

Anna Wellner

Service Learning as an Alternative Academic Trend in U.S. Higher Education from the late-1960s to the mid-1980s: A Case Study from Michigan State University

ABSTRACT

The article sheds light on the way in which alternative academic trends that originated alongside student protests in the late-1960s and early-1970s influenced higher education in the U.S. It focuses on a case study from Michigan State University (MSU), analysing the initiation and implementation process of service learning, an alternative trend in education that combined community service with academic education, from the late-1960s to the mid-1980s. It examines the roles different stakeholders at the local level (i.e., students, faculty, and administrators) as well as others on the national level (i.e., politicians and education commissioners) played in influencing that process. The case of service learning at MSU exemplifies that an alternative trend, one introduced from the bottom up, could become a standard academic practice, yet one that was not implemented without numerous adjustments and compromises. This article will demonstrate the pedagogical method's execution and how its educational goals changed according to common standards in higher education that were usually established from the top down.

Keywords: service learning; alternative academic trend; student protest; U.S. higher education; university administration

Introduction

Since the 1960s, higher education has expanded in many countries around the globe. More students than ever now attend academic institutions, and the specialisation and fragmentation of knowledge as well as the number of academic disciplines increases

continuously with scientific expertise often guiding political agendas and actions.¹ Given the growing relevance of science and scientific institutions in modern societies, it seems surprising how infrequently they form subjects of inquiry. The history of higher education offers much room for exploration, and the many lessons to be learned from such study can guide future academic activities. One important topic that merits further study centres on the student protests of the 1960s and their influence on higher education.² The protests covered diverse topics, yet academic matters also played a prominent role.³ Students and faculty were discussing alternative forms of teaching and learning.⁴ They also critically disputed how institutions of higher education should relate to society in general and to surrounding communities in particular. The student protest era is also a vital research topic to use in analysing bottom-up movements in higher education, especially those that examine students' possible influence as regards changes in academic processes and structures.⁵

- 1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018), Population with tertiary education (indicator), doi: 10.1787/0b8f90e9-en (accessed on 1 May 2018); Michael Gibbons et al.: *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*, London 1994; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): *Scientific Advice for Policy Making: The Role and Responsibility of Expert Bodies and Individual Scientists*, OECD Science, Technology and Industry Policy Papers, No. 21, OECD Publishing, Paris 2015, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js3311jcpwb-en> (accessed on 1 May 2018).
- 2 The year 1968 has become an icon of the protest movement at large (Wolfgang Kraushaar: *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*, Hamburg 2000; Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (ed.): *1968: Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Göttingen 1998). However, the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s were neither bound to a certain period, nor a single coherent movement. Although protests occurred globally, they were likewise fragmented into local events (for an introductory overview, see Martin Klimke: *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties*, Princeton, N.J. 2010; Roderick A. Ferguson: *We Demand: The University and Student Protests*, Berkeley 2017; Caroline Hoeflerle: *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties*, Abingdon 2013).
- 3 For works on the influence of student protests on academia see: Julie A. Reuben: *Reforming the University: Student Protests and the Demand for a "Relevant" Curriculum*, in: Gerard J. DeGroot (ed.): *Student Protest: The Sixties and After*, London and New York 1998, pp. 153–168; Wolfgang Kermer (ed.): "1968" und Akademiereform: Von den Studentenunruhen zur Neuorganisation der Stuttgarter Akademie in den siebziger Jahren, Ostfildern 1999; Rainer Rosenberg/Inge Münz-Koenen/Petra Boden (eds.): *Der Geist der Unruhe: 1968 im Vergleich: Wissenschaft - Literatur - Medien*, Berlin 2000; Mikaila Mariel Lemonik: *Student Activism and Curricular Change in Higher Education*, London 2016.
- 4 See the contribution by Wilfried Rudloff in this issue.
- 5 Obviously, activism spanned all professional ranks within the institutions of higher education. Faculty and administration participated in the course of events, as did students (Cf. Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, New York, London 1993, ch. 2). Therefore, whenever the article refers to 'student protests'

This article examines student volunteerism, later often referred to as ‘service learning’, as one example of a trend in higher education emerging in the wake of the protest era, and demonstrates how it developed over time. Robert Sigmon and William Ramsay established the term ‘service learning’ in the late-1960s. The two educators had organised special programmes that aimed at providing internships with the U.S. *Atomic Energy Commission* to students who were studying science. They later defined ‘service learning’ as “the integration of the accomplishment of a public task with conscious educational growth”.⁶ While different stakeholders employed the term continuously throughout the following decades, its underlying significance and definitions varied. In 1993, the National Community and Service Act provided a national definition and officially sanctioned framework. The act defined service learning as

a method—(A) under which students [...] learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that—(i) is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; (ii) is coordinated with an [...] institution of higher education [...] and with the community; and (iii) helps foster civic responsibility; and (B) that—(i) is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, [...] and (ii) provides structured time for the students [...] to reflect on the service experience.⁷

Even though the definition aimed at being applicable to different programmes nationally, the actual implementations varied. Yet, the act officially recognised service learning’s contribution to students’ academic education. Today, service learning remains very popular at institutions of higher education around the world, especially in the U.S.⁸

or ‘activism’, it always takes into account that faculty members and administrators participated in the events.

- 6 Robert Sigmon: Service-Learning: Three Principles, in: Synergist, the Journal of ACTION’s National Student Volunteer Program 8:1 (1979), pp. 9–11, p. 9.
- 7 The National and Community Service Act of 1990. [As amended through 17 December 1999, P.L. 106–170], p. 5; at: https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cncs_statute.pdf (accessed on 24 April 2018).
- 8 Since the early 2000s, service learning has received international attention. Various educational systems throughout the world have introduced different forms of public education into their curricula in schools and institutions of higher education, using U.S. models as inspiration. For current international literature, see Jun Xing/Carol Hok Ka Ma (eds.): *Service-Learning in Asia: Curricular Models and Practices*, Hong Kong 2010; Sally Matthews: *Teaching and Researching Africa in an “Engaged” Way: The Possibilities and Limitations of “Community Engagement”*, in: *JHEA/RESA* 8:1 (2010), pp. 1–21; Anna Maria Baltés/Manfred Hofer/Anne Sliwka (eds.): *Studierende übernehmen Verantwortung: Service-Learning an deutschen Universitäten*, Weinheim 2007.

This article focuses on the development of service learning at MSU. The institution has a long and well-documented history of offering voluntary projects. I will describe how student volunteerism emerged alongside student protests, examine the progress of the trend over time, and analyse the role other stakeholders played in influencing its operational goals and practices. I will explain why and how actors from outside academia, such as U.S. presidents, their administrations and a national education commission, influenced and guided theoretical assumptions and pedagogical objectives of service learning or voluntary programmes over time. My central claim is that university administrators played a decisive role in mediating between educational debates and their practical implementation at the institutional level. As the case of volunteerism at MSU will show, students' potential to influence administrative decision making soon faded away after the protest era of the late-1960s ended.

The history of student volunteerism as an alternative academic development remains understudied. In particular, its influence on higher education in the second half of the 20th century merits further scholarly attention. Current research either broadly deals with such phenomena as 'civic engagement' or examines different forms of student volunteerism over a longer period.⁹ Thus far, only a few historic accounts studying the development of service learning in the U.S. exist. One of the best-known is *A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future*.¹⁰ The editors, Timothy Stanton, Dwight D. Giles, and Nadinne Cruz, compiled interviews and autobiographical notes from initiators of volunteer projects from various regions of the U.S. from the 1960s to the 1990s. However, the work rarely reflects on overall educational discourses that might have affected programme execution over the years.

The article is part of my larger research on the history of service-learning in the U.S. In my PhD thesis, I currently analyse the influence of education policy discourses on the development of service learning at Michigan State University between 1967 and 1995. I argue that the history of educational developments, such as service-learning programmes, cannot be understood by focusing only on either university contexts or larger education policy discourses, but rather that a constructivist approach, which aims at contextualising the former with the latter, helps to grasp the complex processes through which educational concepts develop.

9 Cf. Theda Skocpol/Morris P. Fiorina (eds.): *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, Washington, D.C./New York 1999; Georgina Brewis: *A Social History of Student Volunteering: Britain and Beyond, 1880–1980*, New York 2014.

10 Timothy K. Stanton/Dwight E. Giles Jr./Nadinne I. Cruz (eds.): *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on its Origins, Practice, and Future*, San Francisco 1999.

Many historical documents, used in this article as well as my thesis, come from the University Archives and Historical Collections at MSU.¹¹ The current Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement also provided sizeable material.¹²

A Brief Overview: The Emergence of Student Activism

Student protests often were a direct consequence of pressing political, societal, and cultural issues of their times. The Civil Rights Movement that aimed at granting equal rights to formerly oppressed ethnic groups found practical expression in the famous sit-ins organised by African-American students in Greensboro, North Carolina.¹³ Critical social issues often intertwined with students' academic concerns. At the University of California's Berkeley campus, students employed different tactics, such as sit-ins, teach-ins, and demonstrations to support their right to exercise free (political) speech on campus and to abolish the traditional *in loco parentis* rule on campus that regarded students as immature and incapable of making independent decisions. This tradition coincided with students not yet having the right to vote in political elections, which did not change until the early-1970s.¹⁴ Influenced by the civil rights debates of their times, university students at Berkeley demanded to be accepted as full members of the academic community and to have a say in university affairs.¹⁵ The Berkeley Free Speech Movement became a blueprint for protests at other campuses throughout the country and in other parts of the world.¹⁶

Another issue that raised not only raised concern, but also aggravated student unrest during the mid-1960s was the war in Vietnam and the role played by the U.S. in that conflict. Many students and faculty members opposed the war. Moreover, protesters

- 11 I would like to thank the Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections for the opportunity to conduct research at the archives.
- 12 In this chapter, the unarchived sources are cited according to the original document's title, adding the centre's name. Many thanks to Karen McKnight Casey, Director of the *Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement* (CSLCE) until June 2013, and Nicole Springer, Associate Director of the CSLCE, for providing this material.
- 13 Cf. Jürgen Heideking: *Geschichte der USA*, Tübingen et al. 2003, p. 398.
- 14 Sylvia Engdahl (ed.): *Amendment XXVI: Lowering the Voting Age*, Detroit 2010.
- 15 Cf. John R. Thelin: *A History of American Higher Education*, Baltimore, MD 2004, pp. 312–314.
- 16 Cf. John S. Brubacher/Willis Rudy: *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities*, New Brunswick et al. 1997, p. 349; William J. Rorabaugh: *Berkeley at War: The 1960s*, New York et al. 1989, pp. 28–36.

questioned the role that universities, especially those engaged in research, played in supporting war efforts as a result of military-sponsored research, for example by the Department of Defence.¹⁷

MSU belonged to the top quarter of the nation's universities in terms of receiving federal funding.¹⁸ Its president, John A. Hannah, had well-established ties to the Federal Government.¹⁹ As was the case at other universities, these additional financial resources supported academic fields such as chemistry, physics, and mathematics.²⁰ Moreover, MSU provided technical assistance to foreign countries, also sponsored by federal money. The most well-known, yet also most controversial of these projects, was the Michigan State University Group (MSUG) that had operated in Vietnam since 1955. The programme had been promoted as a means to protect the region from Chinese and Soviet influence and to secure economic trade with the U.S. On behalf of the State Department, MSUG trained police forces and staff of the public administration, and helped to write the South Vietnamese constitution.²¹ MSUG's interference contributed to the election of Ngo Dinh Diem, a former Vietnamese graduate research assistant at MSU, as the first president of South Vietnam in 1955.²² In 1962, the programme ended due to Diem's dictatorial politics.²³

According to many activists on campuses all over the country, the close relationship between research universities and the federal government deviated starkly from higher education's historic tradition of contributing to the public good. Cases such as the questionable MSUG project sparked criticism from many students and faculty members who feared that increasing interference in international affairs and sponsored research

- 17 Cf. Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, pp. 13–20; John R. Thelin: *A History of American Higher Education*, p. 309.
- 18 Cf. Hugh Davis Graham/Nancy Diamond: *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era*, Baltimore, MD 1997, pp. 56–57.
- 19 Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, p. 22.
- 20 Paul L. Dressel: *College to University: The Hannah Years at Michigan State, 1935–1969*, East Lansing, MI 1987, p. 192.
- 21 Cf. John Ernst: *Forging a Fateful Alliance: The Role of Michigan State University in the Development of America's Vietnam Policy*, in: *Michigan Historical Review* 19:2 (1993), pp. 49–66, pp. 49–50; Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, pp. 22, 47; David A. Thomas: *Michigan State College: John Hannah and the Creation of a World University, 1926–1969*, East Lansing, MI, p. 227.
- 22 Cf. Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, pp. 46–47; John Ernst: *Forging a Fateful Alliance: The Role of Michigan State University in the Development of America's Vietnam Policy*, pp. 56–57.
- 23 Cf. Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, p. 47; John Ernst: *Forging a Fateful Alliance: The Role of Michigan State University in the Development of America's Vietnam Policy*, pp. 50, 62.

would damage the academic integrity of institutions of higher learning. Questions arose concerning whether universities engaging in such endeavours would place greater emphasis on providing scientific services to the federal government and industrial interests than on providing the benefit of education to the public.²⁴

President Lyndon B. Johnson's *War on Poverty* was another issue that discredited the federal government's ability to solve significant social problems. Johnson's vision of establishing a 'Great Society', one that promised social and ethnic equality to all citizens, as well as opportunities to prosper, did not materialise. Social inequality persisted. The Vietnam War and the military spending accompanying it made investments in social politics even more doubtful. Thus, protesting students grew increasingly sceptical about the initiative's possible success and sought ways to solve the problem through alternative measures.²⁵

Organising campus protests was only one method students used to express their discontent over social as well as academic issues. Some students and faculty members chose other forms to alter circumstances they found unacceptable. One well-known example is students volunteering for service in their communities and beyond. In what follows, I will demonstrate the development of volunteerism by presenting a case study from MSU. My example helps to demonstrate how student protests coincided with the initiation of alternative academic programmes and allows for evaluating how such programmes found opportunities to become institutionalised in the higher education setting.

Student Protests and the Service Mission – A Case Study from MSU

Dissatisfaction with academic and social matters led some students at MSU to seek out ways of expressing alternative opinions that deviated from viewpoints held by university officials and the overall student and faculty body. In 1965, students launched *The Paper*, an unofficial "independent alternative to the 'established' news media of the university

24 Cf. Paul Boyer: *Promises to Keep: The United States since World War II*, Lexington, MA et al. 1995, pp. 292–293; John S. Brubacher/Willis Rudy: *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities*, p. 350; Jürgen Heideking: *Geschichte der USA*, p. 405.

25 Cf. W.H. Cowley/Don Williams: *International and Historical Roots of American Higher Education*, New York et al. 1991, pp. 194–195; Paul Boyer: *Promises to Keep: The United States since World War II*, p. 300.

community”.²⁶ The students behind *The Paper* aimed at “[expressing] intelligent thoughts about things of concern to people at Michigan State University”.²⁷ Consequently, its contributors wrote about new works in the arts and the Vietnam War, for example, along with treating academically related topics, such as the hiring of scholars, President Hannah’s influence on MSU’s education policies, the role of students as members of the academic community, and MSU’s relationship with the federal government.

In 1965, students at MSU also began protesting against the Vietnam War. They distributed anti-war literature on campus, rallied, demonstrated, and even occupied a campus building in 1967.²⁸ The most prominent case of MSU student protests occurred in 1970. Two incidents, the U.S. invasion of Cambodia and the deadly shootings at Kent State University in Ohio, led to a two-week strike of roughly 12,000 people at MSU.²⁹

The service mission was an important theme noted among the diverse reasons given as the catalyst to protest at MSU. Several accounts in *The Paper* underscore the sense of worry and unease felt by both students and faculty. In the wake of the MSUG project and the university’s overall involvement in military-industrial research, one student wrote that he feared the university administration could not “distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate social service”.³⁰ Another student argued that universities should contribute to “the peaceful, but intense, resolution of common problems”.³¹ Reflecting on the perceived inadequacy of President Johnson’s Great Society agenda as a means to solve social problems, one writer claimed that higher education should not help to maintain the *status-quo* of a society, but instead should foster “social change”.³² While

26 The Paper, 1:1 (3 December 1965), p. 2, at: <http://www.msupaper.org/> (accessed on 24 April 2018).

27 Ibid.

28 Cf. Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, pp. 131–133; David A. Thomas: *Michigan State College: John Hannah and the Creation of a World University, 1926–1969*, pp. 418–420; Michael Kindman: *Their Opinions Were Unpopular: War Protestors Convicted of Trespassing*, in: *The Paper* 1:3 (20 Jan. 1966), p. 6, at: <http://www.msupaper.org/> (accessed on 24 April 2018).

29 Cf. Kenneth Heineman: *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, pp. 251–253.

30 Jon Aaronson: *Social Science and Reality: A House is Not a Home*, in: *The Paper* 1:14 (5 May 1966), p. 2, at: <http://www.msupaper.org/> (accessed on 24 April 2018).

31 A Declaration of Purpose—January 1965, in: Paul M. Schiff (ed.): *Logos: The Voice of CSR Summer 1965*, in: Vice President for Student Affairs Student Protest Files UA. 7.0, Publications. Logos. Committee for Student Rights. 1965–1966, Folder 27, Box 1050 H, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.

32 Stuart Dowty: *An Impolite Answer to Charles Wells, or: Some Comments on MSU, The Status Quo and Social Change, or: Chuck, Baby, You’re Just Too Naive!*, in: *The Paper* 1:11 (14 April 14, 1966), p. 7, at: <http://www.msupaper.org/> (accessed on 24 April 2018).

many students criticised what they perceived as inappropriate interference by politics with higher education, they failed to reflect on the possible politicising effects of their own demands.

During the 1960s, four projects originated at MSU that allowed students to engage in public service and to re-interpret or revive what they perceived as a more suitable service mission. Through the *Student Education Corps*, students provided school tutoring and assisted teachers in the community during their school classes. The project originated from a course in which the professor had covered the topic of educating socially disadvantaged youngsters. Several students proposed volunteering in schools in disadvantaged areas to improve the educational situation of those children and youth. Most of these university students majored in Education and chose to participate in the project as an extension of their course of studies.³³

Another project was the *Campus Community Commission*. Students involved with this group tutored high school students. Additionally, they organised afterschool activities, such as camp trips, games, and arts and crafts.³⁴ Similarly, in *Students for Community Organization through Pan-Hellenic Effort*, volunteers operated a community centre in a socially disadvantaged area in East Lansing, organising recreational activities for schoolchildren.³⁵

The *Student Education Project* was different from the other projects. For several consecutive years, the project brought MSU students to Holly Springs, Mississippi to provide a summer programme at Rust College, a historically African-American liberal arts college. The volunteers mainly offered additional tutoring to high school students who wanted to attend college.³⁶

- 33 Cf. James R. Tanck: *The Volunteer Action Effort At Michigan State University: A Report on the Initial Year of the M.S.U. Office of Volunteer Programs 1968*, p. 14, in: Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement (CSLCE), Michigan State University (MSU); Helen Clegg: *MSU Students Become Involved*, in: *The State Journal* 1/22/1968, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI; *The Annual Report of the Office of Volunteer Programs [January to July 1968]*, in: CSLCE, MSU.
- 34 Cf. *MSU Volunteer: A Handbook on Volunteer Programs for Faculty and Staff* [ca. September 1968]; *MSU Students Run Volunteer Program*, in: *The Towne Courier* [n.d.], in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 35 Cf. Helen Clegg: *MSU Students Become Involved*; *The Annual Report of the Office of Volunteer Programs [January to July 1968]*; *MSU Volunteer Viewpoint 1:1 [1968]*, CSLCE, MSU; *MSU Volunteer: A Handbook on Volunteer Programs for Faculty and Staff* [ca. September 1968].
- 36 Cf. John Duley: *The Origin and Execution of the MSU/Rust College STEP Project: My Reflections on It* [n.d.], CSLCE, MSU; *3 Dorms Join STEP* in: *The State News* 55:290 (20 April 1965), p. 6, in: Gerald M. Kline Digital and Multimedia Center, Digital Collections, MSU Libraries; *Annual Report: Office of Volunteer Programs: Michigan State University*,

Obviously, student volunteerism was not a new phenomenon in U.S. higher education.³⁷ Two popular national initiatives served as role models and inspired local activism at different institutions. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy had established the *Peace Corps*, a programme that sent volunteers to developing countries, where they helped to build up or improve education, agriculture, infrastructure, and so forth.³⁸ This idealistic programme was especially popular with young people. In the mid-1960s, the Johnson Administration established *Volunteers in Service to America* (VISTA), “a domestic parallel of the Peace Corps”,³⁹ as part of the overall war-on-poverty programme. VISTA “recruited middle-class volunteers to work on programs in inner cities, rural communities, and other low-income areas”.⁴⁰

In 1967, James R. Tanck, a graduate student, former volunteer and coordinator of the *Student Education Corps* initiated the establishment of an office “to provide additional support for volunteer service efforts at [MSU]”.⁴¹ In January 1968, the *Office of Volunteer Programs* (OVP) was founded within the department of Student Affairs.⁴² From the late-1960s onward, the OVP organised and initiated student volunteerism efforts at MSU. Students engaged in projects similar to the original four. They provided educational services to surrounding schools, and organised recreational activities in day-care centres, nursing homes, and institutions that offered help to mentally and physically handicapped children. Moreover, students functioned as tutors to juvenile delinquents. Due to the

Fiscal Year 1969–70, CSLCE, MSU; Helen Clegg: MSU Students Become Involved; MSU Volunteer: A Handbook on Volunteer Programs for Faculty and Staff [ca. September 1968].

37 Student public service was very common at denominational colleges throughout the 18th and 19th centuries (cf. John R. Thelin: A History of American Higher Education, p. 63).

38 Cf. Paul Boyer: Promises to Keep: The United States since World War II, p. 178; Jürgen Heideking: Geschichte der USA, p. 394.

39 Paul Boyer: Promises to Keep: The United States since World War II, p. 219.

40 Ibid.

41 MSU Volunteer: A Handbook on Volunteer Programs for Faculty and Staff [ca. September 1968].

42 Cf. Student Volunteers Get Deserved Support, in: The State Journal 113:208 (Tuesday, 21 November 1967), in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI; The Annual Report of the Office of Volunteer Programs [January to July 1968]; MSU Volunteer: A Handbook on Volunteer Programs for Faculty and Staff [ca. September 1968].

organisational efforts of the OVP staff, the number of regular projects increased over the years. In the academic year 1970–1971, the office offered 54 different services.⁴³ Over the course of the next two decades, that figure more than doubled.⁴⁴

The OVP also grew in staff. Between the late-1960s and the 1980s, the office had four directors. All of them had obtained university degrees, although in completely different disciplines, such as Accounting, Communications, and Criminal Justice.⁴⁵ They had prior volunteer experience or had been employed in a similar function elsewhere. Two to three other staff members as well as several graduate students supported the director.

Apart from helping students to secure appropriate service placements, the OVP team provided additional support to the students to help them prepare for their assignments. The team offered orientation sessions that informed volunteers about common tasks and procedures.⁴⁶ Agency representatives sometimes provided further training onsite.⁴⁷ Moreover, some departments offered courses providing academic input to prepare students for their service assignments. They covered the current state of research on subjects that students dealt with in practice. For example, the Psychology Department offered a course entitled “Psychology and Urban Problems”. Its aim was “(1) to look at urban problems from a psychological standpoint, (2) to give students actual contact with urban problems and social issues, [and] (3) to encourage participation in social issues”.⁴⁸ Students reviewed literature on selected topics and discussed the readings in class. Afterward, they participated in service projects to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice.⁴⁹ Although these explicit linkages between the academic curriculum and service projects were few in the beginning, they increased over the ensuing years. During the

43 Cf. Volunteer Opportunities for 1972, Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1971–1975, Box 1490, Folder 8, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI; Annual Report: Office of Volunteer Programs 1970–71, in: CSLCE, MSU.

44 Cf. Service-Learning Center Program Report 1989 to 1990 [n.d.], in: CSLCE, MSU.

45 Cf. Helen Clegg: MSU Students Become Involved; John E. Peterson: He’s a Do-Gooder’s Samaritan, in: The Detroit News (1 November 1971), in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1971–1975, Box 1490, Folder 8, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI; MSU Volunteer: Student—University—Community—Experience—Education—Service, Office of Volunteer Programs, Michigan State University, November 1976, CSLCE, MSU.

46 James R. Tanck: The Volunteer Action Effort At Michigan State University: A Report on the Initial Year of the M.S.U. Office of Volunteer Programs, s. l. 1968, pp. 89–90.

47 Cf. *ibid.*

48 MSU Volunteer Viewpoint 1:1 [1968].

49 Cf. *ibid.*

academic year of 1979–1980, the OVP was renamed to the *Service-Learning Center* (SLC) to “better illustrate [the] concept of students serving in community agencies in exchange for learning opportunities”.⁵⁰

The early initiation of volunteer programmes at MSU also aimed at reinterpreting the university’s service mission. The projects were designed to improve the conditions of disadvantaged community members, such as delinquents, the disabled, senior citizens, minorities, and, most of all, disadvantaged children. The OVP director and his team wanted “to develop a sense of oneness among all volunteers who, no matter what they were doing, [had] in common an interest in voluntary action to promote social change and improvement”.⁵¹ Consequently, the OVP chose the slogan “Give a Damn about Your Fellow Man”.⁵²

Student volunteerism at MSU thus proved itself a viable alternative to other practices in higher education in a twofold way. On the one hand, it augmented conventional learning opportunities. Students engaged in projects beyond the walls of the ivory tower by applying theoretical knowledge in real-life settings. In this way, they reinforced the university’s public service tradition and mission. On the other hand, volunteerism functioned as an alternative form of student protest. The volunteers can neither be described as clear opponents to the social and political order of their times, nor indifferent to or supportive of it. Those responsible for establishing the OVP preferred to cooperate with university officials and establish a solid base for their service programmes, an option more radical student protesters would probably never have considered. Tanck and his team also neither openly criticised the Federal Government’s social policies nor its close connection to universities’ research departments. Even if they had thought as much, it was probably more prudent to keep such ideas to themselves to not jeopardise the office’s existence. Other volunteers, however, were less moderate. In an interview, one student claimed that volunteering was a way for his peers to engage in their “own type of protest against the lack of concern and consideration by many people in our society”.⁵³ The OVP’s

- 50 Kristin Sayre, Jane S. Smith, Letter, January 1980, in: *Service-Learning Annual* [sic] Reports 1976–1986, CSLCE, MSU.
- 51 *MSU Volunteer: A Handbook on Volunteer Programs for Faculty and Staff* [ca. September 1968].
- 52 *The M.S.U. Volunteer*, January 30, 1970, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 53 Cf. Praises MSU Volunteers: Mrs. Nixon Favors “Positive” Protest, in: Grand Rapids Press, 3 March 1970, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.

activities implemented many demands made by student protesters. The office helped to connect the university with its immediate community by contributing to improving social conditions and to reinterpreting the service mission.

Over time, however, students' initial enthusiasm for achieving substantial social change faded, when they realised they could only act within the realm of whichever respective project they were engaged in. Volunteers usually participated in service activities for one or two terms. Thus, they did not learn whether their support contributed to improving the service recipients' conditions afterward. While some students grew frustrated by these limitations in achieving social change, others adjusted their expectations accordingly.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, interest in providing altruistic service that contributed positively to community life continued. Apart from internal alterations, student volunteerism also changed due to external influences in educational politics. The next section examines those influences more closely.

Influences in Higher Education on the National Scale

Student protests often resulted in violent confrontations between protesters and authorities, thus damaging the reputation of universities. At times, it seemed administrators could not ease the unrest occurring on their campuses. Popular frustration with campus and street riots in the 1960s also contributed to the successful, though marginal, victory of Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon.⁵⁵ Once elected, he and his administration were challenged to resolve the tense situation on both public streets and national campuses. This process led to new entanglements between politics and higher education stakeholders on local, state, and national levels. In this context, student volunteerism became a useful tool to counteract the image that higher educational institutions had gotten out of control. The White House initiated an effective campaign to promote student voluntary service, emphasising that student engagement would be viewed as a constructive effort to improve societal conditions. In early 1970, First Lady Patricia Nixon visited five campuses—among

54 Cf. Marion Nowak: *The Volunteer in Action and Some Personal Views*, in: *Michigan State News*, 23 November 1969, pp. 4–5, in: *Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI*; Edward C. Hutchison: *10,000 Michigan State Students Do Volunteer Work*, in: *The Grand Rapids Press*, 14 December 1969, in: *Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI*.

55 Bruce Kuklick: *A Political History of the USA: One Nation under God*, Basingstoke [et al.] 2009, p. 292.

them MSU—to promote student volunteer programmes.⁵⁶ A film crew accompanied her, as well as several press representatives, and her tour became “widely publicized”.⁵⁷ In her speeches, Mrs. Nixon congratulated volunteers, referring to them as “the majority of college students who [were] working in a constructive way to change society”.⁵⁸

The White House’s support of college volunteerism was part of President Nixon’s agenda to establish a ‘New Federalism’. This entailed the idea of minimising the perceived big governments of the Kennedy and Johnson era by reducing spending on welfare programmes, transferring responsibility from the federal to state and local levels, and encouraging individuals to take on a greater role in directing the course of their own lives.⁵⁹

The presidential attention created a nationwide awareness of student volunteerism. At the same time, it also promoted an image that these young service providers were clearly different from campus protesters. According to the federal campaign, volunteers contributed to social improvements, yet did not criticise political entities, and especially did not express political discontent. That interpretation of student volunteerism effectively reduced the nuances of students’ complex motives to engage in service within their communities.

Moreover, the White House completely neglected the service’s contribution to students’ academic education. Although this aspect was at a preliminary stage during the period, it remained central to the OVP’s mission of organising and promoting student volunteerism.

- 56 Cf. Virginia Redfern: Pat Sees How People Help Each Other: Lansing Folks Find First Lady Charming Guest, in: *Lansing State Journal*, 3 March 1970, Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI; Lansing First Stop: First Lady to Visit “Forgotten” Students, in: *Lansing State Journal*, 1 March 1970, U Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 57 First Lady Visits Area Volunteers, in: *The State Journal*, 2 March 1970, Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI; cf. Marcia Van Ness: Gifts Mark Visit: Pat Nixon Turns Tables on Hosts, in: *The State Journal*, 3 March 1970, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 58 Beverly Eckman: Pat’s Lansing Visit Turns on Young, Old, in: *The Detroit News*, 3 March 1970, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 59 Cf. Richard Nixon: Special Message to the Congress on Forthcoming Legislative Proposals Concerning Domestic Programs, 14 April 1969, in: Richard Nixon: Richard Nixon: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President 1969, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Gov. Print. Office, 1971, p. 285; Richard Nixon: Address at the National Governors’ Conference, 1 September 1969, in: *ibid.*, p. 694.

A slightly different interpretation of the uses of student volunteerism came from another stakeholder that dealt with higher education issues at the national level: the *Carnegie Commission on Higher Education* and, particularly, its successor organisation, the *Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education*.⁶⁰ Founded at the end of the 1960s by the *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, the council aimed at “[promoting] research and reflection on higher education and its role in society”.⁶¹

The previous decades had been characterised by the rapid expansion of the higher education sector. In their “Golden Age”,⁶² research universities especially profited from the space race and military conflicts that, according to the political elite, endangered U.S. national security and international superiority. Federal institutions, such as the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, NASA, and others, sponsored research mainly in specific disciplines, for example, the natural sciences and engineering.⁶³ The Higher Education Act (HEA) and the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities of the mid-1960s further expanded federal support. As the title of the former indicates, previously excluded disciplines also received additional funding.⁶⁴ The HEA also offered additional scholarships to undergraduates. In particular, low-income and minority students benefited from this new initiative.⁶⁵ Robert Dallek notes: “The law facilitated a huge expansion of college enrollments. In 1970, 34 percent of the eighteen-to-twenty-one age group in America attended some [type of] college degree credit programme, up from 15 percent in 1950”.⁶⁶

However, tough economic times took their toll on universities and set financial limits to this expansion. Stagflation, that is, slow economic growth and high inflation, marked the 1970s.⁶⁷ The costly engagement in Vietnam as well as expensive domestic programmes had strained the federal budget. In 1971, the federal deficit reached roughly \$23 billion

60 Hereafter referred to as “the Carnegie Commission”.

61 John Aubrey Douglass: *Higher Education as a National Resource: A Retrospective on the Influence of the Carnegie Commission and Council on Higher Education*, in: *Change* 37:5 (Sept.-Oct. 2005), pp. 30–38, p. 32.

62 John R. Thelin: *A History of American Higher Education*, p. 260.

63 Cf. Roger L. Geiger: *Research and Relevant Knowledge. American Research Universities since World War II*, New York et al. 1993, p. 165; Jürgen Heideking: *Geschichte der USA*, pp. 383–484, 393–395; Hugh Davis Graham/Nancy Diamond: *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era*, pp. 35–38.

64 Hugh Davis Graham/Nancy Diamond: *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era*, p. 45.

65 Cf. W.H. Cowley/Don Williams: *International and Historical Roots of American Higher Education*, pp. 197–198.

66 Robert Dallek: *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times 1961–1973*, New York et al. 1998, p. 202.

67 Cf. Willi Paul Adams: *Die USA im 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 2008, p. 107; Jürgen Heideking: *Geschichte der USA*, p. 425.

dollars. International trade fell, and prices rose, as did the unemployment rate, increasing from less than 1 per cent in 1973 to more than 9 per cent by 1982.⁶⁸ As a result, federal “funding for the nation’s colleges and universities [...] lost its momentum”.⁶⁹

Unfortunately, “the higher education community had very little systematic information about itself, let alone thoughtful analyses to assist planning [for the future]”.⁷⁰ The *Carnegie Commission* set out to minimise this knowledge deficit. Between 1967 and 1980, it issued numerous publications, including policy reports, and sponsored research and technical reports.⁷¹ The *Commission’s* board of trustees consisted predominantly of college and university representatives. One-third of the members came from the private as well as the government sector. Students were not included.⁷² The *Commission’s* chairman Clark Kerr, former president of the University of California, set up a small team of permanent staff and engaged experts to examine specific topics.⁷³

Overall, the reports issued by the *Carnegie Commission* were optimistic in tone, confirming that higher education in the U.S. was developing very well.⁷⁴ In one of its first reports, Kerr and his team concluded that “there [was] no crisis of general dissatisfaction”⁷⁵, thus contradicting all demonstrators who thought differently.⁷⁶ At the same time, however, the *Carnegie Commission*—and especially Kerr—proved critical of academic innovations that were introduced from the bottom-up, fearing that they would endanger academic quality. Although Kerr and his team “[recommended] that efforts be made [...] to provide

68 Cf. Paul Boyer: *Promises to Keep: The United States since World War II*, p. 365; Willi Paul Adams: *Die USA im 20. Jahrhundert*, p. 107.

69 W.H. Cowley/Don Williams: *International and Historical Roots of American Higher Education*, p. 196.

70 John R. Thelin: *A History of American Higher Education*, p. 318.

71 Cf. Arthur Levine: Clark Kerr and the Carnegie Commission and Council, in: Sheldon Rothblatt (ed.): *Clark Kerr’s World of Higher Education Reaches the 21st Century: Chapters in a Special History*, New York, 2012, p. 52; John Aubrey Douglass: *Higher Education as a National Resource: A Retrospective on the Influence of the Carnegie Commission and Council on Higher Education*, p. 32.

72 Arthur Levine: Clark Kerr and the Carnegie Commission and Council, p. 51.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

74 Cf. John Aubrey Douglass: *Higher Education as a National Resource: A Retrospective on the Influence of the Carnegie Commission and Council on Higher Education*, p. 38.

75 Carnegie Commission on Higher Education: *Reform on Campus: Changing Students, Changing Academic Programs: A Report and Recommendations*, Draft, June 1972, p. 2, Clark Kerr Personal and Professional Papers, CU-302, Folder 5, Carton 13, the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

76 *Ibid.*, p. viii.

a variety of opportunities to students for community service”,⁷⁷ they also argued that “community service and apprenticeship programs [lay] at the outer edge of both financial possibilities and academic endeavors as historically defined”.⁷⁸

Even though the scientific educational institution officially rejected practices such as student volunteerism, it indirectly supported them by its interpretation of the relation between academic education and vocational training. Kerr and his team anticipated occupational conditions would worsen during the course of the 1970s. The report “Higher Education and the Nation’s Health: Policies for Medical and Dental Education”⁷⁹ dealt with a perceived professional shortage in the health sector. Against this backdrop, the *Commission* recommended offering medical service to communities.⁸⁰ In the 1970s, “the motivation for curriculum debate [...] shifted from student unrest to steady-state economic woes”.⁸¹ Looking back in 1982, Clark Kerr offered this view of the situation:

But there were academic changes on a major scale that originated in the marketplace external to educational policy considerations [...]. These changes consisted of the fundamental shift from liberal to vocational studies, and, within vocational studies, from one field to another [...]. Business administration and the paramedical specialties were the great gainers. [...] In American higher education, changes influenced by the market are accepted in a way that reforms originating in concerns for educational policy are not.⁸²

As the two examples have shown, interpretations of student volunteerism that originated at the federal level differed in character and direction. The Nixon Administration brought national attention to student volunteerism, yet it completely neglected the service’s potential contribution to students’ own academic education. Similarly, the *Carnegie Commission* refused to accept service as an integral part of a university education. At the local level, the divergent interpretations at the federal level affected institutions that were operating programmes in student volunteerism. The next section examines these changes in the programme of volunteerism that operated at MSU.

77 Ibid., p. 59.

78 Ibid., p. 59.

79 Carnegie Commission on Higher Education: Higher Education and the Nation’s Health: Policies for Medical and Dental Education, A Special Report and Recommendations, October 1970, New York et al. 1970.

80 Cf. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education: A Critical Analysis of the Reports and Recommendations, p. 8586.

81 Arthur Levine: Handbook on Undergraduate Curriculum, San Francisco et al. 1978, p. xvi.

82 Clark Kerr: The Uses of the University, Cambridge, Massachusetts et al. 2001, p. 128.

New Directions in Student Volunteerism at MSU

A first change in the operations of the OVP was the initiation of seemingly new programmes during the 1970s. Staff members declared they wanted “to lose [the] image [of] a bureau that [concentrated] on working with children”.⁸³ Accordingly, the team shifted its attention to establishing programmes in “business-consumer services and in the medical-community health areas [as well as] in legal aid services”.⁸⁴ In the early 1970s, the bureau launched the *Consumer Service Corps*. At the *Michigan Consumer Council*, volunteers helped staff members to research information relative to individual complaints, to prepare reports, and to explain alternatives available to consumers.⁸⁵ Moreover, the number of programmes in the field of health and medicine expanded. Volunteers, for instance, worked with emotionally disturbed children, in a mental health clinic and in hospitals, and engaged with the *Multiple Sclerosis Society*.⁸⁶

Apart from creating new programmes, the OVP also readjusted its operational goals. While individual responsibility had always been a precondition for students to engage in voluntary service, this competence became more important as a learning outcome of service activities.⁸⁷ ‘Employability’ was another educational goal emphasised throughout the 1970s. According to the OVP’s annual report from 1972–1973, this new objective resulted from students’ changed motivations:

Volunteering has become a very important activity in the life of today’s student. College students are finding more and more obstacles in the path to obtaining employment after graduation. [...] Hence many graduating students have come to depend heavily on their record as a volunteer to demonstrate their employability.

- 83 Volunteer work attracts students, in: Michigan State News, 15 January 1971, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1971–1975, Box 1490, Folder 8, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 84 Mike Wagoner: MSU Volunteers: Campus Agency to Provide Help may Also Innovate New Programs, in: The State Journal, 20 August 1971, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1971–1975, Box 1490, Folder 8, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 85 Cf. Volunteer Opportunities for Spring 1971, [n.d.], p. 19, CSLCE, MSU.
- 86 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 7; The M.S.U. Volunteer, Michigan State University, Office of Volunteer Programs, Student Services Building, 2:7, 1971, p. 6, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1971–1975, Box 1490, Folder 8, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.
- 87 Shirley Johnson: Volunteers Aid Children: Bureau Offers Individualization, in: Michigan State News, 10 April 1970, in: Media Communications Records UA.8.1.1, Service Learning Center 1967–1970, Box 1490, Folder 7, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, MI.

Many students recognize this situation well in advance and volunteer specifically to build a work record in the area of their intended career.⁸⁸

A couple of years later, the centre's new director, Jane Smith, explained the gains students received through serving. She employed a business-like tone that differed considerably from the emotional tone of the OVP's early phase:

You [the students] are [...] very different from the student activist of the [']60's who volunteered to change the social conditions of the world. Sure, you like the feeling that helping others brings but there is a lot more to it than that. Volunteering gives you a chance to explore the career you've chosen, to get some experience on the job, and to test in a 'real life' situation some of the theories you are learning in class. [...] You develop your human relations skills as well as job skills; as you work as an unpaid staff member fulfilling your responsibilities.⁸⁹

As those comments show, altruistic service—while still mentioned as one goal of student volunteerism—had lost its significance compared with the dominant aim of providing career-related experience to the student. Smith also clearly sought to distinguish current students from those of the late 1960s. Through her comment, she cut the ties that linked student volunteerism in the 1970s to its historical beginnings in the 1960s.

In consequence of this new direction in campus volunteerism, the OVP staff began to advertise its programmes to specific majors. Programmes in the health fields were advertised to “students preparing themselves for the health delivery professions”.⁹⁰ The new direction in student volunteerism at MSU proved successful. Throughout the 1970s, the number of volunteers increased, reaching a peak in 1980 with 2,687 students engaged in one of the programmes.⁹¹

However, evaluations from that time prove that students' motivations could differ from officially proclaimed goals. Volunteers themselves did not distinguish between altruistic service and gaining career-related experience to the same extent as OVP administrators

88 Annual Report 1972–73, Office of Volunteer Programs, Michigan State University, p. 2, CSLCE, MSU.

89 MSU Volunteer: Student—University—Community—Experience—Education—Service, Office of Volunteer Programs, Michigan State University, [ca. December 1976], CSLCE, MSU.

90 Annual Report 1972–73, Office of Volunteer Programs, Michigan State University, p. 3, CSLCE, MSU.

91 Cf. Volunteer Survey Results and Trends 1977–80, in: Service-Learning Annual [sic] Reports 1976–1986, CSLCE, MSU.

did. For example, while volunteers who participated in health programmes usually answered questions about the furtherance of employability affirmatively,⁹² some claimed that they also volunteered to support social causes.⁹³

Many of the changes in the OVP's operations and lines of justification correlated with the political goals of the Nixon Administration. While group initiatives to solve social problems and contribute to social change had been central when the OVP was launched, by the 1970s, its staff members had begun to emphasise individual responsibility as the dominant objective of service projects. Moreover, the OVP allegedly initiated programmes that were more attuned to economic and health issues. These changes mirrored central claims of the 'New Federalism' agenda that focused on transferring responsibilities for social politics to state, local and even individual levels. Moreover, the OVP staff claimed that employability had become a desired outcome of their service experience, thus reflecting recommendations of the *Carnegie Commission*. Smith and her team also increasingly supported medical programmes, reminiscent of the *Commission's* report that suggested improving professional training in the health sector. Therefore, it seems justifiable to conclude that the OVP staff adhered to common political trends affecting higher education and that they tried to implement programmes that would align accordingly, even though the director and the team never openly acknowledged doing so or referred to any one of the initiatives as being influential in this regard.

Another aspect indicating an attempt at aligning operational practices and justifications with political trends is that this conformity was sometimes more superficial than actually transformative. Although it appeared that staff members created new programmes, a closer look reveals that they simply re-labelled certain established programs. For example, the intentions of programmes designed for volunteers to work with mentally disturbed children were very similar to programmes traditionally subsumed under the education and recreation category. Moreover, programmes attached to the medical service field often required students to fulfil simple tasks, such as serving beverages to patients or performing secretarial duties. Consequently, students did not really improve their medical skills and knowledge, but instead supported daily routines at individual institutions.

The final section of this article summarises the research findings. It then discusses the special role administrators played in institutionalising alternative trends in higher education.

92 Almost 90 per cent in the medical programmes volunteered to gain experience in their career field (cf. Medical Programs, in: Annual Report 1977–78, CSLCE, MSU.).

93 Ibid.

Alternative Trends—An Understudied Theme in the History of Higher Education

At MSU, the scope and goals of the alternative trend of student volunteerism changed considerably over time compared with its initiative phase, even though volunteerism had been permanently implemented.⁹⁴ This leads to the conclusion that students could initiate change, but its institutionalisation depended more on external trends in higher education and that administrative personnel played a distinctive role in implementing them. Consequently, although the volunteer programmes continually fulfilled the organisation's service mission, over the years, its importance declined compared with other goals.

As the empirical evidence from this case study has demonstrated, the respective stakeholders' ranks and reputations determined their potential of influencing educational discourses concerning the future of higher education in the U.S. President Nixon held the highest office in the country. Kerr and his team were well-established scholars who could look back at successful careers in higher education by the time they took up their roles with the *Carnegie Commission*. Comparatively, although protesting students had begun their academic education, they were simply that: students who held alternative and, at times, radical ideas.

The use of specific distribution channels further increased the potential to influence academic perceptions of student volunteerism. As part of its 'New Federalism' campaign, the White House's team issued official statements, distributed reports, gave speeches, and granted interviews. The *Carnegie Commission* published its findings via academic reports financed by the respected *Carnegie Foundation*. Both parties presented their ideas and findings in a professional, seemingly objective manner, with a message designed to reach and connect with a broad audience. In comparison, student protestors typically used ironic, sometimes even cynical, language to express their views and to distinguish themselves from "the establishment".⁹⁵ Moreover, they circulated their demands through leaflets and unofficial newspapers, only distributing them locally. Consequently, student demands typically only appealed to those readers who were already attuned to such claims. Protestors found it difficult to persuade opponents of their agenda's credibility and worthiness. Additionally, although student protests occurred nationally, they appeared as fragmented across local chapters, without any cohesive national strategy employed.

94 Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, at: <https://servicelearning.msu.edu/> (accessed on 24 April 2018).

95 One example to illustrate students' ironic stance is seen in an issue of *The Paper* that was titled the "Special Super Duper 'Anti-Everything' Issue": cf. *The Paper* 1:14 (5 May 1966), at: <http://www.msupaper.org/> (accessed on 24 April 2018).

Consequently, it is not surprising that former stakeholders had a greater chance of directing future perceptions concerning appropriate educational goals and practices. As the case of the Nixon administration and the *Carnegie Commission* reveals, these stakeholders even contributed to diminishing the reputations of protesting students.

The case of student volunteerism at MSU also demonstrates that administrators were central stakeholders who guided universities' operations. They mediated between educational policy initiatives that originated on a national level and their local adaptations. While the OVP had originally been launched from a student's idea, and its first director had been a former student, the position became permanently established, with the number of administrative employees increasing as well.

To improve the efficiency of university governance, institutions of higher education had introduced New Public Management, a managerial revolution that became popular during the last quarter of the 20th century.⁹⁶ This led to an increase in the number of university administrators.⁹⁷ These employees had to ensure that their respective departments and units fulfilled expectations with respect to accountability and desirability of academic programmes. That might explain why they were attuned to responding to common and changing demands of the respective political zeitgeist. The OVP's director and other staff members never mentioned that their actions and operational goals changed due to the influence of the two national initiatives. Yet, Patricia Nixon visited the MSU campus, and the *Carnegie Commission's* papers were widely disseminated and well-received within academic communities. Thus, the OVP staff must have been aware of the different concepts the two initiatives represented. Possibly, they did not realise to what extent the initiatives guided their own actions and perceptions. Yet, central claims of the Nixon Administration and the *Carnegie Commission* were reproduced at the institutional level at MSU, even though they were sometimes only superficial and did not always represent students' complex motivations to serve. Obviously, staying attuned to current trends helped to secure and even expand the OVP's operations.

96 Cf. Royston Greenwood et al.: Introduction, in: idem (eds.): *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, Los Angeles et al. 2008, pp. 4–5; Barbara M. Kehm: *Hochschulen als besondere und unvollständige Organisationen? Neue Theorien zur "Organisation Hochschule"*, in: Uwe Wilkesmann/Christian J. Schmid (eds.): *Hochschule als Organisation*, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 17.

97 According to Benjamin Ginsberg, "the number of full-time professors increased slightly more than 50 percent [between 1975 and 2005] - a percentage comparable to the growth in student enrollments during the same time period - the number of administrators [...] employed by those schools increased by an astonishing 85 percent [...]". Benjamin Ginsberg: *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why it Matters*, Oxford 2011, p. 25.

Therefore, the historical study of 'service learning' as alternative trend demonstrates that expectations which involved improving university governance through employing a greater number of administrative staff did not always materialise. As observed in the case of the OVP, the administration lacked profound pedagogical-educational training, and directors and staff members probably found it difficult to remain aware of, reflect on, and decide about the appropriateness of implementing educational policy claims on the local level. Thus, service learning at MSU, which had started as a student volunteerism programme directed at fostering social change within local communities, changed over time to become predominantly a useful tool that provided students with career training during the 1970s and 1980s.

In conclusion, the case of service learning exemplifies that an analysis of alternative trends in higher education must be placed within the respective historical context. Otherwise, it risks missing the broader picture by focusing on single events or a specific period, possibly drawing narrow conclusions and, in turn, underestimating the relevancy of such trends and their ability to stimulate change within higher education.

Anna Wellner holds a diploma in Intercultural Business and Language Studies from the University of Passau. She has been employed as a teaching and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, Chair for North American, Caribbean, and Atlantic History from 2010 to 2015. Her scientific interests focus on the history of higher education in the 20th century. She currently works as programme manager with the Stifterverband, an organisation devoted to consulting, networking and promoting improvements in the fields of education, science and innovation in Germany.