

## 2 Why the University?

### *A Uniquely Positioned Institution*

To modern ears, Grover Cleveland's assertion "When I was in trouble and needed help, I usually turned to the University of Michigan" and such speeches as Woodrow Wilson's "Princeton in the Nation's Service" may border on platitudes.<sup>1</sup> After all, it has been commonplace to find universities promoting their "service," allowing faculty to take sabbaticals to work in government posts, and inviting public figures to address commencement. However, in their time, these presidents' words reflected a new role for higher education.

The conception of the emerging university as an institution directly involved in the political, economic, and industrial development of the nation was essentially new, replacing the antebellum belief that colleges should primarily produce theological leaders and upstanding local citizens. Debate certainly had existed about what was meant by a college education and about how best to develop character and morality among students. Nonetheless, the scale and reach of American higher education was appreciably smaller in the colonial, Revolutionary, Jacksonian, and antebellum eras. Some people—most notably, Henry Phillip Tappan (at the University of Michigan in the 1850s)—did attempt to bring the "university idea" to America before the Civil War. However, not until the founding of Johns Hopkins University in 1876 and the passage of the Morrill Acts in 1862 and 1890 did the national research university, focused on supporting the American state and directly serving the government, become an established alternative to the local college, focused on building morality and serving God.

To fully appreciate the role of the university in the development of the new American state, one must appreciate the massive institutional change that transformed American higher education. The university of

today is fairly similar in its curriculum and mission to the university of the 1920s. The same certainly cannot be said about the relation of the university of the 1920s with the university of the 1850s: “to paraphrase Henry Adams, Harvard in 1850 was in many ways closer to the Middle Ages than to the Harvard of 1900.”<sup>2</sup>

While the nation’s leading universities came to this political role naturally, they did not do so effortlessly. The institutional entrepreneurs who guided higher education worked continually to elevate their schools internally and to define their relevance externally. Additionally, these leaders created and furthered both structural and societal roles that placed the university in a privileged position and allowed it to work as an active partner and independent agent of the burgeoning American state.

### Universities and the Institutionalization of Expertise

Studies of American political development have long recognized the role that university-based expertise played in the expansion of the American state and in related reform. Skowronek neatly summarizes the rationale for such a focus.

The obvious fact [is] that American institutional development did not stop in 1920. Indeed, the institutions that have been added to the state apparatus and the functions that have been assumed by the national government since 1920 may seem to dwarf the significance of the state building episode [between the 1870s and 1920]. The expansion of national administration accelerated dramatically in the 1930s and again in the 1960s. *Yet, the course of institutional development . . . [is] rooted in this turn-of-century departure* [emphasis mine]. The internal governmental changes negotiated between the end of Reconstruction and the end of World War I established a new institutional politics at the national level that has proven remarkably resistant to fundamental change. They have also raised questions of political authority and the capacity for direction within government that have yet to be firmly resolved.<sup>3</sup>

Strikingly, a very similar story can be told regarding the development of higher education. As I discuss throughout the course of this book, such similarity is more than the product of coincidence. Universities did not simply mirror the growth of the state; they both facilitated it and capitalized on it.

Contemporary observers and scholars of reform—including, to some extent, Eisenach and Skowronek—assume an inevitability in universities’ rise as supporting institutions for the national state. In part, such an assumption is understandable, for one of the primary goals of

their works is to underscore the intellectual and institutional apparatuses that were integral to the expansion of American state capacities. Skowronek states in his introduction:

The routine work of government is primarily a mental rather than a manual labor, and the intellectual talent available in government for problem solving and innovation is critical to the capacities of a state to maintain itself over time.

Skowronek notes that such “intellectual talent” can come from an established aristocracy, a state-supported church, professional and trade organizations, or educational institutions.<sup>4</sup> However, he also stresses that in the case of American state building, this talent came primarily from the emerging university and the related professional associations. As mentioned earlier, Eisenach takes Skowronek’s emphasis even further, describing the university as akin to a “national church,”<sup>5</sup> providing the state not only institutional and intellectual apparatuses but also moral and cultural support.

I do not quibble with Skowronek and Eisenach’s characterization of universities’ fundamental role in the state-building era. In fact, I use their arguments as both a springboard and a frame for my own discussion. Appreciating their general discussion, I seek to move the consideration of universities a step further. Seemingly, Skowronek, Eisenach, and others take the role of the university in state building for granted. They maintain that the state needed intellectual talent and that the university provided it. In this work, I highlight the fact that the situation was not necessarily that simple.

First, before the later half of the nineteenth century, American universities were not necessarily in the business of developing and defining “intellectual talent.” Instead, American higher education devoted itself to developing character, instilling morals, and defining a gentleman class. University service on behalf of the new American state was not merely an extension of its previous work. Rather, it was a product of the university’s own institutional redefinition.

Second and correspondingly, universities were not the only potential source of institutional and intellectual support. Today, it seems natural and almost inevitable that universities would define particular bodies of knowledge and provide credentials testifying to individuals’ expertise. However, it would be a mistake to assume that no alternatives ever existed. In the development of the new American state, one could imagine a system whereby the knowledge and skills required by teachers, foresters, civil administrators, and others were defined and

credentialed either by national government agencies or by a federally chartered university. But instead, the nation's leading universities came to define appropriate knowledge and skills. The possibility of such an alternative imparts greater richness to the study of universities' contribution to the development of the American state, because it frames universities' contribution to the development of the national state not as a simple mechanism for reform but, rather, as a piece of a complex puzzle within which universities helped to define and establish the parameters of reform itself. Crucial to this effort was the universities' intimate relationship with other organizations dedicated to reform and to the development of the national state.

Professional, disciplinary, and civic associations were also actively involved in the process of building a new American state. The membership and, more important, the leadership of these associations were drawn from what was described as the class of "university men." Institutions of higher learning served as a defining and driving force. To borrow from Brian Cook's distinction, the American university was not simply instrumental to but, rather, constitutive of the administrative state.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the university did not simply provide manpower and transmit knowledge at the behest of the national state. Rather, by defining new bodies of knowledge, establishing new degree programs, and granting new credentials, universities defined the agenda for state capacities. University-based expertise thus provided the state not only with particular capabilities and rationales but also with direction, establishing priorities and defining the appropriate reach of its administration.

Universities' efforts to define their contribution and forestall potential competitors placed a premium on institutional entrepreneurship and organizational coordination. Such entrepreneurship and coordination were not simply crucial for the growth of universities and their service to the state; they were also fundamental to establishing the nature of such service. First through informal means and later through structured efforts, universities were often able to determine to which public concerns specialized knowledge would and would not be applied.

This agenda-setting function may seem so readily apparent as to be almost unworthy of mention. However, it is important to illuminate its effect. For example, scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were highly interested in making government more efficient, applying expert techniques for land use in forestry and agriculture, and establishing standards in such professions as law, medicine, and education. They were not interested in issues of contemporary concern,

such as the political participation of ethnic minorities, the effects of smoking on public health, and the best way to educate citizens for whom English is a second language. Though it might seem almost absurd to imagine either early university scholarship focusing on such issues or early academic programs dedicated to such fields, the peculiarity of this conjecture stems in no small part from the universities' extensive influence on the public agenda. The efforts of advocates and the force of social movements certainly have been essential in bringing such matters to public attention. Nonetheless, the power of such public ideas is greatly enhanced by their institutional locale. Since the end of the antebellum era, the American university has been arguably the most authoritative of public institutions.

*Developing Structure: Coordination, Agency, and Partnerships*

In undertaking this study, I initially expected to focus on each institution separately, comparing their individual relations with the state. However, as my research progressed, I realized that the coordination of and relationship between universities was essential to understanding their interactions with the state. Moreover, I also discovered that the relationships between universities themselves and between universities and the national state evolved significantly with the founding of the Association of American Universities in 1900. I therefore frame my discussion around this founding. I build from studies of individual schools to consider the general role of the university in the legitimization and formalization of the national state in the "loosely coupled" era (1862–99) and in the "formally aligned" era (1900–1920). While the state developed, the notion of universities' public service as active partners and independent agents evolved as well.

Nongovernmental institutions play a significant role in the establishment of state authority. Mediating interplay between political institutions and public ideas, nongovernmental institutions take on a "parastate" quality,<sup>7</sup> acting as partners of or agents with the state. In American political development, the role of such nongovernmental institutions is intensified. The public good is not always democratically defined, especially during eras of reform. Nongovernmental institutions are largely free from the immediate concerns and whims of electoral politics and thus can better support changes in the foundations of state authority.

In the era of building a new American state, existing democratic institutions were seen as corrupt and inefficient; thus, new institutions needed to be created.<sup>8</sup> New institutions would not just spring to life

from the demands of the electorate. They had to be nurtured by non-governmental institutions that fostered new institutional and intellectual apparatuses for governance. Additionally, because of the various stratifications and constraints imposed by American federalism, shifts in the basis of governmental authority are not necessarily unitary and immediate. Instead, they are often scattered and gradual.

*University Coordination: The “Loosely Coupled”  
and “Formally Aligned” Eras*

Though not formalized until the formation of various higher education associations, such as the AAU, the contributions of universities to the new American state were coordinated throughout the state-building era. Initially, this coordination was based largely on the personal and social ties of university presidents. A telling example of such familiarity was the friendship of Andrew Dickson White, founding president of Cornell, and Daniel Coit Gilman, founding president of Johns Hopkins. The two were friends at Yale and traveled together to Europe after graduation, before embarking on their academic careers. In no small part due to such familiarity and in response to the uncertainty of their expanded role and mission, universities consciously modeled themselves on one another in terms of curriculum, structure, and relations to the state.

Coordination helped spur what DiMaggio and Powell characterize as institutional isomorphism.<sup>9</sup> The nation’s leading universities were close enough to learn from one another. They were also complex enough to harness variation that (to borrow from Axelrod and Cohen)<sup>10</sup> would allow for institutional adaptation and evolution. University presidents would send one another their annual reports and budgets, but formal collection of such materials or meetings regarding similar administrative concerns rarely, if ever, took place. Universities and their leaders handled between themselves, rather than through internal committees, questions ranging from whether to add courses in political economy, to the appropriate role for summer sessions and extension programs, to the appointment of naval engineers to the faculty through informal communications and letters. Even when internal committees were formed to examine such matters as coeducation or fraternities, among their primary duties was to poll other schools to learn how they addressed such issues. This loosely coupled coordination not only meant there was institutional similarity; it also meant there was informal regulation, as universities standardized their curriculum, their campus life, and their relations to the new American state.

Interestingly, despite increasing complexity in the size and scope of

universities, the move toward more formally aligned coordination was not prompted by difficulties between the loosely coupled elite universities. Rather, it was prompted primarily by difficulties certain universities had encountered in gaining credit for their course work and acceptance of their degrees at the leading European universities, especially German ones. In the United States, if a student sought to transfer or to pursue graduate studies at an institution different than where he or she had done undergraduate work (a practice that was much less common than it is today), the leading universities would accept that student based on a simple letter from their former institution. This letter often came personally from the university's president. Such an approach did not necessarily work for students seeking to study at European universities.

Responding to a report on the difficulties of American students abroad by his university's Graduate Council, University of California president Benjamin Ide Wheeler suggested a conference of the nation's leading universities. Writing to the presidents of Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Chicago in October 1899, Wheeler suggested that a meeting was necessary because it would be impossible to discuss the value given American degrees by the German ministers of education unless a more formal standard for scholarship was set among the leading American universities.<sup>11</sup> Other university leaders agreed, and by February 1900, fourteen of the nation's leading research universities met in Chicago and formalized their coordination by establishing the Association of American Universities.

Between initial discussions and its first formal meeting, the organization's purpose had grown beyond simple concern with European respect for American degrees; matters fundamental to relations between American universities, such as standardized admissions, degree requirements, and graduate migration, were all included on the agenda for its first meeting. Recognizing the potential importance of such discussions for their relations with the national state, university leaders included the U.S. commissioner of education among their numbers at the conference.

Formally aligned coordination meant that the leading institutions of higher education could now set an agenda of issues to be addressed, rather than haphazardly waiting for issues to arise. They could formally standardize degrees and curriculum, rather than handling credentials on a case-by-case basis. They could also define their relations with the state through a collective approach, rather than through disparate efforts.

*The University and the National State: Active Partners and Independent Agents*

Whether coordinated through loosely coupled personal affiliations or through formally aligned associations, universities helped to establish the new American state and its authority of expertise. Universities functioned as both active partners and independent agents of the state. The role taken by the university was usually determined by the availability of resources. In addition to coordination, universities utilized access to highly generous benefactors, such as Andrew Carnegie, Paul Mellon, and John Rockefeller.

Such access did not mean that university leaders had limitless funds. New buildings, new problems, and new faculties stressed academic budgets. Therefore, institutional entrepreneurs sought patronage whenever necessary but not exclusively. Generally speaking, problems that cost a great deal to handle, such as the training of university students for military leadership and service or the expansion of scientific agriculture, were tackled through partnerships. Problems that cost little or nothing for the university to deal with through its expertise, such as the quality of secondary education and the standards of the professions, were tackled by the university as an independent agent. The application of expertise in these roles was driven by problem identification and entrepreneurial choice on behalf of university leaders and government officials.

Working in conjunction with the new American state sometimes meant that universities simply pursued a shared interest in national standards of rationality and expertise; at other times, it meant more direct partnerships with the national state. These partnerships began in earnest with the establishment of land-grant colleges through passage of the first Morrill Act in 1862 and continued after the Civil War, reinforced by the second Morrill Act of 1890. Though various experiment stations accompanying the creation of the land-grant colleges represented a prominent partnership between universities and the government, they were far from the only ones. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, federal departments and bureaus—such as the Departments of the Interior, the Treasury, Agriculture, and Commerce; the Bureaus of Education, Mines, Fisheries, Forestry, and Public Health; the Geological Survey; the Weather Bureau; and the Departments of the Army and the Navy—would all work in conjunction with universities to gather, assess, and disseminate expertise and information.<sup>12</sup>

In an effort to maintain relevance and patronage as well as serve the

state, universities sought to develop relations that moved beyond simple research partnerships and into the establishment of whole schools, degree programs, and credentials. The efforts of University of California president Benjamin Ide Wheeler to establish a school of forestry in Berkeley present a fine example of this. Writing to the head of the Bureau of Forestry, Gifford Pinchot, Wheeler proposed that the bureau provide foresters to serve as faculty.

I think it represents at any rate a line along which much can be done in bringing the United States departments into closer relation with the universities. The department at Washington would be benefited often by closer relation to the universities and the universities would be benefited quite as much.<sup>13</sup>

As Wheeler's letter to Pinchot indicates, university leaders saw such partnerships as beneficial for both their schools and the federal government. Wheeler never could convince Pinchot to fund faculty for a whole school, but various agencies made numerous contributions to Berkeley and other universities in terms of manpower, money, and resources, solidifying relations between universities and the federal government.

Building on earlier partnerships, universities offered their service to the nation in the preparation for and eventual entrance into World War I. Some faculty opposed such efforts and were relieved of their duties. Interestingly, other faculty felt universities were not doing enough and should direct all resources to the war effort, abandoning the study of literature, art, and the like. Between these two views, university leaders sought what was arguably a somewhat middle ground, by developing the Student Army Training Corps and the Reserve Officers Training Corps. The aim of the SATC was to develop "as a military asset the great body of college men throughout the country and to provide a reservoir from which officer material could be selected" and "to prevent wasteful depletion of the colleges through indiscriminate volunteering perpetuation."<sup>14</sup> As the war continued, the partnership between universities and the federal government continued and in fact grew. In an editorial entitled "Drafting Our Universities," an anonymous Columbia University professor, "on leave in the nation's service," stressed the need to perpetuate these partnerships.

We spell Government with a capital "G" these days and the habit will continue until the war becomes a memory only in the mind of the oldest inhabitant. And the universities have been recognized in the general division of things essential and unessential for the public welfare.

The universities after this war will be recognized by the Government as

the training schools for national efficiency. The mere will to live and to pay our debts is going to see to that. Trade, commerce, manufacture, science, national welfare in general are going to require such stimulation that they will have to be nationally organized; and the roots of their successful growth are going to be imbedded in the university. The universities of the country will have busy days before them after peace is declared.<sup>15</sup>

The partnerships that fostered such “busy days” represented not only direct institutional and intellectual linkages between the university and the national state but also direct efforts by the university to help legitimize and formalize the authority of the national state.

Working as independent agents meant that universities acted on behalf of the American state, regulating and coordinating policy areas in keeping with national reformers’ desire for standardization, rationality, and efficiency, but not with direct authoritative governmental sanction. For example, the era of the new American state not only saw the expansion of national administrative capacities and the emergence of the university; it also witnessed an extraordinary boom in public and private secondary education. In 1870, there were 72,156 students in 1,026 high schools; by 1900, there were 519,251 students in 6,005 high schools. In the next twenty years, the numbers doubled for each decade.<sup>16</sup> Though interested in the quality and nature of secondary education, the national government did not have the resources to regulate high schools. As mentioned in chapter 1, the United States Bureau of Education was an agency of limited means and reach within the Department of the Interior. Responsibility for regulation, however, was simply given to the states.

In the East, the Middle States Examination Board, comprised of the region’s major universities and colleges, created standardized entrance exams that drastically reshaped secondary school curriculum. In the Midwest and West, universities began accrediting public and private high schools through a system of admission by diploma. Many of the universities that adopted the diploma system were public, but in curricular matters, these institutions were often more concerned with pleasing their peer institutions than with pleasing their state legislatures. Started in 1869 by President E. O. Haven of Michigan, the diploma system meant that high school graduates who had taken the requisite courses from an accredited high school would be admitted to the university without having to sit for the entrance examinations.

Simply offering course work that universities prescribed, however, was not enough for high school accreditation. The high school or local alumni association would sponsor accreditation visits whereby faculty

or select alumni representatives would visit local high schools to determine if their graduates could gain admission. The visits meant that universities were actively overseeing the quality of secondary education. For example, when A. F. Nightingale, superintendent of Chicago high schools, wrote to the University of Michigan president thanking him for renewing his school's accreditation as a "diploma school" and for providing him a detailed report by the faculty members who had assessed the school, he also asked for the names of two teachers the report had found unqualified, so as to be sure to not rehire them for the next year.<sup>17</sup>

Visitation reports did not simply comment on the quality and content of instruction; they also assessed the quality and size of the physical plant, especially libraries and laboratories, as well as student demeanor. Reports were frequently shared between universities, as high schools often would use their "diploma relations" with one university as the basis for seeking similar relations with another. Thus, universities acted as a regulatory agent, ensuring standards of quality, efficiency, and rationality.

Regulatory activities were not limited to secondary education. Such rising professions as law, medicine, and public administration found themselves regulated not by government agencies but by universities coordinating their efforts through their own schools and related professional associations. The development of a national, professional bar was fundamental for the new American state and its efforts to replace the existing state of courts and parties.<sup>18</sup> The formation of the American Bar Association was crucial to this effort, but just as important was the development and expansion of law schools, which stressed a standard and formal notion of legal expertise. Law schools helped the bar enforce these notions by producing credentials that allowed the bar to distinguish those who did have such training from those who did not. Similarly, the development of medical education, spurred by social critic Abraham Flexner's scathing report on the quality of medical training in the United States, created standard expectations and requirements for those who would possess the doctorate of medicine.<sup>19</sup>

Universities not only provided credentials; by regulating and standardizing their admissions and curriculum, they gave value to those credentials. It was not justice, health, or education departments that were setting the standards for lawyers, doctors, teachers, and others; it was universities who were doing so, as independent regulatory agents. However, because of the intimate ties between leaders of the university and leaders of the new American state (oftentimes they were one and

the same), universities did so not in competition with the state but in conjunction with it.

Whether as an independent agent or as an active partner, universities expanded the scope and reach of the national administrative state further than it would have been able to go if it had relied on its own institutional and intellectual apparatuses. Universities' extension of the state was primarily directed by academic leaders seeking to establish their own institutions as well as the state itself. Pursuing the expansion of expertise and cultivating the patronage of private benefactors and public officials, institutional entrepreneurs offered the resources of their universities. In both the "loosely coupled" and the "formally aligned" eras, universities coordinated their efforts and resources and thus accentuated and systematized their support of the national state.

### Universities and the American Aspiration

When considering the contemporary context for university-based expertise and support of state authority, it is crucial to build on our understanding of how and why universities were essential to the development of the national state. However, it is also important to understand the unique societal position universities held at the time of such development. As universities developed greater awareness of their identities as national institutions serving more than a local or regional elite, their entrepreneurial leaders offered university expertise not just to the federal state but to the nation as a whole. Expertise alone was not enough, and thus university leaders and other advocates also stressed the contributions that the emergence of universities as national institutions made to a national democratic identity, to national economic and industrial competitiveness, and to a national intellectual vanguard. Not only is this auxiliary support essential for our understanding of universities' role in the process of building a new American state at the turn of the century, but it is also fundamental to our examination of current questions about the relationship between the nation's academic and governmental institutions.

#### *The Rise of Institutional Awareness and National Identity*

Universities were structurally well positioned to support state authority founded on expertise. However, this alone was not the reason they were integral to the national state's development. In addition to promoting an expertise that placed authority in the hands—or more specifically, the minds—of trained specialists, the emerging university also

fostered a culture of aspiration and a perception of accessibility that helped position it as a national institution. Critics, especially populists, would decry universities and their focus on expertise as elitist and undemocratic. Nonetheless, by the turn of the century, these criticisms had been largely diffused, as university leaders argued that the promotion of expertise was democratic, since training was supposedly available to any and all who were gifted enough to pursue it. Class and social status certainly still had a large effect on the institution, but the creation of fellowships, grades, and a general move among university leaders to stress academics and “merit” meant that the emerging university was more open than its antebellum predecessor had been.<sup>20</sup>

Universities also offered a unique nationalism grounded in intellect and collegiality. The national reach and ambitions of the emerging university offered the new American state not only expertise but also a possible institutional base for reconciliation of the Union. Soon after the Civil War, the University of California’s eager search for faculty led it to the Harvard educated Joseph LeConte, who had served with the South Carolinian regiments during the Civil War. LeConte even briefly served as president of the University of California. Yale’s War Memorial built in 1901 honored alumni who had died serving both the United States of America and the Confederate States of America. At his inauguration as the University of Virginia’s first president, which was attended by President Theodore Roosevelt, Edwin Anderson Alderman reflected a desire to create a national institution.

The Americans of the Southern States are the only Americans who have known in the direct form the discipline of war and the education of defeat. They alone of the unbeaten land have had intimate experience of revolution and despair.

There is still the Republic to be served, venerable now, for all its brilliancy, and literally made over in outward form, in spiritual purpose and in industrial capacity since 1850. Who shall leaven this tumult of peoples with soberness and simplicity and Americanism? What is Americanism coming to signify spiritually to the world? Shall it be alone pride of power, passion for achievement, genius for self-indulgence, mad waste of energy, as in the ant hill, or shall it mean steadfast justice, respect for law, sober discipline, responsible citizenship, and moral sturdiness?

The building of a National university of modern type in the South is the great opportunity to benefit the Republic now offered to the wisdom of States and imagination of far reaching men.<sup>21</sup>

Such nationalism was not limited to grand general conceptions of the university and its relation to the nation. It was imbued even in consideration of specific university programs. Describing the work of the

University of California's School of Agriculture and explaining the significance of agricultural research, acting president David Barrows stated in 1912:

It is the country even more than the city which is menaced by the migration of the more active elements from the rural districts into the urban. It is the rural districts moreover which may be prejudicially affected by the settlement of foreign immigrants. . . . Foreign immigrants located in communities in the country tend to remain foreign, to perpetuate their foreign speech and prejudices, and to long resist incorporation into the American nation. All of these considerations give the highest importance to the work which lies before the Department of Agriculture of the University of California.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, the university was not operating experiment stations in rural areas simply to teach people how to farm; it was also operating them to teach people how to be good Americans. As Barrows's comments reflect, these programs offered more than just expertise to the various regions and people served. They also promoted a national state and identity. The university thus not only helped establish the new American state; it helped define what it was to be American.

With the Morrill Act of 1862 leading to a conflation of curricular, institutional, and political forces, the research university began to emerge in the aftermath of the Civil War. Professional and graduate schools, research laboratories, structured disciplines, and specialized faculty reflected the response to and demands of a more industrial and complex society. Additionally, the end of the Civil War and the push toward the twentieth century witnessed the beginnings of self-conscious institutional identity. Active alumni associations, the rise of extracurricular programs (especially intercollegiate athletics), and the move toward public ceremony gave institutions both organizations and identity beyond their own hallowed halls.

The University of Michigan's various alumni associations outside of the state—most notably, the Alumni Association of the Southwest (Kansas City, Missouri)—would sponsor accreditation visits whereby faculty would visit local high schools to determine if their graduates could gain admission by diploma. For a number of years, beginning in 1887, the Harvard Club of San Francisco sponsored a scholarship to send a University of California student to Harvard for a master's degree. At Harvard and Yale, only clergy served on the governing corporations until a push by alumni for representation ended with elected alumni representatives being seated—first at Harvard in 1867 and later at Yale in 1889. The relative power and influence of such graduate orga-

nizations could also be seen by the fact that in addition to inviting the U.S. commissioner of education, the founders of the Association of American Universities also invited the Federation of Graduate Clubs to send a representative.

The rise of extracurricular programs, especially of the sport of football and the activities surrounding the game, also reflected the growth of institutional self-awareness. School nicknames, fight songs, and colors all developed quickly after the first game between Princeton and Rutgers in 1869. Correspondent to the rise of alumni associations, football became a focus for loyalties and socializing. The Princeton-Yale game in New York and the Michigan-Chicago game in Chicago were highlights of the elite social calendar. Extensive coverage of college football in newspapers across the country surpassed every other sport of the early twentieth century. Such coverage not only stoked the fire of alumni but gave the mass public who might never have set foot on a college campus an image of and identity with the elite universities.<sup>23</sup> Football was not without problems. In fact, rampant abuses of rules, excessive alumni boosterism, and, most significantly, player deaths troubled academic leaders. For a number of years, California and Stanford abandoned football and instead played rugby, a game that Stanford's president David Starr Jordan felt was morally superior and that he characterized as demanding a much higher grade of skill and alertness and being far more interesting to watch.<sup>24</sup> Eastern schools did not take such a drastic action, but a significant increase in on-the-field fatalities led President Theodore Roosevelt to convene the athletic managers of the leading football schools—Harvard, Yale, and Princeton—at the White House in 1905.

The rise of alumni activity and of athletics was not necessarily essential to the emergence of the research university. However, it demonstrates the development of universities as national institutions that self-consciously created and nurtured an identity beyond their own walls. Institutional image and prestige became commodities that were linked to the value of university-based credentials. The elite institutions sought to establish national reputations for their schools; alumni associations and athletic success were one way to do this. National reputations were critical not just for attracting new students but also for maintaining the value of credentials and furthering the authority of expertise that these credentials helped create. Football success did not necessarily make degrees more valuable, but University of Chicago president William Rainey Harper courted Alonzo Stagg, for example,

in an effort to build a successful football team that the president hoped would both bring great national notoriety and, in its own way, build legitimacy for the school.<sup>25</sup>

Correspondent with such concerns, the overall size and geographic diversity of universities' student bodies were of interest to their leaders. In an era before reputation rankings and college admissions guidebooks, these statistics were a measure of a university's prestige. For example, responding to enrollment figures showing a marked increase in overall student population and in the number of students coming from outside the Northeast, Columbia president Seth Low declared that the figures were "evidence that the great development of the university . . . has become widely known," and he maintained that "it [was] a fair inference from [the] figures that Columbia's national reputation [was] on the increase."<sup>26</sup>

Heightened awareness of institutional identity could also be seen in university ceremonies. In the mid-1880s, the leading American research universities adopted standards for academic costume, corresponding to the degree received and the school from which the degree was conferred. Additionally, the commencement address, rather than student-based activities, became the focus of graduation ceremonies. The influence universities held as national institutions was both summarized in and symbolized by the comments made by President Rutherford B. Hayes at Yale's commencement in 1880.

Any administration and any country is more indebted to the man who is engaged in educating the people than to those who are its executive and administrative officers. The executive officer is but the figurehead at its best. The Government are the men who, figuratively speaking, run the machine, and the boilers of the Government. The head of such an institution as this, where moral and intellectual culture are committed, is the man who forms the men who control not only the figurehead but control the nation. . . . Any administration that is a good one or desires to be a good one, must ever be grateful to an institution such as this.<sup>27</sup>

Like Cleveland's comment and Wilson's address mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Hayes's sentiments here might be dismissed by contemporary readers as empty rhetoric common to political speeches at university events. It is important to note, however, that the notion of a public commencement address from an outside notable developed in this era. Previous to this era, commencements were fairly insular activities comprised essentially of student oratory and a farewell address (often in the form of a sermon) by the university president. The rise of the university as a national institution led to an effort

to bring in outside speakers and to a recognition of the university as a platform from which public figures could receive attention for their remarks.

### *Universities and the Democratic Community*

The multiple contributions of the universities to the nation were often discussed in regard to the primary object of providing expertise. Nowhere was this more readily seen than in discussion of the university's ability to produce active and educated citizens. Responding to those who feared that university promotion of expertise would be undemocratic and would lead to a lazy and compliant citizenry, university advocates argued that expertise and citizenship education not only could go hand in hand but were in fact related.

Speaking of the limits to expert training, the annual 1880 commencement editorial of the *New York Times* praised the American system's pluralistic attainments: "But it is not so much the purpose of the educational system of this country to produce ripe scholars and men of great learning as to turn out citizens well equipped for the work of active life and qualified for the most exacting duties of citizenship."<sup>28</sup> The editorial was not dismissing the value of expertise. Rather, it was stressing the ability of universities to both examine politics through special study and contribute to the more general political awareness of all its students. University leaders and proponents of expertise have argued, even today, that specialization is useful not just for those who pursue detailed examination but for those who receive a more general grounding in a subject and take such grounding to the world around them. In the view of the *Times* editorial, such scholarship would benefit the nation not only by producing experts who handled the great public questions of the day but also by producing citizens more likely to contribute to and participate in public life and the political process.

As the university became more specialized and as its production of expertise grew, university leaders emphasized that the notions of service and community were enhanced, rather than overwhelmed, by their expansion. Building from the rise of institutional identity, university leaders saw the growth of the university as an opportunity to further community and enhance citizenship. Speaking at Boston's Old South Church in 1901 on the "development of the college spirit," Yale president Arthur Twining Hadley argued:

It is perhaps the greatest merit of the typical American college that it exercises a powerful influence against selfishness, whether physical or intellectual, and in favor of the development of a community life. . . . The majority

of those who attend our universities are ready to enter into the spirit of the place, and they demand their fellows do the same thing. Man is a political animal: and the boys entering into a group of this kind at an impressionable age become part of a close community whose public sentiment and code of ethics take powerful hold upon them. . . . it has this result: that the boy, at a most impressionable age, forms a conception of public conscience and a code of honor which carries him outside of himself: a code which leads him, not by physical compulsion but by influence of public sentiment, to do things in which consideration of personal convenience are purely secondary.<sup>29</sup>

As Hadley continued with this message, he emphasized that in addition to training specialized experts in the fields of medicine, science, literature, the arts, law, and public life, universities trained all students, no matter what their specialty, to be experts in democratic citizenship.

We have seen how our colleges give their men a training in just this sort of public spirit which is so necessary to our welfare as a nation. . . . We are in the midst of difficulties that cannot be checked by law—difficulties that grow greater as the years go on. Individual efforts at reform seem helpless and hopeless. We need a sound public opinion to meet them. We must have large bodies of men who will fully accept the principle that we are members one of another, and insist upon applying it to the problems of practical life.<sup>30</sup>

Like the *Times* editorial twenty years earlier, Hadley stressed that in addition to expertise, notions of citizenship and democratic community were promoted at research universities, and he maintained that the relation of these two purposes was not mutually exclusive. In securing public acceptance for the authority of expertise, Hadley and others argued that while training students to be experts, the university also trained students in the proper way to employ this expertise—for the betterment of fellow Americans. Hadley's "public spirit" was thus an extension of the *Times* editorial's notions of citizenship. Both sources were concerned with the university's ability to produce students who looked to the nation's welfare, and both maintained that the legitimization and formalization of expertise based in research and specialization advanced, rather than hindered, this ability.

#### *Universities and National Economic and Industrial Competitiveness*

The university offered itself—and was looked to—for more than promotion of participation, citizenship, and democratic community. As the Industrial Revolution expanded both products and markets, American business, political, and academic leaders became concerned with their nation's economic and industrial competitiveness. Their most specific concern surrounded America's position relative to other nations in

regard to industrial productivity and advances in technology. While issues of character, national will, and natural resources concerned these leaders, the nation's ability to produce men who could develop new technologies as well as harness manpower and other resources was also a major concern. The classrooms and laboratories of the emerging university offered a source of hope and comfort.

Similar to notions of democratic community, the university's contribution to the nation's industrial and economic competitiveness were a compliment to, rather than a competitor with, the university's efforts to further the federal state through research-based expertise. After the Civil War, among the major educational policy concerns was the fact that a number of Americans—including such academic leaders as Andrew Dickson White, Daniel Coit Gilman, and Arthur Twining Hadley—had received their graduate degrees in Germany. Writing in 1883 about Columbia's plans to turn Columbia into a full-fledged university with graduate and professional schools, the *New York Times* celebrated the value such a university would offer.

It comes as no beggar, but to ask the room be made for it, and strength be given it until the day when it shall be the City's pride and glory, when it shall draw from every part of the country and from other countries and shall furnish here upon our own soil the post-collegiate education which American students must now seek abroad. This latter fact alone is reason enough for establishing such a university.<sup>31</sup>

The question of what would drive the professional and scientific training that helped define the emerging university led advocates to urge that universities stress industrial and economic development, which, in keeping with the dominant current of the time, fostered a concern for utility and relevance that encouraged universities to expand the objects of study and research. The *Times* was a primary advocate of universities' pursuing such diversity.

It is plain that our higher educational institutions, if they would conform to the progress of the world and the demands of the times, must extend widely the limits of their field of study so as to include within its scope those subjects which really constitute now the body of human learning. If they do this, they must of necessity allow a wide liberty of choice.

It is certain that the institution that best meets the requirements of modern life and best fits its students for the variety of tasks and provides them will meet with the greatest favor and do the most useful work.<sup>32</sup>

Curricular expansion alone, however, was not a solution. As the *Times* would note a few years later, studying multiple subjects was not enough. American universities needed to study multiple subjects well,

and there sometimes were limits to an institution's ability to do this. In an editorial regarding the appointment of President Low as president of Columbia, the *Times* used the opportunity to speak of American higher education's limitations compared to other nations.

It is no secret that our educational institutions all through the country cannot for a moment compare in respect of endowments and appointments with similar institutions in England, France, and Germany. . . . it is possible to organize instruction here that is on scale with the University of Berlin. It is one part . . . of the needed work to be done in America.<sup>33</sup>

The comparative lack of resources available at American universities were a problem for institutional entrepreneurs, such as Low, but they were also an opportunity. Appeals to both public and private benefactors would stress institutional competitiveness with other American universities and would also appeal to a patriotic obligation to ensure that American higher education—and by extension, American industry—was competitive with other nations.

The call for competitiveness was not simply articulated by the mainstream press. University presidents themselves highlighted the economic and industrial advantages of advanced research and training. Of course, part of this emphasis stemmed from an institutional desire to raise funds and build programs. However, these leaders also spoke of a collective necessity. American higher education could serve the nation in many ways, and enabling America's industries to compete with those abroad was a major goal. In an enthusiastically received speech given to an audience including the leaders of other major colleges and universities at a National Higher Education Conference at Association Hall, Brooklyn, in December 1891, Brown University president E. Benjamin Andrews addressed the importance of universities for economic competitiveness.

Nearly all the great advances in industry which make goods cheaper and life happier involve principles which have been wrought out in the study or the laboratory. Edison could do little but for the science of physics, which less practical men elaborated and made ready for use. . . . the power of research in high realms pays. Witness the case of Germany, which manufactures 83 percent of the chemicals used on the Continent of Europe because of the chemical discoveries made and the knowledge of chemistry diffused among her people through the agency of her universities. In the effort of America to compete industrially with European nations no one thing is more important than the promotion among us of scientific training in its highest forms.

No tongue can tell the debt which the practical, everyday science on which the world now lives owes to the great masters and law givers of sci-

ence and the departments of mathematics and everyone of them was the offspring of some institution for higher learning. The same, if not a closer relation, exists between good schools and practical science in the department of sociology.<sup>34</sup>

When considering the emergence of the American university, one cannot overestimate the importance of comparative sensibilities. As Andrews emphasized, the university's support of economic and industrial development was justified not in response to a need to serve the marketplace or support capital expansion, though these certainly might have been implicit. Instead, the obligation to help America compete against other nations drove such concerns.

Interestingly, just as notions of democratic community were linked to the expanding federal state's authority of expertise, so was concern regarding America's industrial and economic competitiveness. Building on their belief in a greater need for efficiency, both institutional entrepreneurs in academia and leaders of industry argued for university-developed expertise that would support state expansion and industrial competitiveness. Needless to say, national state capacity and industrial capacity were seen as connected. Universities and institutional entrepreneurs helped promote that connection as essential to their societal contribution. Concerns over American scholars being trained in foreign universities and concerns about the quality of American education in comparison to foreign universities were not limited to institutions of higher education but were shared by the national state and by American industry as well. The more stakeholders universities could find for its efforts, the more support it could garner.

### *Universities and a National Vanguard*

In expanding the federal state, "an emergent intelligentsia rooted in a revitalized professional sector and a burgeoning university sector . . . championed a fundamental reconstruction of the mode of governmental operations to be centered in 'finish, efficacy and permanence.'"<sup>35</sup> However, this national vanguard based in the professions and universities did not limit its attention to state building. In developing acceptance for their pursuit of efficiency and expertise, universities and their supporters stressed the diversity of intellectual leadership that these growing national institutions provided.

Partially, this intellectual leadership was to be directed toward democratic citizenship and industrial development. However, universities did not limit their national service to these areas. Additionally, they sought to perpetuate their support of all that was "useful" by pro-

ducing scholars and disseminating knowledge. Speaking at an anniversary celebration at Columbia University, Francis Courdet articulated this ambition as the defining function of the university.

If I could venture to give a definition of my own, I should proclaim that the true university is that which teaches nothing that is useless and everything that is useful and good. That its aim should be to form a class of men who, by their training, moral and intellectual, would be the model men of the country in the government of which they might be expected to take a large and useful part. I would be bold enough to say that the real university should concern itself in ripening useful talents, in eliminating useless and idle theories. Law, medicine, theology, literature—surely all these things, in all their branches and offshoots, form useful subjects to the student. To elevate the standards of all professions and ennoble the pursuits of study loving men, to arm these with weapons, offensive and defensive, which experience has proved to be available in battle, public or private life—these are the aims which may well encourage the founders of the ideal university.<sup>36</sup>

Courdet did not limit the universities' intellectual leadership to affairs of the state. Instead, he outlined multiple areas of service a university could provide. Driven by increasing specialization and the rise of professionalism, universities helped create a national vanguard that served as leaders in a variety of fields, from law to agriculture, medicine to religion. Many of these leaders would be involved in the expansion of the federal state, and many of the advances in their particular fields would contribute to the state's development. Notably, just like notions of democratic community and industrial development, the university efforts to develop a national vanguard were portrayed as one of many different contributions.

Reflecting on the growth of Johns Hopkins University, founding president Daniel Coit Gilman saw the growth of higher education as essential to the furtherance of intellectual leadership. It was the importance of knowledge, not character or social standing, that Gilman and other proponents of a national vanguard stressed.

Twenty years ago students in colleges were said to be diminishing in numbers. Now careful statistics show a marked increase. . . . Think for a moment what this means. Think of the large additions to Church and State. Think of the large additions to human happiness by keener intellectual enjoyment and nobler love of life.

We need more knowledge. The paths of inquiry are clear; the route has been surveyed. Now for detailed investigation.<sup>37</sup>

While governor of New York, Theodore Roosevelt also stressed the need for intellectual leadership in all fields of endeavor. Speaking at

Cornell's commencement exercises in 1899, Roosevelt showed characteristic enthusiasm when stating the case for such leadership.

Our country could better afford to lose all of the men who have amassed millions than to lose one-half of its college-bred men. We can get along without men of enormous wealth, but not without men of brains.

Above all, do not become of the class of so-called highly educated and cultured, who sneer at American institutions and American customs. If you recognize fault, come forward and expose it and strive to remedy it.<sup>38</sup>

As Roosevelt's words underscored, the need for "college-bred men" and "men of brains" was universal, not limited simply to the creation of an expanded state based in expertise.

### Structuring a Unique Position

The era of building the new American state witnessed an effort to bring expertise to most all of America's institutions and customs. The university's support of democratic community, industrial development, and a national vanguard might not have been directly linked to the formal structures of the federal state, but it was linked to issues of national pride and national capabilities, which in turn greatly influenced these formal structures. University support of expertise and its promotion of administration were closely tied to all these aspects of public service.

When assessing contemporary conceptions of administration and the role of universities in advancing these conceptions, it is critical to recognize that the origins of such service lie not only in the entrepreneurship and coordination of universities and their leaders at the turn of the century but also in the development of the university as a national institution dedicated to the promotion of America's democratic community, industrial competitiveness, and an intellectual vanguard. Expertise and specialized knowledge were essential to the university's service. This service was enabled and enhanced by its unique structural and societal position.