The late nineteenth-century University Extension Movement, followed by the Workers' Education Association and University Extra Mural Studies, have been regarded, rightly, as important contributions to adult education and indicators of the commitment of universities to those who were not undergraduates but had a thirst for study. R.E. Bell has argued that the conventional wisdom which assumes nineteenth-century higher education to be elitist and in which such inclusive initiatives as the extension movement were anomalous, should be re-appraised. In a stimulating paper he concluded that 'even the most superficial exploration of university opportunities in Victorian society soon reveals a situation far more complex than that suggested by the traditional stereotype of an elitist enclave ...'.¹ The admirable historical introduction to the Report of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1919, tends to support Bell's view. After analysing the complex nineteenth-century tradition of experiments in adult education, it suggested that 'the movement for the wider diffusion of adult education, which began in the opening years of the present century, was not, therefore, preaching a novel ideal or essaying an unrehearsed experiment'.² It is not the intention of this paper to argue a revisionist case, but to explore the attitude to non-degree course access of the first of the university colleges as a contribution to the discussion. This is the more necessary as, surprisingly in so industrious a chronicler, Thompson did not follow the fortunes of the evening

¹ R.E. Bell, The Open University: exciting innovation or disappointing revival (Open University School of Education, 1993), 3.
department beyond 1860, and Fiddes and Charlton only noted its existence.³

In January 1849 the trustees of the will of John Owens created a committee chaired by Samuel Fletcher, to devise a 'general character and plan' for the college.⁴ Assuming that 'the major part of young men of the middle class in Manchester' were engaged in a trade or business from about fifteen, the committee sent a questionnaire to twelve colleges of higher study in all parts of the kingdom.⁵ One question was whether there should be 'two distinct' courses, one for that group who entered industry and commerce early and a more advanced and lengthy course for those who 'would pursue their studies to a more advanced age'. Only four responses were received but all agreed that it was vital to anticipate two groups of students with different expectations. Dr Bruce of Belfast went so far as to assert that no college could succeed without a body of students pursuing a course of study 'for professional objects'. The seriousness of this inquiry is evidence that from the beginning the trustees took into account the relationship of the likely social and economic background of the students to the courses of study to be provided. The committee report was strongly influenced by the Scottish experience in which social class was not a determinant of access and where 'students of every variety and description', including those who were preparing for trade or commerce, could attend classes 'in whatever order or manner may suit their different views and prospects'.⁶ It was this belief that in due course made the evening classes possible, as it was unambiguously stated that while desirable that students should undertake a 'regular' course of study, it was evident, that to insist on this as a condition would contract within narrow limits the benefits of the institution ... considering the age at which young men in this district are usually engaged in business, there may, and probably will be, a large body of students desirous of improving themselves ... but unable to devote to their studies the period which may be required for a course extending to the higher departments of those subjects.⁷

It is necessary to emphasize the educational principles and awareness of local needs underlying the early discussions on the

³ J. Thompson, The Owens College ... (Manchester, J.E. Cornish, 1886); E. Fiddes, Chapters in the history of Owens College and Manchester University 1851–1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1937); H.B.Charlton, Portrait of a University 1851–1951 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1951).
⁴ Trustees Minutes (T.M.), vol. 1, John Rylands University Library Archives (J.R.U.L.A.).
⁵ Ibid., Appendix to the Report of the Committee, 78.
⁷ Ibid.
curriculum of studies of the future college to demonstrate that the
evening work was not primarily a later expedient to meet financial
difficulties and to be abandoned as soon as possible. The quite
separate liberal and vocational courses introduced at Durham and
King's College, London, were rejected as impossible considering
the level of the endowment and might conflict with John Owens's
wishes which implied a more holistic approach. Instead, a single
or 'regular' programme would be established to be taught at two
levels, 'senior' and 'junior'. This would unite the basic values of
the college for 'the general cultivation and discipline of the mind'
with a response to the needs of young men in an industrial and
commercial environment who could not spend sufficient time in
study to achieve 'senior' or degree level. Such flexibility would
allow, for example, a grouping of mathematics, natural philosophy
and chemistry to give a student 'the principal part of the
knowledge requisite for the elementary training of engineers,
machinists and others destined for pursuits in practical science'
and those with more time, or perhaps financial resources, to read
for a degree of London University. It was also agreed to permit
access to another category of day student, 'occasional' students
who would be able 'to attend any particular portions of the course,
or any subject not included in the regular course', limited study
which would be valuable for their various occupations. In addition,
it was decided that by discriminating between 'class' and 'public'
lectures still wider admission would be possible.

This was a remarkably open college organization but it is
unlikely that the trustees and the newly-appointed professors at the
opening in 1851 had any conception that for some forty years
the occasional students and the evening students would form
the majority, while undergraduates remained comparatively excep­tional. If this was so, realization of the implications was soon to
dawn. Early reports of the principal were notable for the sharpness
of their insight and exposed the lack of educational infrastructure
locally and nationally and reviewed the lowly expectations of
Manchester parents, which were often more socially than
educationally determined. In February 1853 the trustees approved
Scott's move to establish evening classes — the first use of this
term — for schoolmasters in classics and mathematics with the
concession of reduced fees. This is of some interest in the history
of education and while not unique as University College, London,
rans a course well known to Scott and Greenwood, the enterprise
shown by Manchester elementary school teachers in 'British,
National and the like public schools' in meeting and sending a

* For an assessment of Scott, see C. Lees and A. Robertson, *Bulletin of the John Rylands
* T.M., vol. 1, 1 February 1853.
deputation to the College marked a stage in professional development. There was also in existence an Association of Middle Class Teachers with which the College had occasional contact. Student numbers were satisfactory for so early a period and between 1853 and 1858, 162 teachers attended the evening classes though there was considerable drop-out when they encountered the rigours of Greenwood's Greek and Latin and the eccentricities of Sandeman's mathematics. There were also fluctuations in attendance which Scott explained by reference to problems of part-time studies for 'that laborious class of men'. There were limits to the involvement with schools, however, and when a distinguished H.M.I., Morell, suggested incorporating a training college in 1858, Greenwood, whose long and distinguished period as principal had just begun, responded sharply that 'an unfavourable impression, however groundless, might be produced' by such a decision which could distort the character of the college. More positive connections developed later. In 1866 the committee responsible for a memorial to Richard Cobden associated the endowment of a chair with free entry by teachers and pupil teachers in publicly-funded schools of Manchester and Salford to political economy classes. At a meeting of the Court of the reformed college in 1871 which had emerged from the work of the Extension Committee and was soon to move to Oxford Road, T.H. Huxley advocated the more extensive and systematic teaching of science. The Science and Art Department in London was the principal agent through which government promoted science in elementary schools and there had already been suggestions from London that Owens College might prepare selected science teachers for its certificates. This had been somewhat coolly received and limited to day students. But the idea gained new prominence in 1884 when London amended its grant regulations to ease the cost for evening students. Saturday and eventually summer vacation courses for science teachers were a further development of a significant but always small component of the part-time students.

The original course for teachers stimulated Professor W.C. Williamson to offer a course of natural history in the evening and it is he who can be claimed as the originator of the general evening

11 It is important to remember that teachers in 'National' and 'British' schools were elementary school teachers. 'Middle class' refers to teachers in private or endowed schools.
15 In O.C.D., vol. 1, Doc. 105.
16 Minutes of the Owens College Meeting, vol. 1, 13 November 1870.
17 O.C.D., vol. 5.
courses, as his initiative compelled the trustees to consider the implications of extending such responsibilities, although there is no evidence of a formal decision to promote such courses as a regular part of the College programme. The principal supported the enlargement on the ground that it met the original intention of the trustees to provide for those who could not attend regularly because of their work. In addition, he argued, as occasional students finished their courses and entered or returned to work, it was important to provide further courses for them if their interest had been aroused. It was suggested that the evening fee should be one guinea for a course of twenty-four lectures without the normal entry fee. One lecture only would be given each week 'to avoid the interruptions otherwise likely to occur with such an audience'. As these matters were being formalized Richard Christie was appointed in December 1853 to the chair of history and in February 1854 it was announced that he would offer an evening course. First attendance at these two trend-setting courses was forty-three for natural history and fourteen for history. A year later Christie was teaching half courses in political economy and jurisprudence with three and seven students respectively. Before the first decade of the College’s existence was out, a special prospectus for the evening classes was published and some twelve courses, junior and senior, were being offered, a range which gave students who attended a prescribed number of courses regularly access to the matriculation examination of London University.

Already the college authorities were beginning to understand the challenges, both economic and logistical, of extending enrolment while retaining standards appropriate to higher education and remaining true to the wishes of the founder. The decision not to incorporate the training of teachers indicates sensitivity to this. Financial issues were a constant concern of the college at all levels of its activity and it is impossible to know from extant evidence how far the evening work was deliberately upgraded to respond to financial constraints. There is no evidence of such a policy decision or of heart-searching about its propriety in the very full trustees’ minutes and it is unwise to conclude that the work was merely finance driven. The substantial circumstantial evidence suggests that genuine conviction continued to underpin the work. It cannot be without significance that the first principal, Scott, was at the forefront of contemporary thinking about adult education and despite indifferent health taught on the evening courses, or that Greenwood as professor and principal, at a time of hugely increased professional responsibilities, taught evening classes for

19 Ibid., 7 February 1854.
thirty-six years. The important financial principle was established from the beginning that the student fee, minus one third for the college, would be retained by the teacher. Scott’s argument was that to insist on the college entrance fee would undoubtedly deter students, whereas taxing the teachers’ pay entailed no risk and, ‘if such courses are required at all they can ultimately afford to contribute to the general fund’. It was to be 1890 before a grant was given by government to higher education and as in school education prior to compulsory attendance, determining the strategic balance of staffing, courses and fees was a critical decision to ensure student growth and college viability. Until 1862 fee income as a proportion of college income averaged about one fifth, and the improved proportion from that time was mainly an outcome of the steep rise in evening students. There can be little doubt that coincident with a genuine commitment to ease of access, the trustees and staff recognized the large increase in part-time students as an important source of income, and to some extent became dependent on it for perhaps forty years, particularly as a result of its determination to appoint able staff, develop a new site and achieve university status. In other words, the college and its evening work grew up together and general acceptance of this became part of the culture and a customary part of teaching and administration. There is considerable evidence that until the end of the 1950s the small staff and poor health of the principal, led to very informal organization which probably explains the very small amount of day to day records which have survived, if indeed they were ever kept for the evening students. It was with the feared collapse of the college from 1857, with hindsight more apparent than real, that attempts were made to create a more systematic framework of courses and responsibilities, which the appointment of Greenwood as principal encouraged but was also emphasized by Roscoe and Christie. The indirect aspects most significant for the evening work were the greater emphasis on regular day students, particularly those who would take London University degrees, and the creation of the College Meeting in 1857 which acted as a rudimentary senate. The former increased the conviction of staff that regular attendance, library study and regular examination, while necessary for all serious students, were vital for

[21] Principal’s Report to the Trustees, 3 January 1854.
[22] See Charlton, Portrait, Appendix B.
[23] On the other hand, ambivalence appears sometimes, as when discussing accommodation in favour of the day students, ‘... the evening classes are but an adjunct of the proper work of the College’. College Meeting, 4 February 1865. References to the classes as experimental which lasted to the 1860s were probably derived from uncertainty of funding.
[24] Christie seems to have been particularly influential in formalizing the day work which might have had implications for the occasional and evening students, T.M., vol. 2, 1857, ‘The professors on the future of the college’. 
the undergraduates and may well have encouraged a move to diminish the number of 'occasional' day students by encouraging them to attend in the evening. The College Meeting, which gave some coherence to decision-making, recommended a large increase in the evening provision to the trustees in March 1858 for an experimental period.\(^{25}\) As the principal indicated in his annual report, they would effectively open to evening students similar opportunities for study as were available to day students. He carefully pointed out that the plan of the trustees was that students enrolling in the evening would 'be encouraged to enter on a systematic, rather than a desultory, course of study'.\(^{26}\) This was the first of many adjustments to the evening course. The number of undergraduates remained for many years very small. For example, in 1863–64, ten years after the evening work had begun, there were eighteen regular day students who were attempting a degree of London University from matriculation to final B.A.\(^{27}\) In order to harmonize fees the distinction between schoolmaster and other courses was abolished. These developments were in part influenced by a visit to King's and University Colleges, London, by the influential secretary to the trustees and solicitor to the college, J.P. Aston.\(^{28}\) Despite the increasing numbers, it would obviously be recognized that to develop the evening work energetically involved a considerable risk. For the half century the evening courses existed, it is possible to sense tension between the educationally and financially desirable expansion of part-time students, a provision highly regarded in the local community and with implications for continuing donations from wealthy Mancunians, and the most effective use of very able staff, as the evening work was hugely staff intensive.

It is important to understand that professors of the developing college, including Scott and Greenwood, made a notable general contribution to education in Manchester and its region and it cannot be argued that they took a narrow or 'ivory tower' view of educational developments or that they were not well informed about education outside the college itself. Typical of this was the support given to the Manchester Working Man's College (W.M.C.) which, from 1858, shared the Mechanics' Institute's premises in Princess Street. From this connection was to come the most dramatic encouragement to the evening classes and a policy which committed the college to their continuation. This was the decision in 1861 to merge the W.M.C. with Owens College. This

\(^{25}\) College Meeting, vol.1, 29 March 1858.


\(^{27}\) O.C.A.R., 1863–64.

\(^{28}\) There is a small collection of papers of the W.M.C. in J.R.U.L.A., including MS reports by the secretary J.H. Nodal, and a scrapbook in Manchester Central Reference Library.
surprising move was very different from the policy pursued between 1856 and the 1870s to amalgamate with medical schools in the area; nor was it the same as incorporating the Manchester and Salford College for Women (M.S.C.W.) in 1883. A new faculty and academic prestige derived from the former and in the case of the women’s college, a new main-stream department and a growing number of undergraduates were added. The Working Man’s College had been founded in 1858 in response to a national movement, traceable to the early years of the century, to extend educational opportunity for working men of the artisan and operative classes. As with mechanics’ institutes, however, the skilled and more prosperous artisan group soon predominated in the Manchester W.M.C. The records show how much this was regretted by the W.M.C management but it probably made the transition to Owens College easier. As it is impossible to get information about the social or employment background of Owens evening students, the analysis of W.M.C. students about to become students of Owens College is of interest. At the beginning of the session 1859 to 1860 there were thirty-six operatives; eighty clerks, warehousemen and agents; eleven shopkeepers and assistants; and four teachers and librarians. The college was, of course, wholly part-time so evidence that there had been a struggle to achieve the aim of the founders — ‘to call out the latent faculties of the mind and to carry them forward by careful and continuous training to the highest degree of perfection of which they are capable’ — must have had resonances in Owens College. The merger involved a serious decision by Owens as it was recognized that the W.M.C. students would be unable to afford the existing evening course fees, as the W.M.C entrance fee had been half a crown, with a two shilling fee for a course of ten lectures. Although the Owens trustees were willing to reduce fees for the evening classes to enable the merger to take place, margins could not be squeezed too much as Owens would be even further away from achieving its policy of making the evening work self-funding. The greatest factor which encouraged and ultimately enabled the merger to take place — and probably initiated it — was the intimate connection between the staff of Owens and the Working Man’s College, in this respect very similar to the later relationship with the M.S.C.W. A decade later the Manchester City News noted that Greenwood with, ‘a knot of gentlemen, whose guiding spirits reigned at Owens College, had started the

30 W.M.C., MS report by J.H. Nodal, 5 November 1858, J.R.U.L.A.
31 Ibid., MS report, unsigned, undated, on autumn term, 1859.
32 Principal’s report to the trustees, T.M., 25 April 1861.
Manchester Working Man's College'. Greenwood was a very active secretary as well as teacher of classics and religion and was joined by professors Christie, Roscoe, Sandeman and Scott. Alfred Neild, one of the Owens trustees, was treasurer and taught political economy and Oliver Heywood, the Manchester philanthropist, soon to be treasurer of the Owens College Extension Committee, was a council member. Such former distinguished early graduates as Gwyther, Picton and Pankhurst were involved and the name of George Faulkner appears as a contributor to funds. Because of this it is also perhaps unremarkable how closely the aims and organization of the W.M.C coincided with those admonitions on attendance, regularity, systematic study and examination attendance, so frequently heard by Owens students in the principal's end of year addresses. At the W.M.C. it was expected, 'in every case aiming at what is thorough and systematic rather than what is extensive but superficial; and, again, not engaging to lecture to a class of listeners merely, but to teach and direct those who believe that they must be parties to their own education, and are willing to give the labour implied in this'. In fact, so intimate was the relationship, it would not be an overstatement to suggest that the W.M.C was from its beginning an extension of Owens College evening work. Interestingly, the 1919 Adult Education Report suggested that the two most significant early developments in adult education were the foundation of people's colleges and the development of university education. In 1860 something akin to this seemed to be emerging at Owens College. The trustees' minutes are very restrained on the events leading to so major a decision and the principal's report to the trustees in April 1861 indicated only that a merger was being considered and set out a suggested way forward. By way of rationale it was claimed that in Manchester there was a need for 'a good and complete series' of evening classes but the continuing existence of such classes outside Owens College would lead to the uneconomic situation of fragmented attendance. To compensate for the fall in income from lowering fees it was suggested that an endowment fund should be created to support the evening work. In reality, for a time the college had to draw on its own general contingency fund. The practical point was made that the classes should run from October to March when attendance might be at its most regular and it was accepted that 'supplementary' teachers might have to be appointed. The trustees appointed Greenwood and Neild to negotiate the

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33 Manchester City News, April 1872, Cuttings Book (All newspaper references are to the Cuttings Books, J.R.U.L.A.).
34 W.M.C., J.R.U.L.A., printed leaflet on the new college, no date.
35 Adult Education Report, 23.
36 Greenwood to the Trustees, T.M., 25 April 1861.
amalgamation which, considering the overlap of roles and intimate relationships between the two institutions, cannot have been as formal as Thompson implies.\(^{37}\) Before these events took effect, the former decision to extend the range of the evening classes, seemed to be bearing fruit when, as early as 1858–59, there were 107 evening students in college classes compared with fifty-nine the previous year. Although this total dropped back to seventy-seven in 1859–60 before rising to ninety-two the year after, it still far outnumbered the day students. 1861–62 saw the steepest climb when the number rose to 235, as students transferring from the W.M.C. registered.\(^{38}\)

A small but not insignificant indicator of the changing status of the evening work was the decision from the 1862–63 session to have a separate and yearly formal meeting of staff, students and supporters to hear a report on the year's progress, as had been the practice from the beginning with the day students. An unexpected outcome of this may have helped create the impression that the evening work was a wholly separate activity. It was shown in a previous paper in the *Bulletin* that this perception was strong among the day students and the separate evening ceremony ensured that the principal's address to the annual meeting of day students never referred to the evening classes.\(^{39}\)

Fig. 1 shows dramatically how dominant the evening classes were until the early 1890s when the day classes, helped by the slowly evolving secondary education provision and the rapid development of the women's department after 1883, moved into an equal numerical position for the first time.\(^{40}\) The addition of the W.M.C. students from 1861 gave a substantial boost but scarcely explains the continuing increase to the remarkable total of over 900 students at the end of the 1870s from which point the decline was undramatic but continuous. The lowered fees and the extensive range of courses are probably explanation enough. From 1865 the Calendar published lists of regular and occasional students but not evening students, for whom no lists of registrations or class attendance appear to have survived.\(^{41}\) The Calendar did publish united lists of matriculated and degree students of the University of London but did not distinguish between day and evening students. The only evidence to survive which casts much light on this important work is a volume recording the students from 1870 who achieved some level of success with the University of

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\(^{37}\) Thompson, *Portrait*, chapter 8.

\(^{38}\) Figures from O.C.A.R., 1858–59 to 1861–62.

\(^{39}\) From this time a separate annual report on the evening class department is presented with much important detail.

\(^{40}\) Figure compiled from data in O.C.A.R., 1852 to 1896.

\(^{41}\) Class registers were kept as detailed figures were always reported in O.C.A.R. but none has survived. Most regrettably, there is no evidence of the social or work background of the students, and age was not noted for the more mature students.
London. Until the mid-1880s the clerk entered a note if the student was from the evening classes and also gave the number who entered for matriculation or parts one and two of the degree, as well as those who were successful or failed. From this it appears that the total number of day and evening students to matriculate in the period up to 1886 was 692 and of the 103 evening students, sixty-seven passed. At part one of the B.A. 278 students entered and of the sixty evening students, thirty were successful. Twenty evening candidates out of 183 day and evening students graduated after success in part two, 68% of those part-timers who had got so far. The majority of the graduates were in Arts with only five gaining a B.Sc. and this is understandable, as reading for a science degree in the evening was particularly demanding.

Fig. 2 shows the detailed figures over a fifteen year period but when the patterns are looked at on a yearly rather than a cumulative basis in Fig. 3, it is not surprising, perhaps, that the

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**Figure 2**

Day and Evening Students Entered for University of London Degrees:
Matriculation, first B.A., second B.A.
Key: E = evening students, D = day students

42 Register of Students Entered (for) Examinations of the University of London from 1851. In fact, details to 1870 are very brief and record totals only. From 1870 details of courses taken and examination results are given.
college authorities expressed anxiety as this simpler chart shows.\textsuperscript{43} No doubt because of the concern about the quality of work and to monitor whether the expensive operation was viable, careful statistics were kept about the attendance of students in classes and recorded in the annual report. From time to time the principal would disclose how poor attendance was, as in 1864 when he noted that since 1861 the average number of classes attended per student was 1.75, 1.66 and 1.65 over the three years. He also pointed out that participation in the annual examination varied greatly between subjects but on average was from one third to one half only.\textsuperscript{44} A detailed census was taken from 1873 to 1882 and demonstrated that the number of students attending the by then very extensive range of classes, which fell into seventeen categories of subject, remained high but was unevenly and perhaps surprisingly distributed.\textsuperscript{45}

There has been little research on the introduction and development of subject areas in the university colleges and it is worth reviewing in a little detail the characteristics of some of the evening classes.\textsuperscript{46} Classics was, as it had been from the foundation of the college, exceptionally popular. Perhaps more surprising is the size of the interest in Greek, 840 students compared with 1,077 for Latin. While French and German were taught in the day classes from the beginning, it was in 1858–59 that French became a regular subject of the evening classes, taught by Alphonse Podevin. German was taught for many years by the remarkable linguist Professor Theodores. Little comment was ever made on modern foreign languages in the formal discussions of the staff or in the public pronouncements on speech and prize-giving occasions, yet it appears that French was second only to classics in popularity with strong German and some Spanish. This would presumably represent the influence of the commercial environment of Manchester where even a rudimentary grasp of a foreign language among, for example, the group categorized in the records

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & 1870 & 1875 & 1880 & 1885 \\
\hline
Matriculation & 4 (10 sat) & 3 (7 sat) & 2 (8 sat) & 1 (1 sat) \\
\hline
first BA & 2 (2 sat) & 4 (6 sat) & 1 (6 sat) & 3 (3 sat) \\
\hline
second BA & 1 (1 sat) & 1 (1 sat) & 1 (6 sat) & 0 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Figure 3}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. Figures calculated from the Register. It should be noted that identification of evening students is sometimes unclear.

\textsuperscript{44} O.C.A.R., 24 June 1864.

\textsuperscript{45} Return of Students in Each Evening Class ...1873–78 and from 1879–83. In Senate Minutes, Appendix 2, 1881–87, 14 April 1883.

\textsuperscript{46} Details of subjects are very slight and have to be compiled from a number of sources, particularly O.C.A.R., and 42, 45 supra.
of the W.M.C. as clerks, warehousemen and agents, could be of practical use. Curiously, however, there had been no teaching of foreign languages at the W.M.C. although classics was well subscribed, with Greenwood as teacher. The absence of modern language at the W.M.C. may explain the strengthening of an established language base at Owens after 1861. Professor Williamson hinted that social reasons might contribute to the popularity of language in that many parents wanted their children to achieve the socially desirable image of genteel education which included a smattering of language.

Mathematics was for many years a source of great concern to the principal. Its importance with classics as an intellectual discipline made it an indispensable component of university education, but technical competence in mathematics underpinned many of the subjects which the college — and the local community — wished to develop, most notably natural philosophy and engineering. Classics and mathematics had initiated the evening classes in 1853. By the time the major review was made in 1883, mathematics offered a wide range of classes at different levels and covering all aspects of the subject, often with special arrangements to enable students with little background to be brought up to the appropriate standard. The total of part-time students for the decade of the survey was 1,219, many fewer than for classics or modern languages. But it was not numbers alone that caused the anxiety. Professor Sandeman who established the subject and until 1860 taught natural philosophy as well, had a style of teaching suitable only for the ablest degree students and he intensified for many years the already endemic tendency for students to drift away from classes and examinations. The same phenomenon was noticed at the W.M.C. where Sandeman also taught the subject. In 1865, the year of Sandeman's enforced resignation, Greenwood regretted in his report that, 'classes so important, and for which such ample provision is made by us, should be the most thinly attended on the list'. In fairness to Sandeman it had been noted by principal Scott as early as 1855, that mathematics 'seems to be neglected in the middle class education of this great seat of mechanical activity'. It is interesting to speculate how much, if at all, the reputation of a lecturer affected recruitment. Probably little, but the lecturer's ability must have been a factor in whether or not struggling evening students persevered. Students with appropriate

48 Student numbers in O.C.A.R. reveal that lack of basic knowledge was a continuing problem and even the junior course was sometimes divided into three classes. The failed experiment of a College Tutor was mainly to enhance mathematics ability and was turned into a mathematics lectureship.
mastery of the rudiments of mathematics were a national problem before the painfully slow reform of the endowed grammar schools from 1869, and demonstrates the dependence of evolving colleges on standards in schools which helps explain the intimate relationships which developed between universities and grammar schools later in the century. The situation may have improved somewhat in the college by the 1870s as physics and even engineering had been introduced on an evening basis. It is impossible to judge how much improvement in mathematics teaching was due to Professor T. Barker, described in a Manchester Guardian leading article, as ‘one of the ablest teachers in the country’, but it appears from figures assiduously recorded each year that class sizes in mathematics and subjects dependent on it, remained relatively small and unpredictable from one year to the next. The principal learned to observe such fluctuations with some resignation from year to year commenting, for instance, in 1884, ‘If the popularity of the great disciplinary studies — classics and mathematics — appears for the moment to have declined, in modern languages and chemistry, usually regarded as pre-eminently paying subjects, there has been either a falling off or at all events no increase’.

Among the science subjects, chemistry was of particular significance as a leading contributor to student recruitment in both the day and evening courses. In his history of the chemistry department from 1857 to 1886, Roscoe, who was appointed in the former year, argued that the early trustees doubted the subject’s credentials as the basis of a liberal education and that it had got off to a slow start. Considering Professor Frankland’s problems in establishing and fitting out a laboratory at Quay Street on a shoestring, this point is rather unfair, but it is the case that there were no evening classes until 1857. It is perhaps revealing about the status of the evening work in general, despite many public assertions of its importance, that in the history of his department’s achievements, Roscoe who taught on the evening course, both at Owens and the W.M.C., ignored any reference to it despite the fact that in the decade 1873 to 1883 alone, 1,530 evening students were taught, one of whom, the later Professor Sir T.E. Thorpe, F.R.S., had been an evening student. Chemistry provides a good example of how the evening classes could respond rapidly to an expressed need in the local community. In 1868 the Manchester Chemists’ and Druggists’ Association asked the college to provide

51 Manchester Guardian, Leading Article, 14 October 1885.
53 H. Roscoe, Record of work done in the Chemistry Department of the Owens College 1857–87 (London: Macmillan, 1887).
courses to meet the demands of the new pharmacy legislation and in that very session a course was mounted and was attended by sixty-one students, and for the next year a full programme of courses in pharmaceutical chemistry, materia medica, physiological botany and Latin was planned and proved to be attractive. The great success of chemistry under Frankland, Roscoe and Schorlemmer and the general expansion in evening work with a distinctly vocational slant, caused some to believe that the college was moving away from the intention of the founder who had wished to promote traditional university studies. Roscoe engaged in a typically robust press controversy to refute this but the point is an important one as professional studies in the new university colleges was a significant area of controversy in the second half of the nineteenth century and one in which it might have been expected Manchester would have been deeply involved. No less a figure than Robert Lowe commented that the Manchester college had become ‘subservient to the industry of the place’ when the college was working to win university status in the late 1870s.

Alfred Neild, the college treasurer, when introducing the speaker at the beginning of the new session in October 1874, made a point of observing that it was ‘hurtful and foolish prejudice that there was any contrariety between the pursuit of liberal learning and the most earnest and energetic prosecution of the active business of life’ and Greenwood lost no opportunity to deny that study at the college was ‘a mere handmaid to the practical necessities of the neighbourhood’. It is appropriate to mention that in the inaugural lectures which introduced their subjects as part of higher education, the first professors went out of their way to show that there was no dichotomy between intellectual or even spiritual enlightenment and the practical outcomes of knowledge.

There is a good deal of evidence that in Manchester subjects in the evening programme which contributed to enhanced professional standing in occupations which were coming under public oversight, were particularly valued. It has been seen how chemistry responded to the needs of pharmacists and in 1881 the Institute of Bankers had asked the college to provide courses ‘to prepare clerks in banking houses for such examinations’ and in 1882 a set of courses appeared targeting the new Institute of

55 Schorlemmer appears to have taken on an increasing amount of evening teaching as Roscoe’s responsibilities increased.
56 Manchester Guardian, 2 May 1877.
57 Manchester Guardian, 10 October 1874.
58 Manchester Guardian, 2 May 1877, W.H. Houldsworth and Greenwood refuted the criticism which may well have touched a raw nerve in a college preoccupied with raising academic standards.
59 See On the educational and commercial utility of chemistry (E. Frankland), On University Education (A.J. Scott), J.R.U.L.A.
60 Manchester Examiner and Times, 11 October 1881, Greenwood at the opening of the session.
Chartered Accountants in which, additional to mathematics, political economy and law were provided.\textsuperscript{61} By 1889 the large number of 233 students were taking such courses as mercantile law, law of insurance and administration of estates in bankruptcy.\textsuperscript{62} It is obvious that in the Manchester region there were many for whom some knowledge of the law, as with foreign languages, would be very valuable. The Manchester Athenaeum also planned to put on a law course in 1882 and a certain tension between the two institutions found its way into the press, the smallest of clouds at the time, but symbolic of what was to begin to diminish attendance at Owens evening classes within a decade.\textsuperscript{63} Greenwood was evidently very aware of such possibilities in Manchester, for as early as 1879 he had pointed to ‘admirable’ evening classes appearing in the town, but chose to interpret the situation positively, in that better prepared students might go on to attend the Owens classes.\textsuperscript{64}

The reformed college organization from 1870 and extensive facilities in the new Oxford Road building from 1873 stimulated another review of the evening work. Writing much later Greenwood saw the move to Oxford Road as the coming of age of the evening work which could be considered an ‘organised department of the college’.\textsuperscript{65} How far this was so can be seen in a comment by Neild to the students in 1874, that ‘their convenience and welfare’ had been given ‘very considerable weight’ in the discussions about the location of the new site, and the records of the Extension Committee reveal that the evening work was cited to strengthen the case for public support for College reform to enable ‘clerks, warehousemen and artizans, while earning their livings’ to go on to more advanced work. Thomas Ashton, the most influential supporter of the extension and a generous benefactor, also said that the evening classes were a ‘most important portion of the institution’.\textsuperscript{66}

A major development in 1873 was a £500 endowment for five years from two businessmen, Henry Jackson of Whalley Range and Samuel Watts of S. and J. Watts and Company. Further amounts were given by the M.P., J.P. Thomasson and Mr A. Haworth.\textsuperscript{67} It had always been the aim of the college to make the evening work self-financing and the opportunity was taken to attempt further to enhance the department. Fees were reduced from fifteen shillings

\textsuperscript{61} Manchester Guardian, 10 October 1882.
\textsuperscript{62} O.C.A.R., 1888–89.
\textsuperscript{63} Manchester Guardian, 29 November 1882.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Manchester Guardian, 10 October 1874; Extension and Amalgamation Book, Document 25; Manchester Guardian, 9 April 1873.
\textsuperscript{67} Benefactors of the Owens College, vol. 1, 1873, Evening Classes Temporary Endowment Fund.
to ten shillings and sixpence for a course, the payment of staff was revised and exhibitions were instituted in each subject area, to be awarded on the results of internal sessional examination or external London University success. The exhibitions were part of the continuing battle to encourage more consistent attendance and systematic study. The most determined and conscientious or 'bona fide' students were those who had attended three classes regularly in a year, and they were to be equal in status in all respects to the full-time students. More is heard than in earlier years, of efforts to inform students of career openings and to encourage them to become more fully part of the general student body. The library was made more accessible in the evening. There was recognition that the older, more worldly-wise students could be deterred by practices 'incident to studentship but irksome to adults' such as registration and roll call in class. As part of the attempt to encourage hard work, the old school strategy of emulation was invoked and privileges were given to the bona fide evening students from which the more casual evening students who had to purchase 'unregistered tickets' to attend lectures, would be debarred.

Early in the existence of the evening classes book prizes had been given, as to successful day students, but these had been phased out to save money. What looks like increasingly bureaucratic organization reflected the working out of academic pressures in administrative devices — the college's consistent policy of emphasizing the seriousness of study, whether day or evening, the community interest in professional studies and the increasingly energetic drive towards university status which inevitably emphasized traditional scholarship and, increasingly, research.

It was the end of the short-term Jackson and Watts endowment in 1878, during which student numbers had reached their highest level, and the gaining of the Victoria University Charter in 1880, which provoked yet more heart-searching. The Registrar provided statistics that in the six years prior to the endowment, there had been an average of 471 students in thirty-seven classes whereas in the same period after the move to Oxford Road and with the new money, numbers had risen to 840 students in fifty-six classes.

Fig. 1 shows how the strongest rise coincided with the endowment and the college move to new premises and there appear to be no other local or internal circumstances to account for the dramatic rise in recruitment from 1873 to 1878, other than lower fees, incentive exhibitions and a wide range of classes and levels in the larger new building. But a committee probing more deeply concluded that the strategy of creating undergraduate and sessional

68 Senate Minutes, Appendix vol.1, 20 November 1872, 15 February 1873.
69 O.C.D., vol. 4, Principal's Report, Evening classes, 13 May 1876.
70 Ibid.
exhibitions had failed in the crucial aim of encouraging students to submit themselves either to sessional or University of London examinations. It was pointed out that only thirty-four students had taken some part in London examinations before the last fee change, a number which had subsequently risen to forty-six, and while a not 'inconsiderable' achievement, for individuals, it was only a tiny proportion of the evening students. It was clear to the committee that there was a serious dilemma to be resolved. With the end of the endowment any increase in fees to replace it would cause a decline in numbers which would in turn 'curtail the activity and usefulness of the College', reference to the evening work which, after thirty years, was still regarded by 'its warmest friends,' a euphemism for financial supporters, 'as one of its most important claims to further support.' Greenwood continued to believe that financing the evening classes was properly the 'work of private benevolence and not an appropriate charge on College funds', yet despite the protestations of the 'friends' of Owens College no more money was forthcoming. In March 1879 senate agreed that the courses should be retained at the existing level and reiterated the view that a replacement for the endowment was vital. The exhibitions were all withdrawn with the proviso that if funds should become available, a small number would be reintroduced for the ablest degree students at an advanced stage of the course. Discussions continued about how to handle the situation and while minor adjustments were made to entry or library fees, understandably no major restructuring took place during the excitement and controversy leading to the award of university status in 1880. The grant of a Charter, and particularly the degree awarding powers, meant that evening students had in future two potential routes if they wished to graduate, London and the Victoria University. Analysing the implications of this in his annual report for 1882–83 Greenwood, who as an original appointee of 1851 and principal since 1857, had greater knowledge than anyone of the evening work, acknowledged that a degree at London was extremely difficult for men 'who can only give fragments of their time ... extending over four or five or even more years' and that the numbers would never be large. The new degrees of the Victoria University were, he considered, no less difficult to achieve, 'involving as they do, examinations not less searching, together with a rigidly defined course of academic study' which evening

73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., Greenwood made clear what was always implicit in respect of evening funding: 'the proper work of private benevolence and not an appropriate charge on the College funds'.
75 In approving the new arrangements, Senate, vol. 2, 15 March 1879, again emphasized the vital need for funding by the College or 'from some external source'.

students would find it almost impossible to attend. This was the preamble to an important policy shift. It appears that the University had given up the expectation that evening work could be genuinely undergraduate study for more than a tiny minority and while intending to maintain a core of courses to give access to London matriculation, had decided instead to institute a system of Victoria University Certificates of Proficiency which, Greenwood believed, would be of value ‘as evidence of qualifications for many posts in commercial, manufacturing, or professional life’. Such a step had been envisaged since at least 1880 but had to await the implementation of new powers under the Charter. In order to gain a certificate, a student could enrol after attending two classes from an approved list in the previous year and then become a ‘Student of the College (Evening Department)’. From that point he could acquire certificates as long as he attended courses and sat and passed the appropriate examinations. The Manchester Guardian welcomed the idea enthusiastically in autumn 1883, as a policy by the university ‘to increase the value and importance of the evening classes’. There is no need to challenge this judgment, but the certificate marked a watershed for the evening work and acknowledged the failure of the college after many years of effort, to associate non-degree work with its degree studies.

A particularly interesting aspect of the Guardian’s account was recognition of what was to becoming known as a ‘ladder’ of opportunity. By means of the ‘passport’ of the university’s certificates, much more than by those of mechanics’ institutes or the Royal Society of Arts, it was argued that students would be enabled to move from elementary schools to the evening and science and art classes of the Manchester School Board, to the Manchester Technical School or the School of Art and from there to Owens College. A major frustration for the researcher is the almost total lack of surviving detail in the university archives about individual students, but the occasional reference elsewhere indicates that there was recognition in the community of the value of evening work. A cluster of head teachers, two of them very well known, are included to illustrate how the evening classes could contribute to career progress. W.M. Davies, born in 1855, attended the Lower Mosley Street Schools where in due course he became a pupil teacher and a member of staff. ‘He supplemented his education by attending for eleven years the evening classes at Owens College’ and became a head teacher at a Manchester board school before becoming head of an evening school. James

77 Ibid.
78 Manchester Guardian, 18 August 1883.
79 The Evening Student, vol. 2, 1892 (John Heywood, Manchester) 103.
Scotson, the head of the nationally admired Manchester Higher Grade Elementary School, whose rise from humble origins in Hulme is well known, attended evening classes in the early days of the college and studied classics, mathematics, chemistry and political economy under Jevons for which he won the Cobden Prize in 1868.\textsuperscript{80} Alfred Nixon is of particular interest regarding the theme of this paper. From 1899 he was the first head of the new Commercial Evening School in Manchester which became the College of Commerce. After some years in business, Nixon attended the Owens classes and became an evening teacher at the Mosley Street Schools before moving to the Technical School.\textsuperscript{81} These three do not appear to have been interested in a degree course and represent those the college failed to channel in that direction but who evidently found the courses valuable, as did Wilkinson Northrop, an elementary school teacher who attended Greenwood’s Latin and Greek classes, became a headmaster and eventually a school inspector.\textsuperscript{82}

Two archetypal examples of the ladder as foreseen by the \textit{Guardian} have been identified. Thomas G. Jones of Hulme who, after staying on at the well-known Peter Street elementary school until the age of fifteen years, an early example of Scotson’s influence, achieved success in the Oxford Locals. He worked at Mather and Platt as a pattern maker and attended evening classes provided by the school board from which he won a national Whitworth Exhibition and subsequently a Whitworth Scholarship to Owens College. In 1894 he is recorded as having achieved a first class degree in the honours school of engineering.\textsuperscript{83} Another Thomas Jones also began at Peter Street, a hint at the increasing significance of individual schools, and worked in industry for ten years after leaving at thirteen years. He studied with the Society of Arts from which he gained a number of distinctions and took up evening teaching. There is evidence of him attending Owens classes in 1873 and in the following year he gained the Ashbury Exhibition for mechanical engineering which required the holder to attend at least three evening courses during the year of tenure. He became chief draughtsman at Mather and Platt, head of the science school at the works, and from 1884 was teacher of engineering science at the higher grade board school, then in Deansgate.\textsuperscript{84} The \textit{Guardian’s} enthusiastic opinion that ‘the way is now fairly open in this locality to all who really wish it to secure the most complete mental development ... comparative poverty need be no hindrance to progress’, is with hindsight, very over-

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 29 and \textit{Manchester faces and places}.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 84.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., vol. 3, 107.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., vol. 2, 11, \textit{University Calendar}, List of degrees.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 47.
optimistic, but it is understandable in the light of such examples. Rudimentary connections were emerging in the evolving state system by the 1880s and in Manchester, Owens College and the Victoria University from 1880, were being accepted as part of the process.

Use of the male pronoun in the section above introducing the new certificates of proficiency, serves to draw attention to the fact that the evening classes from 1853 remained to the end of the century, the preserve of men. The struggle to admit women to the university had gained momentum throughout the 1870s and while permitted by the legislation of 1870 and 1880, moved forward decisively only from 1883 with the creation of the Department for Women. There is evidence that Scott would have liked to open evening work to women in 1857 and the trustees appeared to agree, with the result that women are listed among the students of that year. There is no extant evidence that they attended classes and certainly they never re-appeared. There had been an considerably acrimonious debate in 1869 and 1870 on this question when the Extension College legislation was being promoted and the main protagonists were Lydia Becker of the Suffrage Society and her close ally Jacob Bright, the M.P. Bright promoted the cause when he chaired the opening meeting of the new evening class session in October 1869, hinting that 'if classes were thrown open to people of both sexes, instead of to men only, some of the 'less attended classes might be filled up'. This rather mischievous suggestion in the presence of Principal Greenwood, an intractable opponent of mixed classes, was not at all typical and the issue rarely surfaced. In 1874 Henry Roscoe, always a supporter of women, began his famous series of public lectures on science 'to which ladies are specially invited' as the Examiner and Times put it. In the spring of 1875 James Stuart visited Manchester as part of the University Extension Movement, the new Cambridge strategy to extend higher education and already being seen by women as a valuable opportunity. This visit stimulated 'a mother' to write to the Manchester press, criticizing Greenwood’s opposition to mixed teaching, and wondering why the acceptability of men and women together ‘in church, in concerts, in the ballroom,’ was not appropriate to the evening work. She suggested, with what degree of irony it is impossible to know, that ‘a barrier or lattice’ could be erected in classes. In 1884 another lone voice, Professor Robert Adamson, one of the small group of professors most dedicated to the higher education

85 Manchester Guardian, 18 August 1883.
87 Manchester Guardian, 5 October 1869.
88 Manchester Examiner and Times, 26 October 1874.
89 Manchester Examiner and Times, 12 April 1875.
of women, proposed in Senate that women should be admitted to some evening classes, but the proposal never resurfaced after being referred to the Women's Department for discussion.\(^\text{90}\) A committee reporting to Senate in the session 1891–92 on the future of the evening classes, addressed the issue but was ‘not prepared to propose the admission of women students to the Owens College Evening Classes’ except to those short courses which were open to the general public. No reason was given for the continuing exclusion.\(^\text{91}\) The Principal was by then the more open-minded A.W. Ward, but it is likely that the greater informality of the evening arrangements and the time of day, had implications which still disturbed many senior members of the university. A letter appeared in the press in 1893 from a Mary Smerdon of Higher Broughton, regretting the continuing exclusion of women and urging ‘united action’ to put pressure on the College.\(^\text{92}\)

It is perhaps not wholly coincidental that at the time that the new strategy of certificates of proficiency was introduced, there was a resurgence of interest in the University Extension Movement which had received a somewhat cool reception when Stuart had been active in the region. Greenwood had concluded in 1875 that it would ‘reap a very small advantage,’ to ‘introduce a machinery which might have the effect of crippling or reducing by a large percentage the success of their evening classes’,\(^\text{93}\) and he was probably apprehensive about the pressure from women to attend such classes. From the mid-1880s there was strong pressure, particularly from the Withington area of the city, for the Victoria University to support the Extension Movement and was encouraged by Professor Arthur Milnes Marshall, the professor of zoology, who was soon energetically recruiting prominent Owens professors.\(^\text{94}\) It is not possible to assess the early impact of these classes on the evening work, but Marshall’s assumption that they would be mainly confined to areas too remote from the university to compete with the evening classes proved unfounded, particularly when the extension classes made connections with ambitious adult education experiments in such working class areas of Manchester as Ancoats.

No unambiguous statement of change of principle or direction was ever made, but it is possible to sense a change in attitude to the evening work at this time. This may have been partly because

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\(^{90}\) Minutes of Senate, vol. 3, 15 March 1884.

\(^{91}\) Minutes of Senate, Appendix 3, Report of Evening Committee to Senate.

\(^{92}\) Manchester Guardian, 27 April 1893.

\(^{93}\) Manchester Guardian, 9 April 1875.

\(^{94}\) For the work of Milnes Marshall and others in the development of University Extension, see T. Kelly, Outside the walls (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1950) and the Extra Mural archive in J.R.U.L.A.
of an increasing emphasis on research which in turn emphasized honours degree work and much more rigorous undergraduate study than in the past, with implications for departmental organization and staff time, as well as from a desire to save money where duplication of courses could be shown. Financial pressure should not be underestimated as an extremely ambitious institution still relied heavily on private funding despite a government grant from 1890 and a little local government support. Increased educational growth in other institutions offered the university an opportunity to rethink its role. From 1894 the city council urged Owens College to co-ordinate development plans in technical studies as its own technical institution gained prestige, and this certainly affected many courses traditionally taught at Owens in the evening. The school board prospectus of evening classes at the same period was a remarkable directory of 154 pages with a range of carefully constructed courses which must have appealed very directly to young men and women wishing to enhance their vocational skills. The courses of the City and Guilds of London and the Science and Art Department were increasingly accessible. Another, less quantifiable influence was emerging. There were those in the extension movement nationally who argued the rationale of courses as primarily for intellectual stimulation and should be as widely accessible to the public as possible. This was in contrast to the very formalized study which had been at the heart of the evening class tradition. It is not known if Marshall held such views, but it is certain that the presence of T.F. Tout from 1890, a crucial time for both the evening classes and the extension movement, introduced a man committed to spreading the stimulus of intellectual life to the community as widely as possible. He was a university extension or extra mural enthusiast, rather than a champion of evening classes.

It was not long before it was apparent that the ambitious policy of certificates of proficiency was failing dramatically to revitalize the evening work. In the 1884 close of session speeches, the principal, Broadfield and Ward, all commented on changing patterns of attendance at courses and in a meeting to open the 1886 session, Greenwood remarked pointedly that it was regrettable that 'of the 500 or 600 students ... there were not more present,' a point picked up by the press which noted that 'the attendance was not large'. As an indicator this was probably more important than at first seems likely. Emphasis had always been given to formal aspects of the evening classes as part of an attempt to create a sense of collegiality and poor attendance had never

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96 T. Kelly, *Outside the walls*.
97 *Manchester Examiner and Times*, 12 October 1886
been remarked upon before. In 1885 Senate decided that there should no longer be an end of year public ceremony, possibly motivated by poor attendance. As if to pick up the possible interpretation of this, Greenwood went out of his way in autumn 1887 to assure those students present at the opening meeting, that the university was concerned about them and valued them, and 'above all things hoped that the evening students would form a body and vindicate their claims to a high place in the academic circle'. If they had had concerns about their work, the principal urged them to talk to him or his colleagues about their anxieties, and he counselled them to mix with the other students and join societies where they would receive 'a cordial reception'.

There is much evidence that this had never been common. The union rules included day and evening students and the debating society (which formed the main activity of the union for many years) allocated a number of places on its management committee to evening student representatives, who, Greenwood noted, had been 'some of the most prominent speakers', in the past. The logistics of attendance, however, quite apart from any age, social or financial inhibitions, were sufficient to ensure that the evening students were a separate group. There can be no doubt as to the sincerity of the college over many years in its conviction that all resources — library, union and gymnasium — should contribute to a greater collegiality, but constant exhortation could not counteract the realities of part-time work. Those historians who assert that the civic universities consciously disengaged themselves from their community roots to approximate as nearly as possible to the Oxbridge tradition, and the decline of the evening classes could be interpreted as indicating this, must produce evidence that this was a conscious policy rather than a pragmatic response to rapidly changing circumstances. H.B. Charlton, in his centenary study, makes the point that in the latter part of the nineteenth century the Senate, in fact, 'connived' at the decline in evening work by seizing the opportunity to 'consolidate the traditional notion of a university as a place in which full-time study, prolonged over a fixed number of years, is the avenue to a degree'. In the absence of any extant public or private evidence of a policy to go down this road the statements and actions of the college and university have to be carefully examined. It is demonstrably the case from overwhelming and often public statements over many years, that systematic study and its evaluation through examination were seen as the sine qua non of a university education, whether for a degree.

98 Manchester Guardian, 11 October 1887. There is some evidence that the Union had been formed on the initiative of the W.M.C. students after 1861, Owens College Magazine, vol. 13, 1881.

99 Ibid.

100 Charlton, Portrait, 31.
or not, and criticism of evening work invariably rested on that conviction, not on the legitimacy of the activity for a university. Professor Alexander, O.M., writing later but appointed to the chair of philosophy in 1893, summed up this approach succinctly, 'liberality is a spirit of pursuit, not a choice of subject'. It is not so clear as Charlton implies, at least for the years until 1900, that degree work exclusively was perceived as the essential characteristic of a university college. Charlton himself observed that the decision to set up the Faculty of Technology in 1904 was a notably liberal decision and contrary to the wishes of some who did not consider it an appropriate university subject. Similar feelings existed in 1890 when teacher training was introduced. As has been shown, the founding trustees did not share such views and in all of Greenwood's statements, often very critical of the students' approach to study, a degree is never implied as the appropriate outcome for the majority of evening students.

From spring 1886, further review of the classes began, as by that time senate, council and court had all become aware of the issues involved in continuing the evening classes. Marshall was a member of the strong committee, no doubt as a leader of the extension movement which already was becoming more formalized and had been placed under the aegis of the Extension Committee of the General Board of Studies of the Victoria University, of which he was secretary. It is not possible from extant evidence to estimate to what extent the review committee took account of Marshall's views. The main outcomes were recognition of the costs and support for a policy of 'alternation' with other agencies. It was noted that 'expenditure was excessive' but only minor adaptations were proposed and a new certificate in commercial subjects was suggested. In 1891 a further committee surveyed the provision of elementary part-time courses provided in the region, in particular by the Manchester school board, the technical school, the Athenaeum and the Y.M.C.A., and demonstrated considerable replication. The Y.M.C.A. and the Athenaeum emphasized the humanities (although the Y.M.C.A. had a tradition of commercial subjects); the board's classes and technical school, the sciences, commercial and vocational subjects. An annotated draft of the report inserted the phrase 'efficiently given elsewhere', indicating a traditional concern to ensure quality, but one it was recognized could not be monitored in independent institutions. It was shown that the college ran a deficit each year in respect of the courses and recognized that the Victoria University proficiency certificates

101 Ibid., 100.
102 Ibid., 114–17.
103 Minutes of Senate, vol.3, 13 March 1886.
104 Ibid., 12 November 1887.
105 Minutes of Senate, vol. 4, 1 May 1891 and Appendix vol. 3.
and exhibitions of Manchester City Council and Lancashire County Council introduced in 1891, had failed to rouse much interest. The list of subjects to be offered remained extensive, but was significantly reduced in staff commitment as the introductory elements were stripped away. It was estimated that about one quarter of the previous cost would be saved. A decision to introduce short courses of five to ten lectures may have been influenced by memories of the remarkable public lectures in science introduced by Roscoe which ran for over a decade in the 1860s and 1870s, as well as by the more recent regular public lectures at the University Museum and in the Monday Evening Popular Lectures series, as much as by similar trends among extension courses. Whatever the motive, the effect was to intensify the distinction between widely available public lectures and the more traditional evening courses. It is scarcely surprising that opinion in the college came increasingly to the view that the self-funding, independently organized, university extension movement, deserved greater investigation as a possible way to preserve traditional links with the wider community without the problems and expense connected with the evening work.

From this point events moved quickly, although on the surface there still seemed to be positive developments. Principal Ward announced that a course in the summer vacation for science teachers was to be held. The College appointed a lecturer in geography, H.Y. Oldham, in 1892, to support the commercial work of the evening classes, the first appointment in geography in Owens College\(^{106}\) and in 1893 Ward could inform Court with apparent equanimity that the ‘considerable’ fall in evening numbers, now down to 320, was due to ‘changes deliberately adopted’ as part of the overhaul of the evening work, a point he reiterated as late as October 1895.\(^{107}\) Thomas Kelly analysed the growth of the extension and extra mural work of the university but did not set it within the existing evening work tradition.\(^{108}\) While some records which were not available to Kelly have survived, it is not possible to penetrate the politics, both personal and academic, which led to a statement in the report to Court in 1897 that ‘the evening classes formerly held in the College have for the most part been discontinued’.\(^{109}\) A reader of the report to Court in the previous year might have seen the writing on the wall, as it had been noted that the evening classes which had ‘for many years ... done excellent service’ had become less necessary as other organizations took on similar work.\(^{110}\) It was a low key valediction

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106 Manchester Guardian, 18 October 1892.
107 Manchester Guardian, 8 March 1893, 5 October 1895.
108 Kelly, Outside the walls.
109 Manchester Guardian, 3 March 1897.
110 Manchester Guardian, 7 October 1896.
to nearly half a century of commitment, enterprise, frustration and ultimate disappointment. The decision grew out of yet another report in February 1896 which had evidently been taking a much harder look at the whole question and opened with the statement that 'the time seems to have arrived for a complete change of system'. 111 A further twenty-two courses were to be dropped. 'The Committee think it inconsistent with the character of the College that these courses should continue to be offered by it.' There may be a hint in this of Charlton's suggestion of the increasingly academic attitude of senate and the influence of the federal university should not be overlooked. Kelly records that G.H. Rendall of University College, Liverpool, Vice-chancellor in 1894, believed that university life 'proper' meant that 'life for a time was consecrated entirely to study'. 112 The report also noted, perhaps significantly, that the evening classes were increasingly out of step with the day classes: 'most of them attended by a distinct set of students who come to the College, not for literary or scientific training, but for a more or less professional kind of instruction'. In future some subjects were to become short courses and be incorporated into the Monday public lectures. Women were at last to be admitted to almost all courses, law, engineering and chemistry excepted. To give cohesiveness to the University's non-degree work the first formal proposal was made to attach all evening lectures in future, except the rump of the evening classes, to 'the Victoria University Extension Scheme'. 113

111 Senate Minutes, Appendix 4, February 1896, Report of Committee on Evening Classes.
112 Kelly, Outside the walls, 22.
113 Senate Minutes, Appendix 4, February 1896, Report of Committee on Evening Classes.