two follow-up letters.

Nine of the 15 participants are retired; six are approaching retirement. The biographical sketches presented alphabetically below include information drawn primarily from Questions C, D, I, and J.

Robert B. Auld. Auld retired as Assistant Dean Emeritus for Cooperative Education, Cleveland State University (formerly Fenn College), September 1, 1970. He was first involved as a faculty member (1946-1954) and co-op coordinator (1952-1960) before serving as Cleveland State's Director of Cooperative Education (1960-1970). Auld considers the high points of his career to be his tenure as co-op director and his organization of the state-wide Ohio Conference on Cooperative Education ("Higher Education in Partnership with a Productive Society," 1967). He has numerous publications and has served widely as a consultant.

Stewart B. Collins. Collins' first experience with cooperative education was as a co-op student (Drexel University, 1936-1941). He became a co-op coordinator for Drexel's Business Administration students in 1948 and was appointed Assistant Director five years later. He became Director in 1962, and he feels that one of his major contributions to the movement has been the development of the Drexel

University Plan. Collins continues as Drexel's Co-op Director and served as the Executive Secretary for CEA from 1966 to 1978. He identifies high points as his appointment as Director and his leadership offices in CED and CEA.

J. Dudley Dawson. Dawson retired from Antioch College in 1967 as Vice-President and Dean of Students Emeritus, but like many of his "retired" colleagues, he remains active as a consultant and writer. His earliest association with co-op came as Chair of Antioch's Math Department (1924-1933). After two years as Director of Training for the Tennessee Valley Authority, he returned to Antioch and served as Director of Cooperative Education (1935-1953) until his 1953 promotion to Vice-President and Dean of Students. He considers his service to students at Antioch as perhaps his most satisfying achievement.

Among Dawson's multiple contributions to the movement are the operation of an effective co-op program in the liberal arts and sciences, the promotion of the broader educational and career development uses of the co-op work experience, the pioneering of new models including planned learning objectives, and services as a writer and consultant.

Stanley E. Fisher. Fisher, Assistant Dean and Professor Emeritus, Speed Scientific School (College of Engineering), University of Louisville, retired in 1974, after having served as Professor and Chair of the Department of Cooperative Education and Placement since 1952. He cites his recognition as a Professor Emeritus for a job well done and CED's "Clement J. Freund Certificate of Appreciation for Meritorious Service" (1976) as high points. Fisher continues to chair several state and regional committees, and he has received numerous citations for his distinguished service, leadership, and contributions, particularly in the area of vocational-technical education.

Clement J. Freund. Freund retired in 1962 as Professor of Engineering, Dean Emeritus, College of Engineering and Science, University of Detroit. He had served as Dean since 1932. His first involvement with cooperative education came as a student in 1919. Freund considers his opportunity to serve as President of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE; 1948) and his selection by the Ford Foundation to serve as an advisor to the government of Pakistan (1958-1960) as the two major highlights in his career. He feels his most significant contribution to the co-op movement came when he chaired the ASEE-CED committee that formulated the Society's official statement on the objectives and policies of cooperative engineering education ["The Cooperative System: A Manifesto," (1946)]. An additional testimony to his life and service is the Clement J. Freund Award for Meritorious Service in Cooperative Education that ASEE instituted in 1976 naming him the first recipient.

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Donald C. Hunt. Hunt, Director of the Division of Cooperative Education, Career Planning and Placement, University of Detroit, was first involved with co-op as an aeronautical engineering student. After graduating from the University of Detroit (1938), Hunt served with the engineering staff at General Motors before returning to his alma mater. He became Director of the Cooperative Education Engineering Program in 1945 and has since expanded the program to other majors. Highlights cited by Hunt are the honorary doctorate from the University of the Pacific (1977), and a recent surprise banquet and "roasting" by cooperative education peers, associates, and employers in Michigan (1977). Major contributions include his role in the founding of CEA (1964), publication of *Fifty Views of Cooperative Education* (1973), and consulting services in the U.S. and abroad. He has directed the Midwest Center for Co-op since 1972.

George H. Miller. Miller, Director of the Southeastern Center for Cooperative Education since 1969, is perhaps most widely known for his involvement in the training of co-op professionals and support personnel and his role in the founding of CEA. Prior to his present position, Miller served as the University of South Florida's Director of Cooperative Education (1960-1972). One of the first leaders of co-op training programs, Miller has conducted workshops and consulted nationally and internationally.

Miller considers the establishment of the Southeastern Center for Cooperative Education to be the highpoint in his professional life and, with some 3500 participants served to date, perhaps his major contribution to the co-op movement as well.

Wanda B. Mossbacker. Mossbacker, Associate Dean of Professional Development (Director of Cooperative Education/Professional Practice Program) and Professor of Professional Development, University of Cincinnati, at the time of her retirement (1975), first learned about co-op in high school. After graduating from the University of Cincinnati's Cooperative Education Program (1934), she worked as a personnel administrator with the Kroger Company's Corporate Offices (1934-1942) and employed co-op students. She returned to the University of Cincinnati in 1945 where service as co-op coordinator and eventually as program director spanned 30 years. Mossbacker's professional highpoints include the opportunity (only two years after graduation) to be the personnel administrator responsible for all women employees in the Kroger Company; her elections as Vice-President of the Association of College Admissions Counselors and President of the International Association of Personnel Women; her appointment as full professor and later as Co-op Director at a time when women were not generally afforded such recognition.

Among her many contributions to the movement are consultive services, a significant role in establishing one of the first two-year co-op programs (within the University of Cincinnati) especially designed to meet the needs of women students, and leadership of a quality program where she insisted that career selection courses and career counseling be an integral part of each student's co-op experience.

Max B. Robinson. Robinson, who retired in 1959 as Dean Emeritus of Cooperative Education, Cleveland State College (formerly Fenn College), was one of Dean Herman Schneider's first co-op engineering students (University of Cincinnati, 1907). He also has the distinction of being the first co-op student to become a coordinator (University of Cincinnati, 1912-1916). Professional experience prior to his 1933 employment as Fenn College's Director of Cooperative Education include positions in business and co-op directorship roles with the University of Akron and Evansville College (now the University of Evansville). The opportunity to study and work under Dean Schneider and to be an early and successful leader in cooperative education highlight his life and service.

F. George Seulberger. Seulberger, also a product of Dean Schneider's cooperative education engineering program (1920-1925), retired as Assistant Dean and Director of Cooperative Education of the Technological Institute of Northwestern University in 1971 where he had served since 1940. Prior experience included engineering sales and a co-op coordinator position (Drexel University, 1930-1938). Seulberger identifies the opportunity to establish a new cooperative education program in a large, prestigious university (Northwestern) as the high-point and major contribution of his professional life.

Bruce C. Stoughton. Stoughton, who established the University of Houston's Cooperative Education Program in 1959, served as Director until his 1977 retirement. As one of three persons to both Chair CED (1970-1971) and be President of CEA (1976-1977), Stoughton fostered the development of a positive relationship between the two groups. Professional high points cited by Stoughton include the initiation of the University of Houston's Co-op Program, the many friends he has made in cooperative education, and his leadership roles with CEA and CED. As Chair of CED, Stoughton appointed a committee to write the accreditation guidelines which were subsequently adopted by the Engineers Council for Professional Development. He considers this action and his support of the effort to be one of his major contributions to the co-op movement.

Wiley Thomas. Thomas, who retired as Professor Emeritus, College of Engineering, The University of Tennessee in 1976, spent 46 years in the College of Engineering. He began as a Mechanical Engineering Co-op student and later

held a variety of teaching and administrative posts. He notes that his primary interest for 25 years (1942-1967) was the Cooperative Engineering Scholarship Program; he was appointed Assistant Dean of Engineering and Director of the Cooperative Engineering Scholarship Program in 1953.

Arden L. Travis. Travis, Director of Experiential Learning Programs for the College of Business, Division of Career Education, Rochester Institute of Technology, first supported their co-op program as a member of the faculty (1954-1961). He became a co-op coordinator for business administration and accounting in 1961 and assumed responsibility for all experiential learning programs in the College of Business in 1970. Travis cites the opportunity to work with employers and the faculties of 11 co-op colleges on his doctoral dissertation, "An Evaluation of Cooperative Positions in a College of Business," as one of the most memorable portions of his professional life. In addition, he is understandably proud and appreciative of the active involvement of *all* full-time faculty in the Institute's co-op program. Travis has been especially active at state and local levels, but he has also served on several CEA committees, published in the field, and otherwise contributed to the nationwide growth of cooperative education.

Frank Vandegrift. Vandegrift, Director of Auburn University's Cooperative Education Program since 1966, began his involvement with co-op as an engineering student at Georgia Tech (1942). He also graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary and worked as an industrial missionary in the Belgian Congo and as an engineer for the Alabama Power Company before coming to Auburn as an Assistant Director of Cooperative Education in 1964.

Under his leadership, Auburn's co-op program has grown from 8 curricula in engineering to 55 throughout the University. Vandegrift has served as Vice-Chair and Chair for CED (1968-1969; 1969-1970) and Vice-President and President of CEA (1970-1971; 1972-1973), and he has published several widely used co-op materials.

Roy L. Wooldridge. Wooldridge, Northeastern University's Vice-President for Cooperative Education since 1967, has held a variety of co-op related posts since joining the University as an instructor in 1949. Among these: Professor; Dean and Director of Cooperative Education; and, Director of the Center for Cooperative Education. He has also assumed vital roles in the National Commission for Cooperative Education ranging from consultant (1962) to Executive Director (1974) and President (1977 to date). Wooldridge identifies his Chairship of CED (1959), the CEA Presidency (1964), and the Honorary Doctor of Technical Letters Degree bestowed by Cincinnati Technical College (1978) as high-points in his career. In addition to his many contributions at Northeastern Uni-

versity and through the National Commission, Wooldridge has forwarded cooperative education through numerous publications and consultive functions.

Additional Honors

Nine of the fifteen individuals interviewed here have received CEA's prestigious Dean Herman Schneider Award for Outstanding Leadership in Cooperative Education: Collins, Dawson, Freund, Hunt, Miller, Mossbacker, Seulberger, Vandegrift, and Wooldridge. Fisher and Thomas have received the Clement J. Freund Certificate of Appreciation awarded annually by CED prior to 1979. In 1979, the focus of the award changed and it is now given by ASEE of which CED is a division. Freund was the initial recipient (1979) and the honor is hereafter designated The Clement J. Freund Award for Meritorious Service to Cooperative Education. An honor of a different nature is that Collins, Dawson, Hunt, Miller, and Wooldridge were among those nine far-sighted individuals who founded the Cooperative Education Association!

Career Development Factors

Donald E. Super (*The Psychology of Careers*, 1957) and other career psychologists in recent years have shown us that career development is more than a single event, such as the selection of a vocation; the process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. As such, our development may be influenced by a variety of cultural, social, economic, educational, and chance factors.

I listened with interest as the leaders of the cooperative education community fondly recalled those very special individuals and circumstances that contributed to their careers and lives. Not surprisingly, the majority spoke of the positive influence their families exerted — mother, father, siblings, and later their own mates and children. Several participants described the impact that college and precollege teachers had made, while others focused on their associations with co-op professionals.

Robinson, for example, was a student and later a co-op coordinator under Dean Herman Schneider. Robinson went to Cleveland State as Director of Cooperative Education and was eventually succeeded by Auld who had served as a coordinator under him. Seulberger was also a student in Dean Schneider's co-op program; he later became Director of Co-op at Northwestern University. Hunt worked under Dean Freund and became Director of Co-op at the University of Detroit at Freund's request. At least 8 of the 15 interviewed (Collins, Freund, Mossbacker, Robinson, Seulberger, Thomas, Vandegrift, and Wooldridge) indicated that they had been cooperative education students. All gave

tribute to one or more persons, whether parent, teacher, or co-op professional, who had served as a significant role model to them during critical phases of their career development. We, in turn, look to these leaders to learn what we may from their professional lives and offer our words of appreciation.

Space does not permit full coverage of those critical choice points that brought these leaders to their present stages of career development. Several referred to chance factors, to simply being "at the right place at the right time." Closer examination reveals, however, that while the directions taken were not always fully planned, *planful behavior* was involved. The decision to go to college, and, in many cases, to a co-op college; the choice of one job offer or one location over another; participation in professional activities associated with their jobs; all these factors, and more, contributed to the creation of some opportunities and their availability for others.

Retirement (Question K), properly understood, is a further phase in one's career development. Like one's vocation, the content and quality of retirement may be affected by a variety of circumstances such as health, accident, economics, and so on. It need not, however, be a nonproductive, haphazard, and random stage in life.

Those participants not retired at the time of the study (Collins, Hunt, Miller, Travis, Vandegrift, Wooldridge) gave clear indication of their intention to remain active contributors to cooperative education when formal employment is terminated. Hunt, for example, is interested in conducting research on employer attitudes toward cooperative education; Travis plans to complete a book of readings; all hope to have opportunities to provide consultive services, travel, and pursue their hobbies.

Those who are retired have indeed remained active contributors, although health problems, economics, and family considerations have restricted the activities of some. Most have traveled, spent time with hobbies, and continued to promote co-op through writing and consulting. Dawson, for example, has published, consulted with the U.S. Office of Education, and currently consults with some 20 colleges. Mossbacker, who has also published, consulted, and served as a reader for USOE, continues to work with CEA and the Women's Personnel Association. She has traveled extensively, does volunteer hospital work, plays bridge and golf, and is taking a language course at the University. She notes: "In short, I am so busy now that I do not have time to do some of the things that I had time to do while I was working."

Some words of advice are shared with those of us whose career development does not yet include retirement. Stoughton warns that we should not "... wait

until tomorrow is your last day" to plan for retirement. Fisher encourages "all of my friends, all those connected with cooperative education, to develop hobbies during their career employment years. My hobbies are pleasurable and certainly take the pressures off every day life." Robinson, who has been retired for 20 years, cautions us to keep properly dated, written records of all transactions and correspondence. Each of these leaders, through continued service, reminds us that productive, meaningful living need not end with retirement.

Past, Present, and Future Issues

Readers who may eventually review the tapes in full will hear interesting and informative recollections of the early history of cooperative education. For some, such as Max Robinson and Dudley Dawson, those early and fond memories (Question E) developed before or during the depression years; for others, such as George Miller and Bruce Stoughton, the tumultuous sixties, the founding of CEA, and the rapid expansion of cooperative education are recalled. The predominant student, faculty, and employer attitudes toward co-op during its infancy (Question F) were, as one might expect, influenced by a variety of economic, educational, and philosophical developments.

Future issues for cooperative education advocates (Question H), according to these leaders, are much the same as those faced in the past and present (Question G). Although several participants were quite adamant and explicit regarding their position on certain issues, I have chosen, in the interest of objectivity, to report the concerns in descriptive terms. No attempt has been made to offer specific direction for their resolution. Many of the issues must be addressed within a given college; others impact the cooperative education community at large. While there may be some debate over the classification of a particular concern, most issues tend to fall within one of the categories presented below.

Models

To meet future needs, cooperative education must have quality models and well designed programs. Student, faculty, and employer attitudes toward cooperative education may vary according to the format adopted: parallel/extended day versus alternating, mandatory versus optional, credit versus non-credit.

We will face an ever-increasing mandate to develop and refine models that more adequately serve the needs of the rising number of non-traditional students who will be entering our colleges and universities (eg., minorities, the handicapped, older adults). We will need to develop models that emphasize a breadth of educational experiences and foster human flexibility and adaptability. We will

need to provide programs that will more adequately serve students in the Liberal Arts, as well as improve those which serve students in the Sciences, Business, and Engineering.

Personnel

The rapid expansion of cooperative education in recent years has brought many into positions of leadership who were not fully prepared for such roles. Moreover, turnover among employers and site supervisors, among faculty, co-op coordinators and directors, and the expansion of given programs will magnify the need for improved training programs. Training centers may have to become more mobile and more comprehensive in the delivery of services. While it is not likely, or even desirable, that specific standards be set for the selection of co-op directors and coordinators, research may lead to guidelines which may a) more effectively structure the training of such individuals, and b) aid in the screening and selection of leaders for our programs.

Fiscal Responsibility

The need to establish solid institutional financial commitment, especially in preparation for the absence of federal funding, is critical. Inflation may undermine our best efforts. Thus, we may need to seek ways to shift some of the responsibility to the private sector through the development of industry or business supported grants. At the same time, we may choose to seek tax rebates for co-op employers and otherwise encourage their expanded support.

We need to develop strategies for coping with slow periods such as recessions. We must prepare for the anticipated decreases in college enrollment. Co-op budgets may be undermined and programs will suffer to the degree that we are not prepared.

Delivery and Maintenance

The future will require the continued development of quality work-learn stations that: a) focus on quality rather than quantity; b) offer increased levels of responsibility and opportunities for learning as students demonstrate their readiness to handle them; and, c) permit the matching of supply (of students) with demand (of employer needs).

Lest it be forgotten that cooperative education is an *educational program* (not a means to solve social or economic ills), there will be a constant need to orient administrators, faculty, students, employers, government officials, and the public concerning the purpose and focus of co-op.

Rapidly expanding co-op programs may result in watered-down supervision; we must provide for effective and thorough college-based and site supervision. Also, we need to recognize that there is the potential for saturation of the job market, at least within certain fields or geographical areas. Unless we branch out, expand the employment opportunities, some students may be forced to take positions of lesser quality and opportunity. In addition, the establishment and expansion of additional co-op programs may require us to foster cooperation between programs in such areas as transfer of credit, housing, job development, and training.

Professionalism and Credibility

As individual program designs and goals become increasingly diverse, the public may become confused. Already we are being asked: "Who speaks for the movement? CEA? CED? The National Commission?" Although the emergence of an umbrella organization is highly unlikely, the success of cooperative education in the future may depend upon the promotion and development of constructive communication systems among those who support the movement.

There are few who would advocate that all co-op programs fit the same mold; many would oppose the establishment of any kind of accreditation agency for co-op. However, the cooperative education leaders participating in this study were of one accord in their call for *quality*. The desire to maintain professional credibility and the educational objectives of cooperative education requires that we give definition to that term! Although the effort will not be a simple one, we must more clearly identify those standards of excellence which exemplify quality cooperative education programs.

Summary

Cooperative education is indeed "an idea whose time has come," but an idea has no life apart from those who give their lives to it. There are many, of course, who have contributed to the growth and development of cooperative education. Through this "oral history" and a review of tape recorded responses to a series of questions, we have learned much about the career development, the commitment, and the contributions of 15 very special leaders in the history of cooperative education. They have shared their perceptions with reference to the past, present and future of the movement. They challenge and inspire us to forge ahead. I offer this synthesis in tribute to each of these outstanding leaders in cooperative education.