

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Graduate instruction, in the sense of a program leading to a post-graduate degree, was provided for at Michigan Normal as early as 1889. In that year the State Legislature gave the State Board of Education authority to grant “. . . such diploma as it may deem best, and such diploma when granted shall carry with it such honors as the extent of the course for which the diploma is given may warrant and said board of education may direct.”¹

Under this authority the State Board established the degree of Master of Pedagogics, based primarily on a post-graduate thesis. The requirements for this degree were stated as follows:

Any person holding the degree of Bachelor of Pedagogics (a four-year degree established at the same time) of the Michigan State Normal School, may upon application, receive the degree of Master of Pedagogics upon the following conditions:

- (a). He shall furnish evidence satisfactory to the Faculty that he has been engaged in teaching or in school supervision continuously and with pronounced success for five years since receiving the Bachelor's degree.
- (b). He shall prepare and present a thesis acceptable to the said Faculty, upon some subject connected with the History, Science, or Art of Education, the Faculty reserving the right to assign the subject of such thesis.

Unwittingly, the Normal (which had not yet reached the status of college) had taken the first step toward becoming a university (an institution characterized by work at the graduate level). The MPd was obviously used in some cases as an honorary degree. Early recipients included a number of members of Normal's faculty: J. M. B. Sill and Julia Ann King (1890); Charles F. R. Bellows and John

Goodison (1891); Austin George (1893); Charles R. Grawn (1897); David Eugene Smith (1898). Stratton D. Brooks, who was later to become a noted educator and university president, earned the BPd degree in 1893 and the MPd in 1899.

With the coming of President McKenny in 1912, the MPd as an earned degree was dropped. Henceforth, it was conferred strictly as an honorary degree and graduate work disappeared from the scene.

The next graduate undertaking was initiated in 1938 in the form of a joint program with the University of Michigan. In February of that year the Extra-Legal Planning Commission, a body created by the State Board of Education to study problems in public education and teacher training in Michigan, recommended to the State Board that it approach the University of Michigan with the proposal that a joint plan for a Master's degree in Education be developed as between the University and the four teachers colleges. The Board concurred, and by July a plan had been drawn that was acceptable to both parties.²

The program as developed at the Normal College was limited to three areas: Elementary Education, Special Education (the training of teachers of handicapped children), and Rural Education. The stated objectives were threefold: to improve the general effectiveness of the students, to add to their cultural and intellectual attainments, and to provide specific training. The supervision and control of the program was placed completely in the hands of the U-M. Courses offered on the teachers college campus were to be approved by it, members of its staff were to visit and evaluate courses conducted by teachers college staff, and members of the teachers college staff selected for the program were to be given the status of "graduate lecturer" by its Graduate School. The master's degree would be awarded by the U-M, but if as much as three quarters of the work leading to the degree were done on a teachers college campus, that fact would be indicated on the diploma. The fees charged were to be on the same basis as those charged by the U-M, would be collected by it, and only such portion of the fees would be returned to the teachers colleges as would represent "the amounts charged for University Health Service and other special privileges given University students."

The organization on Normal's campus was to be known as the Graduate Division of Michigan State Normal College in Cooperation with the University of Michigan. It was placed under the gen-

eral supervision of a Graduate Advisory Council. Normal's first Council consisted of the Dean of Administration (Milton Hover), the chairman of the Education Department (Noble Lee Garrison), the chairmen of the Department of Special Education (Charles Elliot), and the chairman of two academic departments—English (Gerald Sanders), and Physics (Fred Gorton). Sanders served as chairman. The University of Michigan created the office of Graduate Advisor to the Michigan Colleges of Education, and appointed to this position Clifford Woody of its School of Education.

The calendar of the Normal College was, at this time, based on the quarter plan while the U-M operated on the semester plan. Significant because it proved to be a major factor in Normal's decision (in 1939) to adopt the semester plan was the following provision:

It is proposed that all graduate courses offered in a Graduate Division be organized on the semester rather than the term basis, in order to facilitate the transfer of credit, to avoid misunderstanding about fees and to simplify the problem of cooperation of University staff members in course offerings.

It is obvious that the attitude of the U-M underlying this arrangement was one of jealous protection of its hegemony in the graduate area. Its connotation, as far as the teachers colleges were concerned, was of a relationship that involved only a one-sided kind of cooperation. It evinced distrust of the quality of instruction that a teachers college would, from its own sense of responsibility, provide. For Normal, with a proud and long record of eminent teachers on its staff, this was humiliating. In retrospect it would seem that the U-M would have been far wiser to have assumed the position of a tutor, interested in the pupil's development and planning his course to the point where he might participate in a truly cooperative situation.

As it was, however, the joint program continued for more than a decade before the colleges, one by one, broke away and established their own programs. The first to become independent was Western Michigan College. Finally, in October, 1951, the State Board granted the four teachers colleges authority to confer their own master's degree in education. The minutes of the Board read as follows:

On motion, the colleges of education were authorized to offer graduate work leading to the master's degree with specialization in education, and

to grant such a degree beginning September 1, 1952. Also that the several colleges (1) request sufficient funds in the 1952-53 budgets to carry out these programs, and (2) to collect and utilize in part such tuition and fees as may be necessary to give support to the conduct of such programs.

In July, 1952, the Board approved a specific request to grant graduate credit for work done in a workshop conducted for those in attendance at the Ninth Annual Classroom Teachers National Conference which met on Normal's campus that summer. Those who received this credit were in fact the charter members of an alumni group that was soon to grow rapidly in numbers.

Normal continued for the time being on the joint program, however. Contact with the U-M had, through the years, been friendly and close. There was considerable reason to believe that an improved relationship could be achieved, and the geographical proximity of the two institutions (only six miles apart) provided the basis for feeling that facilities could be shared and that a continuing joint program would be desirable.

In December of 1952, however, the State Board authorized a separate graduate status for the Normal College. The announcement appeared, abruptly and without prior notice to the parties concerned, in the newspapers. From this time, therefore, Normal was engaged in planning, and in the fall of 1953 a specific program was approved.

To formulate a graduate program, President Elliott appointed a Study Committee, consisting of three representatives from the liberal arts area,³ two from the area of professional education,⁴ and the Dean of Administration, who served as chairman. A questionnaire was sent to public school officials in the area.⁵ This survey was a move in the direction of developing a program with a practical, rather than theoretical, emphasis. It also had a political motive, an appeal for support to those in charge of the public schools, whose teachers would be the students.

Results of the questionnaire indicated enthusiasm for a new kind of program. The general tenor of the replies placed strong emphasis on the practical. The terms "internship" and "externship" were used. Reference was made to tying work to teaching situations. One frequent suggestion was that, before entering graduate work, the student should have some years of actual teaching experience. There was substantial support for "work in philosophy of education or education in the context of our particular society."

From a full year of deliberations by the Study Committee a program and set of standards emerged. The graduate curriculum was organized into five areas, and the student must satisfy requirements in all five. The areas were: (a) Individual and Group Learning; (b) The School and Community Foundations; (c) Contemporary Culture and Its Backgrounds; (d) Science and Scientific Method; (e) Contemporary Civilization and Its Backgrounds. The individual student's program was to be "tailor-made"—that is, drawn (with the assistance of a counselor) with the view to filling in deficiencies in the student's background as well as the furtherance of his professional training. The program must include a "Field Project Study," a research experience in which the student (who would be an in-service teacher) was expected to define and explore, with the help of his school authorities, some current educational problem.

Admission to the program would be open to anyone possessing a bachelor's degree from a college accredited by a regional accrediting association (such as the North Central Association or the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education). Thirty hours of credit, quality "B" average, would be required for the degree. No one would be admitted to candidacy for the degree until he had earned at least six semester hours of "B" average credit at this institution, and had had at least one semester of teaching experience. The degree, a Master of Arts in Education, would be awarded only to those "who have had teaching experience or who hold a contract to teach."

Was this indeed a graduate program? Here was no emphasis on scholarly advancement of the frontiers of pure knowledge, an object derived largely from the German influence, and long adopted as a major function of graduate work in America. Rather, it was simply an additional step in the education and training of the teacher, with a nod in the direction of research for specific, practical ends. If the work done were to be of a higher grade than that done on the undergraduate level, it would be because the students had passed through the undergraduate mill with at least a modest degree of success, were better oriented as to their needs by virtue of having practiced to some extent their profession, and in general were more mature in their interests and attitudes. They would not represent a carefully selected group of promising scholars.

But graduate work in America had by the mid-20th century shown many variations. No restricted definition could possibly cover the scene. The one that was widely used and accepted was broad

enough to cover not only the graduate schools of the great universities but even the program of a teachers college:

Graduate Work—a term commonly used in America to indicate work done in the combined university-college institutions beyond the bachelor's degree; in other words, university work as opposed to collegiate work.⁶

Furthermore, the twentieth century had seen an increasing emphasis among the older graduate schools on the importance of tying graduate work closely with the needs of the living society. No better illustration of this fact could be found than that provided by one of Normal's own graduates and one-time instructor on its staff when, as president of perhaps the outstanding graduate institution in America, Johns Hopkins University, Isaiah Bowman said:

Graduate work can not thrive on a philosophy of escape from the dominant social forces of the times. In learning and discovery, as in business and diplomacy, a good deal depends upon the prevailing wind. For example, science has flowered because of its obvious social use. If its benefits had not come to be shared and appreciated by the many, it might have starved underground.

Bowman then turned to the basic character of graduate instruction, the discipline through which the student should pass:

. . . discipline is largely an inner, self-generating and difficult process. It is conditioned in students not only by hard work under Masters but also by intellectual integrity in both masters and students and by an unquenchable desire, in all fields of thought, to get nearer the truth.

Then he added a warning, one that was particularly pertinent to a situation where increases in teachers' salaries had been made to rest largely on the accumulation of additional college credit. He said:

If it [graduate work] pretends to be something that is socially useful, and only fits a student to earn a better material living, it is a fraud. Nor is mere democratic amiability an acceptable substitute for intellectual enterprise. Between the everlastingly earnest and high and enterprising on the one hand, and the slack, the easy, and the conventional on the other, a choice must be made, and each institution engaged in graduate work is making it, consciously or unconsciously.⁷

The proposed program at Normal contained the essentials of a respectable graduate program in the best current sense.

Upon its initiation in the fall of 1953, enrollment leaped upward. Whereas in the fall semester of the last year of joint operation with the University of Michigan the enrollment was 89, a year later it was 158, and the following year 334. In 1962, it was 1,325. Summer enrollments took a similar direction. In 1953 (the last summer under the joint program), the enrollment was 126; in 1954, it was 342; by 1962, it had reached a 1,000, and in 1963 it was 1,775, with some 500 additional enrollments in pre- and post-summer school sessions.

The graduate program came to dominate the summer school enrollment. Naturally, this snowballing of numbers created a serious problem in staffing. The budget did not expand rapidly enough, and classes became large—particularly in the professional education area where a class of 60 or more was not unusual.

Almost from the first, off-campus courses were organized. Beginning in the fall of 1954, a special arrangement with the Flint Community School Program (a Mott Foundation project under the direction of an alumnus of Normal, Frank A. Manley) provided that a specified group of Flint teachers engaged in the program could take all the work necessary to earn the master's degree by way of off-campus courses held in Flint. A semester later, an off-campus course in reading was offered in Jackson. From this beginning, the offering of graduate courses off-campus became widespread.

It was not long before the requirement of teaching experience or a contract in hand was abandoned. Students needed the degree, it was argued, to secure a good teaching position. Furthermore, there was strong pressure from graduating seniors to continue on without break and complete their formal training. It would be more difficult later, as families were established and responsibilities, especially financial ones, increased.

Somewhat later, additional programs were approved. The way was opened when, in June, 1960, the State Board authorized Eastern to grant the master of arts degree in certain subject matter fields. In fairly rapid succession programs were authorized by the Graduate Council in French literature, biological science, industrial arts, physical education, geography, history, English literature, fine arts, and business administration, with others hovering in the offing.

In the spring of 1959, James Glasgow was made Director of the

Graduate Division and Dean of Instruction Bruce Nelson became chairman of the Council. With the change of status of the Normal College to University in 1959, the Graduate Division became the Graduate School. In October, 1960, Glasgow was given the title of Dean of the Graduate School. Holder of degrees from two of the outstanding graduate schools of the nation, Clark University and the University of Chicago, Glasgow was not only efficient in organizing the school but was meticulous in preserving personal contact with students at the counseling and classifying stages. In spite of the tidal wave of enrollments, he succeeded in preventing the Graduate School from becoming an educational mill.

In 1955, the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools visited the campus for the purpose of examining the program, and granted it accreditation.

In the spring of 1963, the program received the approval of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. In 1966, with the arrival of a visitation committee from the North Central Association, the graduate program received particular attention because of its proposal to install a six-year degree, that of Specialist in Education. Open discussion of the desirability of extending the graduate program still further, that is to the doctorate level, was taking place. Possession of adequate resources in staff, library holdings and equipment loomed as major problems for the immediate future. Admissions standards for the more advanced degree programs also were in process of being determined. And in the Faculty Council a move for a more representative Graduate Council which would also play a more decisive role in policy-making was under way. That there would be a pressing student demand for the advanced degrees no one doubted; it was already there.