The Kindahl Era

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Abstract and Keywords

Between 1965 and 1971, a significant Economics Department was created from what had previously been a Department without professional stature. This occurred mostly under the administration of James Kindahl who was Department head from the fall of 1968 through to the spring of 1971. But the process of reconstruction released considerable tensions and turmoil within the Department. That, combined with the changing organization of, and administrative personnel within, the University led to the resignation of Kindahl from the head position and dissolution of the Department that Kindahl had created.

Keywords: reorganization, faculty participation, Michael Best, James Kindahl, Economics Department

The previous three chapters have provided background information relating to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the economics profession, and the social, political, and cultural environment in the United States that is necessary for any understanding of how the creation of a group of radical economists within the University's Economics Department took place. It is to that latter development that
attention now turns. To describe it and the events that followed, it is appropriate to begin with the initial attempt by the University to transform its Economics Department into one of prominence and repute.

During the 1960s the University, as indicated in Chapter 2, was undergoing a period of considerable expansion and transformation. This was seen by the administration as an opportunity to create an accomplished faculty in place of one that had very weak academic credentials. The administration's strategy within each field was to recruit a strong leader as department head, a position endowed with pretty much full authority over hiring and other personnel decisions, and charge him with the responsibility of rebuilding. Research was to become a high priority and faculty democracy, which might precipitate opposition to action taken by the head, was to be suppressed. The strategy paid off, and there was considerable improvement in the quality of the faculty. However, by the late 1960s, many faculty members, including some of those who had been hired by the new heads, had become restive and dissatisfied with the authoritarian environment in which they lived and worked. The result was a movement toward democratization that will be described later.

In the early 1960s, it will be recalled, the humanities and fine arts, mathematics and the natural sciences, and the social and behavioral sciences were all a part of a unified College of Arts and Sciences headed by a single dean. That dean was I. Moyer Hunsberger, a chemist, who had come to the University in 1960 as head of the Chemistry Department, and who was appointed dean in the spring of 1961. The provost on this occasion was a botanist, Oswald Tippo. At the time of Hunsberger's appointment to the deanship, the Economics Department, in Hunsberger's words of a few years later, "had absolutely no stature in the [economics] profession."¹ The head of the Department was still Phillip L. Gamble who, over the years, had become a popular teacher.² Desiring to build a major department, and believing that change could ensue only with new leadership, Hunsberger put pressure on Gamble to resign the headship position. That resignation came in February of 1964.

But Hunsberger quickly found that it was not going to be easy to build a major Economics Department at the University of Massachusetts. "At first, I had the naive hope that . . . some
capable Head of Department could be attracted by our enormous potential to come here and recruit an outstanding faculty. What I learned the hard way was that our stature was too low and the market was too ‘tight’ to permit this solution to our problem.”

Between February of 1964 and December of 1967 the Economics Department had two different acting heads, and three different search committees had attempted and failed to find a suitable and permanent replacement for Gamble. Not surprisingly, tensions were rising between Hunsberger and the Department. In recognition of these difficulties, Hunsberger, during the fall of 1966, brought in a team of three well-known economists, Robert M. Solow (MIT), George H. Borts (Brown University), and Lawrence R. Klein (University of Pennsylvania) to evaluate the Economics Department and advise him about what to do.

The report of that committee, received in January of 1967, acknowledged that the Department was understaffed, that the faculty was engaged in little or no research, that there was sentiment among the faculty for dropping the PhD program (a program that would be essential if the Department were to improve its stature), that there was no leadership within the Department, that related departments wanted to see the Economics Department improved, and that improvement would not come without the commitment of substantial sums of money and initiative from outside the Department. The report recommended, among other things, that a strong head be appointed along with five additional persons, all of whom combine both teaching and research; that “the deplorable state of present research activity should not be allowed to continue”; and that the PhD program not be terminated. The report also contained the following statement:

It is a familiar academic problem for an institution to be saddled with professors on tenure who are obstacles to department development and out of touch with current thinking in their professional fields. The administration and department must face the challenge of such personnel and not be deterred by their presence. We offer no solution to this difficult situation except to suggest that such people be given academic assignments that remove them as far as possible from the main work of departmental reconstruction.
The report concludes by identifying potential candidates for appointment to the positions it recommends. The lead name on its list was Vernon L. Smith who was then a professor of Economics at Purdue University. Smith was one of the most original economists of the time. He was at the height of his powers and was moving in a direction that would eventually win him the Nobel Prize in economics.

With the resignation of Gamble, Bruce R. Morris was appointed acting head. He remained so until September 1968—except for the 1965–1966 academic year when he was the recipient of a Fulbright grant to teach at the University of Baghdad in Iraq. During his year away, Marshall C. Howard took his place as acting head. The twenty-month period following the receipt of the report of the evaluation committee saw the addition of ten faculty members to the Economics Department, a substantial number of whom already were, or turned out to be, active scholars publishing their work in major economics outlets. Included in this group of new recruits, all but one having arrived on campus by September 1967, were Smith (full professor) and James K. Kindahl (associate professor). Smith did not appear until September 1968. In the recruiting of these people, especially Smith and Kindahl, Hunsberger seems to have played a major role.

Smith, who at that time was visiting Brown University, wanted to be located near his wife's Unitarian pulpit outside Boston. Brown and MIT were showing interest in appointing him on a permanent basis. But, according to Hunsberger, Smith preferred a state university to the Ivy League and was intrigued by the prospect, promised by Hunsberger, of building a Department to his liking.5

Kindahl was attracted to the University of Massachusetts by the bucolic characteristics of the physical environment in Amherst. But he was also interested in the possibilities associated with building up the Economics Department. A highly principled man of considerable integrity, and a mainstream economist with substantial statistical background and skill, Kindahl received his PhD from the University of Chicago and was known for his work with George J. Stigler on industrial prices. He taught at Johns Hopkins University, Amherst College, and the University of Chicago before settling at the University of Massachusetts. After one year in the Economics Department as an associate professor, he was promoted by Hunsberger to professor and head of the Department in September of 1968. In accepting the position of...
head, Kindahl was committed to following the direction set out by Hunsberger. The two men had great admiration and respect for each other. It was agreed that Kindahl would do what was necessary to transform Economics into a major department, and Hunsberger, assuming the appropriate justifications were forthcoming, would back him with full monetary and administrative support. There were, of course, implicit limits imposed on the size and budget of the Department. But, for many practical purposes, Hunsberger gave Kindahl considerable free rein.

Kindahl set out his plans for the development of the Economics Department in several written statements. The content of those statements included the following: The Economics Department has responsibilities for both graduate and undergraduate teaching, and (p.86)
the obligation to contribute to the development of the profession through research. Areas of research that are important in the profession should be represented in the Department. One very important area in which the Department was especially weak was economic theory, much of which was (and still is) constructed and expressed in mathematical form. In addition to economic theory, substantive fields of application, involving, in part, statistical analyses are also important. However, no plan or system of priorities should ever be allowed to prevent the hiring of first-rate people regardless of field or approach. Successful teaching and research go hand-in-hand; a person cannot be successful at one or the other without engaging in both. On occasion, the Department may make additional time available for an individual’s research by temporarily reducing his teaching load. In one of the earlier statements, Kindahl also made a promise:7 (p.87)

In the Department as I envision it in the future, there is room for people with the interests and approaches of everyone now on the staff. No member of the faculty will be discriminated against by me in matters of promotions, tenure, or merit [salary] increases because of his field of interest or approach to economics. I shall do my best to judge each individual on the quality of work done in the classroom and in research.

This promise may have been, to some extent, a response to the tension in the Department that, as partly anticipated in the quotation from the 1967 aforementioned evaluation report, was growing. Even so, Kindahl sincerely believed (as did Smith) that the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship was the main mission of a University and, as the preceding quotation suggests, he was quite open to alternative methodologies and ideologies. Kindahl also was helpful to and supportive of younger faculty whom he thought had significant scholarly potential.

Recruiting during Kindahl’s first year as head of the Department (1968–1969), resulted in twenty offers being extended to economists at all ranks. However, only four of those made at the lowest ranks were accepted.

Citing personal reasons, Hunsberger resigned the position of dean of the College of Arts and Sciences on March 1, 1969 and was replaced by Acting Dean Seymour Shapiro, a botanist. By that time the College had more than doubled in size and the need for its reorganization had become clear. Discussion centered on breaking up the College into smaller groups, one of which would be comprised of only the social and behavioral sciences. Kindahl was concerned about the effect this change might have on the efforts to build the Economics Department.
Shapiro held the same attitude toward the Department as Hunsberger and had continued Hunsberger's (p.88) financial and administrative support. But in any reorganization of the sort under consideration, the Economics Department would be unlikely to remain in the same unit over which Shapiro or a replacement from the physical sciences would be positioned as dean. In a handwritten draft of a memo sent to Shapiro in April of 1969, Kindahl worried that a new dean coming from the social and behavioral sciences might not be as sympathetic to the building process. Kindahl's fears probably arose from the fact that, by this time, academic economists had begun to think of economics as a science that imitated the methods employed in the physical sciences. This had set in motion a movement toward the extensive use of mathematics and statistics in economics. The other social and behavioral sciences were lagging behind, if not completely rejecting this trend. And Kindahl may have thought that a dean drawn from one of those areas would not, due to a background exhibiting some resistance to mathematics, appreciate as much as Shapiro the direction in which economics was going.

At the same time, in response to the growth of faculty dissatisfaction with the lack of democracy in the running of the University, the faculty senate was clarifying the form that faculty participation should have in University governance. A report of a subcommittee on the role of the faculty in University decision making presented in April of 1969 stated the general principles. These included the following. There should be faculty participation at all levels of University government, including the department level. Although general practice at the University had been to have department heads rather than department chairmen or, for short, chairs (the distinction between a head and a chair will be indicated momentarily), the latter form of organization should be available if a department (p.89) wanted to govern itself that way. However, because there may be departments that are judged unable to govern themselves effectively with a chair, the provost would still have the power to overrule a department decision in favor of the chair system and appoint a strong head. Motions supporting these principles were approved by the senate in early May and sent to the trustees for consideration. The distinction between a head and a chair
The basic distinction between a Head and a Chairman is understood to turn on the question of where the responsibility for administrative recommendations lies. In the case of a Head, the recommending initiative lies with the Head, with advisory faculty votes accompanying the Head's recommendations. In the case of a Chairman, it is the vote of the faculty [or a designated faculty committee] which governs the departmental recommendation, with the Chairman's opinion accompanying the departmental recommendation.\(^9\)

In the handwritten draft memo to Shapiro just cited, along with his fear that a social or behavioral science dean might not be supportive of the Economics Department's building program, Kindahl was further concerned that increased faculty democracy within the Economics Department as set out by the senate might also impede the Department's growth and development. In a formal memo to Provost Tippo the following December 22, 1969 he was more precise about the latter:

In my view, immediate implementation of the [more democratic, \textit{i.e.}, chair] form of government . . . would doom the Department of (p.90) Economics to a permanent state of mediocrity. The Department has not yet reached the point where "faculty democracy" could be relied on to make the critical and difficult decisions which must be made within the next few years . . . . I have seen no evidence which would lead me to believe that a majority of the present Department could agree on a coherent plan of development and then implement it with the judgment and determination necessary to bring success.\(^{10}\)
However, in April of 1970, the University’s board of trustees approved in principle the recommendations of the faculty senate on faculty participation in university government, and, in August of that year, it approved the division of the College of Arts and Sciences into three faculties: Humanities and Fine Arts, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Social and Behavioral Sciences, each with its own administration and dean. On September 1, 1970, Jeremiah Allen, a professor of English, replaced Shapiro as acting dean of the College of Arts and Sciences until the new structure, including the appointment of new deans, could be put into place. Several months earlier, Robert L. Gluckstern, a physicist, had taken over as provost from Tippo who had moved up to the position of chancellor.

During the 1969–1970 academic year, in the environment created by the discussion and passage of the faculty senate’s motions on university governance, tensions within the Economics Department continued to grow. In addition to those who favored greater democracy, some faculty members, especially those without tenure, may have felt threatened by the new emphasis on research (p.91) and by Kindahl’s efforts to build an academically significant department. (Kindahl had recommended that a faculty member be denied tenure in November of 1969.) But more departmental faculty than just those without tenure were resisting Kindahl and his policies. In the fall, some faculty members demanded input beyond that of an advisory role in recruitment and its direction. Kindahl, who had full authority to recommend appointments by dint of his position as head, made significant concessions. However, these were insufficient to satisfy those who were requesting greater participation. Early in the Spring Semester, there were two faculty resignations, one from the position of assistant head of the Department (he remained a faculty member) and the other severing his connection to the University entirely. The reasons cited for the resignations were alienation and Departmental turmoil in the first instance, and changed departmental and University priorities in the second. Kindahl had to defend his positions on the undergraduate program and on the maintenance of the graduate program to both the Department and the administration. Finally, at a Department faculty meeting on May 7, 1970, after the trustees had approved the faculty senate’s recommendations on faculty participation in University governance, the Department voted 13 to 5, over Kindahl’s objections, to change the organization of the Department by replacing the position of head by that of a chair. At the same meeting, the faculty voted to establish an
executive committee as a further aspect of Department reorganization. The executive committee would handle matters of policy and administration that were not already delegated to the personnel and other committees. The executive committee actually met twice (Kindahl, who was supposed to be present, would not attend) before the reorganization was stopped by Acting Dean Shapiro and Provost Gluckstern in June. (p.92)

First, the dean and provost refused to change Kindahl's status from head to chair. Second, they decided to bring in a visiting review committee to evaluate the Department's strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations for future growth and development. Third, Provost Gluckstern asked the Department to withdraw its request for the change from head to chair and reconsider it after the visiting committee delivered its report. The Department acquiesced and rescinded its vote to replace the head by a chair in a faculty meeting on October 14, 1970. It is remarkable that, in spite of these goings on, the Department still made significant progress in recruiting during 1969–1970: Twelve offers were extended and six were accepted. Included in the group of acceptees were several microeconomic theorists with mathematical backgrounds of various strengths. But serious damage to Kindahl's ability to lead the Department had been inflicted.

The most impressive scholar among that incoming group was one of the more mathematically oriented persons among them: Hugo F. Sonnenschein. Sonnenschein had already made significant contributions to microeconomic theory and was in the midst of a project that was destined to have a major impact on microeconomic general equilibrium theory. Eventually he would become President of the University of Chicago. Although he had declined an offer to join the Department the previous year, he subsequently changed his mind, having been lured by Kindahl and Smith and the opportunity to be involved in the building of the Department, by the prospect of being better located with respect to family, and by the attractiveness of the Amherst area. (p.93)

By the end of October, 1970, the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences had been separated from the College of Arts and Sciences, and a permanent dean of the former had been appointed. The new dean was a political scientist by the
name of Dean Alfange, Jr. Alfange had not been an obvious candidate for the deanship. This was the time when campuses across the country were in turmoil because of student (and often faculty) opposition to the Vietnam War. Students were demanding, and in many cases receiving, a greater role in the decision-making procedures of their institutions. Activism at the University of Massachusetts, which, as indicated in Chapter 3, had now caught up to that in the rest of the country, was intense. The leading candidate to be the first dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Science was an outspoken supporter of the war and contemptuous of its critics. Student hostility toward him was considerable and ended the possibility of his appointment as dean. Alfange was young. But he was well known on campus and thought of as a moderate, and Gluckstern appointed him to the dean position.

The visiting review committee that had been promised by Shapiro and Gluckstern arrived on campus during the fall of 1970. Two of its members, Solow and Klein, had been on the earlier 1967 evaluation committee. The remaining members were James Tobin (Yale), Robert Heilbroner (New School for Social Research), and William Capron (associate dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard). The committee’s report of January 1971 began by noting the enormous and obvious improvement in the Department over the previous four years. “We believe,” the report went on, “that the Economics Department can and should aim for parity with the great state universities of the
midwest (Ann Arbor, Wisconsin, Minnesota). This requires a faculty which is making recognized contributions to the mainstream of professional research.” Later on the report focuses on recent and current hiring:

As a result of the successful recruitment program of the past three years, the Department has clearly established a strong base in one of the core areas of economics, rigorous microeconomic theory. Especially if . . . [a current outstanding offer] . . . is accepted, the Department will have . . . a core group of quality comparable to the best departments in the country. They can be expected to make the University of Massachusetts an important center of theoretical research, and to make a strong contribution to the teaching of graduate students and advanced undergraduates.

There was, of course, an implicit assumption in the report that those who the committee identified as quality economists would remain permanently as faculty of the Department. But it turned out that the offer referred to was not accepted and the “core group of quality” was essentially gone within two years. (p.95) The hires of the previous year had left the Department with a heavy emphasis on microeconomic theory. However, many of those who had pushed for a more democratic departmental administration also favored greater diversity. In particular, the opposition to Kindahl, in their presentations to the visiting review committee, emphasized the lack of macroeconomists in the Economics Department. Kindahl, to be sure, had no difficulty in attempting to recruit economists of this type. During the 1968-1969 hiring season, three of the twenty offers he had extended went to monetary economists. All three offers, however, had been rejected. The efforts by Kindahl to hire monetary (and other) economists notwithstanding, the lack of diversity in the Department at the time was noted by the visiting review committee. For another aspect of their report was its recommendation that the Department should now concentrate on diversifying into areas that were not adequately represented. In the committee’s opinion, the most critical need in this regard was macroeconomic theory and policy, and the report suggests that a major recruiting effort to eliminate the gap was needed. After that, the Department should add persons in other areas as the opportunities present themselves and distinguished people become available.
Finally, the report addressed the divisions and tensions within the Department. It began this discussion with brief but considerable praise for Kindahl:

James Kindahl deserves enormous personal credit for the progress already made by the Department. Nevertheless, the fact must (p.96) be faced that today there is deep division among the members of the Department. . . . [This is probably] . . . an inevitable concomitant of rapid progress, given the desperate condition in which the Department began. . . . In our judgment, it is unlikely that Professor Kindahl can reestablish himself as an effective leader of this Department. . . . However, we caution against abrupt action now. The time to make a change in leadership is when a new head of department can be recruited from outside. In the meanwhile, it is important that the University Administration back Professor Kindahl.

The report goes on to give reasons for retaining Kindahl as Department head. These included (1) that there were still some faculty that had to be let go, and it would be better that Kindahl did this rather than burden a new incoming head with the tensions that might be aroused, and (2) that this would clearly show that the University is fully committed to the academic excellence “so strongly associated with Professor Kindahl's leadership.” Nevertheless, the preceding passage of the report could still be read in two ways: On the one hand, it might be interpreted to mean that Kindahl should be replaced as soon as an appropriate substitute from outside the Department could be found. On the other, it is possible to be read as asserting that, for now, the administration should fully back Kindahl to give him time to put more of his rebuilding program in place.

But there was another matter that was to have, at least in the long run, even greater significance than the internal battles within the Department and the visiting committee's report. In his first year as Department head, Kindahl had recruited Michael H. Best, a new PhD from the University of Oregon. Best joined the Department in the fall of 1969 with a two-year, tenure-track appointment at the rank of assistant professor. Best, it turned out, was a radical political (p.97)
economist (or, for short, a political economist or just a radical). In its aims and content, radical political economy was, as described earlier, on the periphery of the academic economics profession, some distance from the academic economics establishment. Its basic concerns at the start of the 1960s were with inequality and imperialism. Believing that the standard approaches to economics at the time were inadequate and irrelevant to addressing these topics, the radicals turned to the writings of Marx and other nonorthodox economists. During the 1960s radical thought evolved so that, at its core, emerged the notion of class as it related to Marxian and various reformulations of Marxian analyses. However, apart from the unity represented by that core, the radicals were still sharply divided on many methodological, theoretical, and empirical issues.

It is not clear if Kindahl knew of Best's radicalism when the latter was hired. If Kindahl did know, he may have underestimated the full significance of its implications. All the same, Best had made (p.98) no effort to hide his radical interests. Moreover, his doctoral dissertation did make use of standard analytical techniques, although it did not address issues that were considered by many associated with the academic economics establishment to be central to economics at the time. Best was also a highly respected teacher.

Best's initial two-year appointment required that he be considered for reappointment during his second year in the Economics Department, 1970–1971. By then, as pointed out by the visiting committee, the Department under Kindahl's
leadership was clearly moving in one of the directions, namely, economic theory, that Kindahl had earlier identified as important to the rebuilding of the Department, and that the academic establishment in economics was promoting and pursuing. One way in which the current standards of the establishment were clearly acknowledged in the Department was by the emphasis of several new hires on mathematics as a tool in analyzing economic reality. However, Best, the radical, was not following an establishment-sanctioned path, and perhaps partly because of this, his research, in relation to the goals set out by Kindahl and the criteria of the establishment, was judged by a majority of the Department’s personnel committee (in its advisory capacity) to be weak and lack creativity. Early in December, Kindahl recommended a one-year terminal reappointment that would require Best to leave the University in June of 1972. It is likely that Kindahl was trying to build on, or at least not lose, the momentum in recruiting that had been created during the previous two years. By releasing faculty who did not seem to meet standards as soon as possible, space would become available for replacements more quickly. Kindahl would be able to attract high-quality replacements in part because the policy of early dismissal would help to demonstrate the considerable potential of the Department and its commitment to academic excellence. (p.99)

However, Alfange, the new dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Science (along with some economics faculty members), thought early dismissal to be both unusual and unfair. Customary campus practice relating to tenure-track appointees had been to provide them with a full six years before the required tenure decision in order to give them the fullest opportunity to amass a record worthy of the granting of tenure. This would certainly apply in the case of an outstanding and popular teacher like Best. Therefore, later on during the spring semester, Alfange (with the concurrence of his own dean’s-level advisory personnel committee) recommended to Provost Gluckstern a two-year reappointment without prejudice of either further reappointment or termination.

Meanwhile, upon returning from winter break at the end of January, the students took up Best’s cause. A vigorous protest ensued that included, in the first half of February, a number of articles and letters in the student newspaper, *The
Massachusetts Daily Collegian, castigating the University for its reappointment policies. In the end, Gluckstern chose a compromise and agreed to a one-year reappointment without prejudice of either further reappointment or termination. This meant, of course, that Best would have to come up for reappointment again in the following year.

At some time in late January or February, both Smith (who had been deeply involved in the rebuilding process) and Kindahl, came to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that they and their efforts to rebuild the Economics Department had lost the administrative support that they had enjoyed under Hunsberger and Shapiro. In their view, the administration had become sympathetic to the dissidents in the Department. As yet, no statement of backing for Kindahl as recommended by the visiting committee had been forthcoming. Indeed, there had been, to that point, no public comment at all from the administration on the committee's report. (A public statement to the Economics Department was made by Alfange in a memo dated March 19, 1971.) It is not clear if, at that time, Smith and Kindahl knew of Alfange's position on the Best reappointment. But if they did, this certainly would have contributed to their feelings of lost support. Moreover, they were aware of the pressure for Best's reappointment coming from the students and some faculty members and, if they had not yet heard from Alfange on the matter, it is likely that they also would have interpreted his absence of comment as further lack of support.

In an informal handwritten letter on February 2, 1971, Smith signaled to Kindahl his intent to resign from the Department as soon as he was able to decide where he would relocate. An official letter to Kindahl stating the same thing was dated March 15. Kindahl submitted his own letter of resignation from the head position (not from the Department) on February 25. Addressed to Alfange and the Economics Department, it began as follows:

In 1968 I agreed to become Head of the Department of Economics. At that time I was convinced that the University Administration could and would provide the resources and the support necessary to build a first-rate
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Kindahl's resignation was to be effective “. . . as soon as feasible . . . and no later than August 31, 1971.” The role that these resignations had, if any, in persuading the outstanding economist mentioned in the previous quotation from the visiting committee's report to decline the Economics Department's offer is not known. However, the possibility of their significance cannot be ruled out. It could be argued that Kindahl failed in his building efforts because, in the Amherst campus's political climate of the period, he (p.101) was moving too narrowly and too quickly. He clearly held a very strong position in that he had all of the high-profile academic stars in the Department on his side at a time when the administration was committed to enhancing the academic stature of the faculty. The administration may have expected the Kindahl faction to sweep aside its opposition within the Department by the sheer force of its superior academic credentials. Indeed, the purpose of appointing the 1970 visiting review committee may have been to allow the administration to confirm its view that the Department leadership was right and that the opposition was standing in the way of the achievement of academic excellence. But by appearing to focus so heavily on the rapid creation of a group of mathematically inclined microeconomists at the expense of other important areas of the discipline, such as macroeconomics, Kindahl caused the members of the review committee to caution that the opposition's case had substantial merit, a conclusion that may have taken the administration aback.

Moreover, Kindahl's unwillingness to renew Best's appointment, aroused further opposition from faculty and student quarters. The students at the time were pressing their case that the University was concerned only about research and scholarship to the exclusion of teaching, and a campus norm had developed that an outstanding teacher ought to be given the fullest chance to compile a record of scholarship that would justify the award of tenure. Granting Best reappointments for six years up to the time of normal tenure consideration would permit, should his scholarly record then warrant it, a negative decision to be safely and successfully made. However, by refusing to wait, Kindahl earned the distrust of a significant number (p.102) of students and faculty (both inside and outside the Department) and of the
administration, many of whom saw the denial of reappointment (and a second attempt to deny reappointment the following year when Kindahl was no longer head—see Chapter 6) as an ideological and political move.

Of course, it could also be contended that to be successful in building a first-rate department, one has to take quick advantage of opportunities as they arise. The availability of sought-after faculty does not occur often and the window of their availability does not usually last long. Furthermore, restricting attention to specific fields can severely limit the quality of the faculty that can be hired because good people in the required fields may not be available at the right time and better people might be available at that time in other fields. Thus, to build a top-notch department, it is often necessary to hire the best of those available and to try to resolve any field imbalances later. These kinds of considerations were likely driving Kindahl to move quickly and disregard field issues, and he no doubt thought he had the support of the administration to do so.

In any event, it is remarkable how close Kindahl came to realizing his goal of creating a first-rate Economics Department that would be recognized as such by the economics establishment. Building departments of this sort is not easy. It requires large measures of skill and luck, often over a period of many, many years. Skill is a prerequisite for recognizing and taking advantage of opportunities; luck is essential in that the appropriate opportunities have to present themselves at the right time. Had Smith not resigned and had Kindahl's success in hiring extended into the 1970–1971 academic year, the necessary foundation would have been firmly in place in the brief space of three recruiting seasons. The likelihood of achieving first-rate status shortly thereafter would have been very high since (p.103) the filling of the gaps in personnel pointed out by the visiting committee would probably have been relatively easy. However, it was not to be. Instead, and equally remarkable, the Department veered off onto an unexpectedly unorthodox and unexpectedly successful course. The transition to that new course is considered next. (p.104)

Notes:

(2.) As was pointed out in Chapter 2, Gamble joined the Department soon after it was created in 1935 and became its head in 1942.


(5.) Ibid., pp. 3-4.

(6.) Subsequent material is taken from Kindahl's statements on plans dated October 14, 1969 and November, 1970.


(9.) Memo from Provost Gluckstern, September 28, 1970 (Document P71-F7).

(10.) Interestingly, whereas the radical political economists who replaced many of the establishment or mainstream economists hired by Kindahl (see Chapter 6) saw power as necessary to make change, mainstream economists like Kindahl tended to play down the role of power in their understanding of the economic world. It is ironic, then, that Kindahl believed that the use of administrative power by a head, and the rejection of the democracy inherent in the chair form of governance, was necessary to change the Economics Department.

(11.) Microeconomic general equilibrium theory concerns the simultaneous, interactive behavior of consumers, firms, and markets in determining prices and quantities throughout the microeconomy.

(12.) It is interesting that Kindahl, a statistician and econometrician who had little personal interest in
microeconomic theory, pursued and successfully recruited a number of highly active microeconomic theorists.

(13.) There is considerable overlap in terms of their interests and what they do between macroeconomists and monetary economists. Indeed, they are often considered to be substitutes for one another.

(14.) Kindahl's efforts (mentioned earlier) to hire monetary economists and other less-mathematically inclined personnel did not change this appearance.