

Application for
RESEARCH PROFESSORSHIP (1984-85)
Youngstown State University

Submitted by L. S. Domonkos, Professor of History
Department History
Title of Proposed Project "Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago:
In Pursuit of the Ideal University."

Brief Abstract of Proposal (200 words or less) Robert M. Hutchins was one of the most provocative and fascinating critics of American higher education during our century. He became President of the University of Chicago in 1929 at the age of 30, and later was Chancellor until his retirement in 1951. In a series of publications, especially Higher Education in America (1936), Hutchins attacked the universities for allowing themselves to degenerate into service stations and vocationally oriented trade schools. He condemned the anti-intellectualism found in higher education and insisted that the sole mission of a university should be the cultivation of the intellect. Hutchins proposed a curriculum of "General Education," based upon the classics, rhetoric, logic, grammar and mathematics. He insisted that "the liberally educated man must know how to read, write and figure." In order to accomplish this, he prescribed a universally applicable, broad and liberal curriculum that all students had to follow. His ideas created a storm. He was accused of being static, anti scientific, elitist and undemocratic. My research into this controversy is in preparation for a lecture at an international conference next summer. I plan to examine why Hutchins' idea received such a negative reception, with special emphasis on a neglected phase of this controversy, namely the strong opposition he found among the faculty of his own University of Chicago. The current debate about "core curriculum" makes this topic of research most timely.

Date Submitted March 30, 1984

Anticipated Completion Date of Project October 1, 1985

L. S. Domonkos
Applicant's Signature

March 30, 1984
Date

George D. Beaton
*Chairman's Signature

March 30, 1984
Date

Dean's Signature

Date

*Statement of support should accompany application

I. Aims of Research

In August of 1985 the International Committee of Historical Sciences will hold its meeting in Stuttgart, W. Germany. I have been invited to deliver a paper at this conference, the most prestigious gathering of historians. The session in which I will participate will be devoted to the topic of "Great Personalities in the History of Universities," and my paper is entitled: "Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago: In Pursuit of the Ideal University." (See attached program, Appendix I). Since the invitation to participate at this conference was received, I have been gathering material for my study and have sent a brief "Synopsis" of my presentation to the Organizing Committee, for publication. (See Appendix II) Based on my preliminary research, I find that one specific area has been neglected by previous scholars, namely the reaction of the University of Chicago faculty to Chancellor Hutchins' plans for a strong "general education" curriculum. In order to fill this lacuna I have contacted the Archives of the University of Chicago and have received a favorable reply. (See Appendix III) Furthermore, I have also written to Professor Mortimer J. Adler, who was a close associate of Hutchins, in order to gain a better insight and a more personal perspective on the problem. (See Appendix IV). There is considerable amount of printed material on Hutchins' plan for general education and his proposals what a "true university" should be. I have already analyzed some of this information in preparing the Synopsis. What would give depth and originality to my presentation at Stuttgart, would be the inclusion of unpublished archival material and personal recollections from those stormy days at the University of Chicago. It is interesting to note that the problem of general education requirements raised by Hutchins half a century ago, is still being debated at universities today (including our own). This topic is certainly relevant.

II. Background Information

Although my training is primarily in Medieval and Renaissance studies, I have been involved in various aspects of research into the history of higher education, especially the rise of universities. My dissertation at Notre Dame dealt with university history and my publications since then have reflected this interest (See attached Vita with list of publications). When Josey-Bass Publishers of San Francisco were preparing their 10 volume International Encyclopedia of Higher Education, I was asked to write a major article on the development of Higher Education. (See Bibliography) In 1977, I was invited to deliver a lecture on "Enlightenment and Higher Education in Early America" at the University of Warsaw, Poland during the meeting of the International Commission for the History of Universities. The presentation was received with great interest and the study was subsequently published by the Warsaw University Press. It was also translated into Hungarian and printed in the Historical Review in Budapest. (See Bibliography). The fact that I as a medievalist have delivered a paper on American Colonial Colleges and will present a study on Chancellor Hutchins, should not be viewed as contradictory or as a case of dilettantism. It is a well known fact that the curriculum of the colonial colleges was based upon the liberal arts studies as refined at the medieval universities of Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, etc. The general education requirements advocated by Chancellor Hutchins are completely in this medieval tradition. I have not strayed from my own field as far as it might seem at first glance.

III. Current Efforts on Project

Since the arrival of the invitation to participate at the conference in Stuttgart, I have been gathering information on Robert Hutchins and his major critics. To date I have read and analyzed the most important writings of Hutchins, and prepared a fairly complete bibliography of his works. I have also familiarized myself with the major critics of Hutchins and have collected a partial bibliography of their writings. As indicated, I have contacted the Archives of the University of Chicago and Dr. Mortimer Adler in search for original material. I have also enlisted the assistance of Dr. A. W. Skardon, Professor Emeritus of History, who was at Chicago during the Hutchins period and has valuable personal recollections about the intellectual battles between the Chancellor and his local critics. Prof. Skardon is presently in S. Carolina as Guest Professor at the College of Charleston. As soon as he returns he promised further interviews.

IV. Project Plan

The project is already under way. I plan to develop my article in the following manner.

- A. Brief analysis of the condition of higher education in the U.S. at the time Hutchins became President (later Chancellor) at Chicago. Secondary material either in my possession or available at Maag Library.
- B. Hutchins' critique of American Higher Education. This material is published and is readily available. I have read much of it already.
- C. The "Ideal University" according to Hutchins. The necessity of a "general education" curriculum. Have extensive notes on this.
- D. The major critics of Hutchins' plan in the educational community. Familiar with much of this material but need further study.
- E. The controversy caused by Hutchins at Chicago. This needs major attention. Published material is minimal. Must consult University Archives and interview surviving participants.
- F. The significance of the questions raised about the mission of the University in a free, democratic society. Analysis and Conclusion.

The following deadlines have been developed:

- End of Fall Quarter, 1984--Completion of Parts A to D
- Winter & Spring Quarter, 1985--Extensive Research in Part E.
 - July 1, 1985: First complete draft.
 - August 15, 1985: Final text for oral presentation
 - August 27-28, 1985: Conference
 - October 1, 1985: Final copy, including possible revisions based on reaction to paper at conference, ready for inclusion in Transactions of the meeting.

NOTE: The past two years I have been teaching a full load of 12 hrs. each quarter, yet managed to publish five major articles (in three languages). In the next 18 months I have to complete a monograph of over 600 pages, produce the first draft of a text book and co-edit a 400 page collection of studies. In order to be able to produce a solid, original paper for the conference at Stuttgart, I need some relief from teaching. This is why I request a Research Professorship for next year.

V. Pertinent Bibliography

A. Major works of Robert M. Hutchins:

- The Higher Learning in America, Yale University Press, 1936
No Friendly Voice, University of Chicago Press, 1936
 "The University of Chicago and the Bachelor's Degree,"
Educational Record, 23 (1942), 567-573
Education for Freedom, New York, 1943.
 "The University of Chicago: Its Past Record and Its Future Mission," School and Society, 62 (1945), 65-69.
The State of the University, 1929-1949, University of Chicago, 1949.
Morals, Religion and Higher Education, University of Chicago, 1950
The Great Conversation: The Substance of Liberal Education, University of Chicago, 1952
The Conflict in Education in a Democratic Society, New York, 1953.
The Learning Society, New York, 1968.

B. Major responses to the views of R. M. Hutchins.

- Henry D. Gideonse, The Higher Learning in a Democracy, A Reply to Pres. Hutchins' Critique of the American University, New York, 1937.
 Mark van Doren, Liberal Education, New York, 1943.
 Theodore Greene, Liberal Education Reconsidered, Harvard University Press, 1953.
 Theodore Brameld, Toward a Reconstituted Philosophy of Education, Dryden Press, 1956.
 Thomas Woody, Liberal Education for Free Men, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957.
 H. Mumford Jones, One Great Society. Human Learning in the United States, 1959.
 J. Winfree Smith, A Search for the Liberal Arts College, St. John's College Press, 1982.

VI. Availability of Needed Resources

Not applicable.

VII. Applicant's Vita, Publications, Grants and Awards

See attached forms.