

4 Beyond the Morrill Act

Developing Partnerships in the “Loosely Coupled” Era

As the first major policy initiative to define relations between the developing American state and institutions of higher education, the Morrill Act offered a broad opportunity for universities and the institutional entrepreneurs who directed them. The act initiated fundamental changes in universities' notion of public service. Through universities' selection of leadership, implementation of the act, and related academic initiatives, a loosely coupled but relatively intimate group of academic leaders came to define universities' public service.

Supported by coordination between peer institutions, universities and the national state undertook reciprocal service in a variety of areas, ranging from public administration to military training. As the number of government agencies grew, so did the opportunities for institutional entrepreneurs to demonstrate their schools' societal contribution and utility. Not every effort at forging partnerships could be counted as a success. Nonetheless, they could be seen as evolving from an effort to develop and apply knowledge, skill, and expertise to the problems faced by the American state.

Early Partnerships: Individuals and Institutions in an Era of Transition

Keeping with the fragmentation inherent in America's developing national state, partnerships between universities and the national state were not driven by a systematic federal program as much as they evolved from the initiative of individual entrepreneurs bringing specialized knowledge to bear on problems of public concern. Neither Congress nor federal agencies had formulated anything resembling a

formal research agenda. Instead, academic leaders applied themselves and their institutions to problems of public concern in an almost haphazard fashion, often based on their personal interest and institutional necessity.

These early years of expertise-based service and partnership saw individual ambition and occasional coordination laying the groundwork for the more systematic and far-reaching efforts that were to follow. Though offering an alternative method of governance, university-based expertise did not overnight or completely replace the influence of cronyism and personal connections. In fact, while seeking to promote their cause, proponents of expertise and efficiency sometimes resorted to similar tactics. This does not discredit their promotion of specialized knowledge as much as it highlights the difficulties they faced when attempting to institute reforms and the inherent overlap they encountered in seeking to spur a transition from a patronage model of governance to an expertise model.

Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Personal Influence

Perhaps nothing better reflects the complications involved in such a transition than the early career ambitions of Woodrow Wilson. Having just been awarded his PhD at Johns Hopkins University and begun teaching at Bryn Mawr College, Wilson sought an appointment as assistant secretary of state. Pursuing appointment under Secretary Thomas Bayard, Wilson wrote to James Burrill Angell at the University of Michigan in November 1887. Wilson indicated he had heard from a “dear friend” that Bayard was having trouble filling the position. Wilson also noted that he understood “Mr. Bayard likes scholarly men rather than politicians as assistants.” Wilson’s friend had urged him to seek the position, suggesting that the young professor was “more favorably known—in Washington than anywhere else outside of university circles.” Though helpful, Wilson’s anonymous friend was not influential; thus, Wilson requested Angell’s assistance. Wilson apologized for appearing forward, but he stressed: “there are men as young as I in high places in the Depts., and, if there really is any ‘fighting’ chance even for me, I am very loath indeed to miss it. And my reasons are such as I am sure you will think proper and honorable.” He simply hoped Angell’s “indulgent temper towards the ambitions of young men” would allow Angell to accept this inquiry.¹

Among Wilson’s reasons for seeking a position away from Bryn Mawr was his distaste for instructing women.

My teaching here this year lies altogether in the field of political economy, and in my own special field of public law: and I already feel that teaching such topics to women threatens to relax not a little my mental muscle—to exalt the function of commonplace rudiments in my treatment. Before I teach elsewhere I should like to mix with the rough practical things in which I was formerly at home—to recover the proper atmosphere of my studies.²

Though shocking to modern ears, Wilson's comments were unfortunately not uncommon sentiments for the time. Higher education for women had already taken hold at a number of coeducational institutions, such as the Universities of Michigan and California and Cornell University, as well as at a developing series of women's colleges committed to serious liberal arts education, including Bryn Mawr. However, while many approved of educating women, none of the leading academics advocated introducing them to systematic and scientific methods of inquiry or training them to be actively involved in the development of the new American state.

However, Wilson's interest in leaving Bryn Mawr was motivated by a great deal more than his dislike for teaching women. It was motivated by a desire to apply his academic expertise to actual action. Wilson recognized that there were other opportunities for a young man wishing to "mix with the rough practical things" of government and policy—notably, the developing civil service. He admitted to Angell:

I have sometimes thought of entering the Civil Service Examination for some govt. clerkship in order to see, if only in that way, the inside of the mechanism I am engaged in studying. I have been restrained, not only by the fact that a clerk's salary would not suffice for the support of my little family, but also by the consideration that such a view of the actual operations of the daily conduct of federal administration as I could obtain from a clerk's desk in one of the departments would be too imperfect to be of any real service to my thought.³

Aside from demonstrating an almost quaint concern for his domestic situation, Wilson articulated a very real concern for the particulars of practical experience.

Basic government experience would not help Wilson develop intellectually or, we can certainly imply, professionally. Wilson believed his knowledge would not be expanded or properly employed as a lowly civil servant. He desired a position of real authority and significance.

But I do want—and need—particularly, as it seems to me, at this juncture in my studies, a seat on the inside of government—a seat high enough to command views of the system. I acknowledge I dread becoming doctrinaire: I

dread writing what will be of no practical usefulness—a mere elevated student's view of affairs. I want to handle the practical things of my subject for a time, with an official's diligence, and that is the reason I am tempted by the suggestion of my friend,—absurd as my candidacy may at first sight appear.⁴

Clearly, as Wilson himself admitted, personal and careerist concerns were partially motivating factors in his seeking an assistant secretaryship. From a broader perspective, his concern was the relation of knowledge to practice.

Wilson articulated a basic difficulty for a generation of scholars trained in the newly developing social sciences. Their expert knowledge was grounded in detached observation of and scientific training in politics and policy. New institutions of higher learning supported the development of such expertise. However, such expertise could not be self-sustaining or self-contained. Its validity needed to be tested, and its importance needed to be demonstrated. Wilson might have been trained in the most advanced theories of political economy and administrative law, but he was not familiar with the antiquated customs of the diplomatic service. With this and Wilson's young age in mind, Angell politely suggested that Wilson consider other options for government service.

Chastened, Wilson wrote back acknowledging the wisdom of Angell's rather stern advice.

I of course thought that the duties of the Asst. Secretaryship were such as one with a pretty thorough outside acquaintance with the public business might, with diligence, master; for I can of course pretend to no personal experience in affairs, much less to any acquaintance with the formal etiquette of the diplomatic service. I have already confessed that I wanted the office in order to learn, my only readiness being a trained understanding relative to such matters. Certainly, under the circumstances, the place ought to be filled from within the Department, by somebody drilled in its service. I must thank you very heartily for setting me right.

Perhaps out of contrition or perhaps out of a simple desire to explain himself further, Wilson expanded on his desire to link his expertise with application. For Wilson, application was essential for the development of his scholarship. Theories of administration needed to be tested in the laboratory of government. Studious detachment undermined not only the quality of expertise but its legitimacy as well.

Experience in affairs, I feel, is what I most imperatively need to vivify my chosen studies. A constructive imagination will but reach a little way; even a sympathetic instinct to know cannot complete instruction in practical

affairs; and if I have heretofor [*sic*] studied Washington from a distance, it has been simply because I had no choice in the matter. It was a limitation to my work which I felt, but which I had no way of removing. The consciousness of it has, moreover, made me particularly impatient of studious isolation; leading me, perhaps, to magnify its present disadvantages. I love the stir of the world; that stir is what I chiefly desire to study and explain; and I know I cannot scarcely explain it from Teufelsdröcker's tower.⁵

These letters from Wilson to Angell demonstrate that to scholars of the historical and political sciences, the consequences of practical application were an integral aspect of their studies. As an extension of this interest, partnerships between universities and the expanding national state became almost inevitable. Government service was an inherent part of scholarship. Obviously, the idea of educated men working in positions of authority was not new. However, unlike previous conceptions of service that were based on *noblese oblige* or patriotism, the service Wilson desired was based on a particular body of expert knowledge, and he wished to apply, test, and expand that knowledge. Despite this wish, Wilson remained in academia, securing a position at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1888. Two years later, he began his career as professor of jurisprudence and political economics at Princeton, where he became president in 1902. He would eventually have significant opportunities to apply his ideas to government, beginning with his election as governor of New Jersey in 1910.

Wilson's request of Angell reflected the difficulties in transitioning from a patronage- and connection-based conception of administrative appointment to a knowledge- and expertise-based conception. Wilson pursued a position in the State Department out of a desire to both expand and apply his knowledge. However, his appeal for a position was grounded in patronage and favoritism. Notable for its audacity as well its retrospective irony (a future president practically groveling for a midlevel bureaucratic appointment), Wilson's letter also represents a common tension in the pursuit of expertise. Educated individuals would often use personal connections or political favors to obtain positions or pursue partnerships in which they might apply their expertise.

Remarkable as these letters from Wilson to Angell are, it is all the more interesting when we note that they were written in the same year in which his groundbreaking article "The Study of Administration" was published in *Political Science Quarterly*. Well received and widely read among scholars, Wilson's piece gained additional attention when his graduate school mentor Henry Baxter Adams invited him to return to Johns Hopkins University to deliver a regular series of lectures on the

topic. The essay expanded on many of the sentiments expressed in his personal discussion with Angell. Wilson stressed the importance not only of educating the citizenry as to the advantages of expertise but also of having trained men ready to apply such expertise: "but is the whole duty of administrative study done when it has taught the people what sort of administration to desire and demand, and how to get what they demand? Ought it not go on to drill candidates for the public service?"⁶

Similar to his colleagues at leading universities throughout the country, Wilson did not look to the government for such training. Instead, he welcomed and championed the move to develop academic programs that would form the basis of such service: "there is an admirable movement towards universal political education now afoot in this country. The time will soon come when no college of respectability can afford to do without a well-filled chair of political science." However, as he had noted in his letter to Angell, Wilson again suggested that there were limits to what education alone could do.

... the education thus imparted will go but a certain length. It will multiply the number of intelligent critics of government, but it will create no competent body of administrators. It will prepare the way for the development of a sure-footed understanding of the general principles of government, but it will not necessarily foster skill in conducting government.

For Wilson, the key to developing such a "competent body" was a partnership whereby officials would be better prepared to be the "apparatus of government." A thorough political education was the first step in such preparation. Second, administrators would need to be screened through an extensive process of examination and melded through practical experience into a "distinct, semi-corporate" organization.⁷

Wilson recognized that such a body of administrators might be derided as undemocratic, since it would be staffed by individuals trained at universities that were only vaguely responsible to the populous and that were organized beyond the boundaries of electoral concerns. In response to such critiques, he argued that administrative training in the United States needed to be uniquely attuned to public opinion; taking European models of efficiency and adopting them to American demands of participation. Wilson concluded his argument by stressing: "the principles on which to base a science of Administration of America must be principles which have the democratic policy very much at heart. The Cosmopolitan what-to-do, must always be commanded by the American how-to-do-it."⁸

As numerous critics have noted, Wilson's "The Study of Administration" does not necessarily detail how such sensitivity to public senti-

ment can be guaranteed, let alone developed. However, for Wilson and his contemporaries, advanced study was seen as much more open and democratic. In this spirit, new programs were introduced, such as Johns Hopkins's system of academic fellowships. As I will detail later in this chapter, these were among the first efforts to reward and encourage what was defined as merit. Wilson, for example, did not consider himself to be from a privileged background. Similar to the process of choosing university leaders, the study of administration was grounded in a fundamental belief that by picking the best men to apply expertise, the needs of all men would be met.

Expertise or Influence?

It might seem a bit churlish to criticize Wilson for not upholding his public pronouncements in private correspondence, but I would be negligent if I did not mention that in seeking the assistant secretaryship, he seemingly contradicts his own recommendations advocated in "The Study of Administration." In his letters to Angell, Wilson recognizes that he is not necessarily qualified or trained for the post, but he hopes to use it for his own "education." He does not wish to compete for a position in the civil service and instead asks Angell to secure him a position through influence. One might attribute Wilson's slight hypocrisy to pressures associated with the demands of domestic life and the unhappiness of his situation at Bryn Mawr.

However, the disjunction between Wilson's theorizing and his personal efforts reflect a paradoxical and difficult reality for advocates of the new American state. While advocating reforms of government and promoting expertise, these advocates often made inroads and secured positions through the very system of patronage and favoritism that they sought to replace. Wilson would eventually demonstrate ability and gain experience in the practical world of politics (though historians still debate whether he ever acquired diplomatic skills). Other Johns Hopkins fellowship recipients, such as Thomas Cooley and Henry Carter Adams (whom I will touch on more later), certainly were well qualified to serve the Interstate Commerce Commission. Yet their candidacies also were assisted by the fact that active University of Michigan alumnus and eventual Democratic Party chairman Don Dickinson was among those who recommended them to President Grover Cleveland.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that such actions simply reflected the extension of patronage. A new approach to training and a new definition of service emerged, and while it may not have been any

more open and democratic in terms of access, a loosely coupled confederation of universities—mostly autonomous, with tight control of their own governance—began to redefine the American state. Beginning with the radical implementation of a federal initiative for practical education and continuing with efforts to develop scientific political training, university leaders started to develop partnerships that would not only alter their institution's public role but redefine the public sphere itself.

The Pursuit of Scientific Political Training

Among the most significant university initiatives dedicated to redefining higher education's public role was the push to develop programs and schools in political science. The systematic study of politics and administration had first been institutionalized in the United States with Columbia's appointment of Frances Leiber as chair of History and Political Science in 1858. Upon assuming the chair, Leiber outlined his plans for the professorship. Among his primary goals was to expand understanding of "the ends and reasons of political societies, the discussion of the means by which man endeavors to obtain the end or ought to obtain it; in one word, to the science of government, and a knowledge of governments which exist and have existed."⁹

Leiber's efforts laid the foundation for the development of American political science. However, during his tenure, Columbia would never offer more than a few courses on the subject. Attempts to establish a full curriculum dedicated to scientific political training would still be a few years in coming. Initiated by institutional entrepreneurs seeking to establish societal relevance for their schools, these efforts stemmed from a desire to apply specialized knowledge to issues of public concern and from a belief in the ability of universities to develop and disseminate this expertise. While not universally successful, these efforts helped create structures and programs—such as advanced degrees and fellowships—that would support the pursuit of advanced knowledge across a variety of fields and domains.

White's Call, Gilman's Response

An expansive vision of the university pursuing particularized service to the public emerged from a variety of sources and in a multitude of forms. Among these, the platform provided by Johns Hopkins University's Commemoration Day celebration was unique in its influence. Providing a national forum and publishing their remarks, Johns Hop-

kins's president Daniel Coit Gilman annually invited university leaders, such as Harvard's Charles Eliot and Cornell's Andrew Dickson White, to address the place of higher education in a rapidly changing society. Though their talks did not represent a formally coordinated vision, they were among the first efforts by university leaders to jointly address the university's response to an increasingly complex society.

For Andrew Dickson White, the challenge was to pursue knowledge for the sake of training men who could apply this knowledge to all questions and problems government faced. At Johns Hopkins' Commemoration Day in early 1879, White, speaking on "rearing a race of statesmen," addressed the proper provision for higher instruction. White's notion of statesmen and their education focused almost exclusively on expertise. He essentially ignored earlier conceptions of statesmanship and authority built on patrimonial inheritance or charismatic leadership.

According to White, statesmen did not simply come from great families or emerge as great men, they were educated to be great, by universities that pursued and disseminated expert knowledge of public affairs. During his speech at Johns Hopkins (an address also given to the Union League Club of New York in March of that year), White emphasized the need for universities as well as society to pursue expert approaches in all fields in which government endeavored to act.

In a Republic like ours, the people are called on at the last to decide upon all fundamental questions, and to their proper discussion there must be two conditions—first, the education of the mass of citizens, and second, suitable instruction for the natural leaders rising from the masses. For their development there is at present in our higher education no adequate provision. With some training for better discussion of the political and social questions in the world, in the future we may begin to advance without paying the appalling cost of progress she has paid and is paying.

Much has been said of our educated men keeping aloof from politics, but if scholarly young men are trained steadily in political questions from the outset, they will enter public life at such an advantage that this change will be brought to naught. American education is a case for exercise of American munificence.¹⁰

Notably, under White's leadership, Cornell University did not exercise such extensive munificence. Constraints on resources meant that Cornell did not found such a program until after White had left office.

White did not succeed in establishing the far-reaching school of public affairs he desired, but he did establish courses that focused on political economy, social science, the conditions of the poor, and the like. Addressing social problems rather than agricultural or mechanical

ones, these courses grew from the Morrill Act's spirit of training students in how to apply expert knowledge in newly developing fields of study. These courses were justified not only on the basis of student interest but also, more important, on the basis of public service and the promotion of expertise. The university was bringing expertise to bear on an increasing variety of subjects. Such expertise was most valuable in its application. So if the university were to study political and social questions, it would also act as an active partner and directly train men for service in government.

Cornell was not the only university that sought to address problems of politics and governance by "rearing statesmen" through academic training. At Johns Hopkins, Daniel Coit Gilman actively pursued a prominent alumnus, University of Michigan legal and social scholar Thomas Cooley, in an effort to develop a program in public affairs.

Writing to offer a professorship of jurisprudence to Cooley in 1880, Gilman displayed his enthusiasm for a program dedicated to training men for service in politics and public life as well as for the legal profession. Gilman hoped that Cooley's lectures, coupled with courses in history and political science, would develop "so that the Johns Hopkins University may become a place of great usefulness in promoting among educated young men sound ideas of good government."¹¹ Gilman did not necessarily envision a whole particularized school of political science. He was, however, eager to expand the existing courses in the area. He stressed to Cooley that he would not be simply offering instruction to aspiring members of the bar. Johns Hopkins did not (and still does not) have a law school. Instead, Cooley would be helping provide expertise and train young men in the law while directing their focus to its broader social and political implications.

You will perceive that we have in contemplation a scheme which differs both from the ordinary collegiate work, and from the technical training of an advocate; that we look to the liberal education of young men in subjects which will fit them to bear an honorable part in the discussion of public affairs whether or not they make Law their profession.¹²

In attempting to meet White's call for "American munificence," Gilman's plan continued the emerging approach of merging general instruction for all interested in a particular field with detailed study for specialists. Johns Hopkins's course in jurisprudence combined efforts to produce good citizens with efforts to develop experts who could solve the political and social problems that troubled these citizens.

Contemplating Gilman's offer, Cooley heard from Johns Hopkins

trustee George Brown, who asked him to visit. In his invitation, Brown stressed the university's dedication to the program as well as to graduate work and research: "The growth of the university has not been rapid, but it has been healthful and vigorous. One half of the students are post-graduates. . . . No where in the country is so much original work done."¹³ Brown acknowledged the infant nature of Johns Hopkins's programs but suggested that this would allow for freedom of approach and method. He emphasized to Cooley that the whole of the institution was committed to pursuing new and detailed knowledge in a variety of areas. He suggested that Cooley's career and reputation would benefit from strides made at this new institution.¹⁴ Despite expressing a genuine interest in the post, Cooley would eventually decline the Johns Hopkins offer. Unable to find a suitable replacement for his position in Ann Arbor, he wrote Gilman saying that to accept would be to "do the University [of Michigan] a wrong."¹⁵

Initially remaining at Michigan, Cooley would not receive the Supreme Court nomination that Brown and many others expected and desired for him. He was, however, appointed as the first chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, in 1887. Though not achieving his ultimate ambition, Cooley embodied the fledgling partnerships between government agencies and university expertise. By attempting to recruit Cooley, the nation's first institution dedicated to graduate education sought a scholar who would oversee the federal government's first major attempt to exercise national regulatory power, an effort underscoring the embryonic partnership between developing universities and the evolving American state.

Even without Cooley, Johns Hopkins's program of advanced study in politics, history, and the law gradually developed. In addition to communicating with Gilman and his trustees, Cooley communicated with former colleagues on the Hopkins faculty, such as Herbert Baxter Adams, professor of historical and political science. Undertaking a more subtle recruiting effort, Adams wrote to Cooley that Johns Hopkins had "begun its fifth year very prosperously" and that the program in the history of local governments had fifteen graduate students and over twenty undergraduates.¹⁶

Adams's excitement was not limitless. By 1885, he was frustrated with his support from the institution and politely toying with the possibility of taking a position at the University of Michigan—to replace Charles Kendall Adams, who was leaving to succeed Andrew Dickson White as president of Cornell. Eventually, Herbert Baxter Adams

would decline Michigan's offer. His explanation offers insight into his slight discontent with Johns Hopkins as well as his commitment to make a place for his scholarship there.

[When offered the position] some weeks ago I was in a somewhat discontented state of mind, owing to the difficulties and obstructions encountered by my department. I felt a strong inclination to seek greater freedom in a broader field, where History and Political Science had already won their place. But today, amid the tranquil life of a New England town and surrounded by the steadfast hills, I am encouraged to stand by the work I have already begun in Baltimore. I am persuaded that it is better to clear my own field as did my own fathers before me.

Professor C. K. Adams has opened a wide territory in the Northwest, but I am afraid that no other Adams could hold it with equal grip. He is so identified with the Michigan School of Political Science that, without him, the school cannot remain the same. On the other hand, my Baltimore work, circumscribed as it is, has a growth, a character, and surroundings all its own; it could not be successfully transplanted even to richer soil and made to fill an entirely different place.¹⁷

For Herbert Baxter Adams, the limits he felt at Johns Hopkins were less burdensome than the expectations he feared would come from being at Michigan. Despite his early concerns about the place of history and political science at Johns Hopkins, he would remain there until his death in 1901. First during his fellowship and later during his professorship, significant advanced work was undertaken and progressive training was done. This work and training was based in systematic class work and original investigations, approaches that are second nature today but were among the first of their kind at the time.

The success of these approaches that originated at Johns Hopkins can be seen in the fact that in the first years of the program (1877–91), the university granted twenty-five PhD's in historical and political science.¹⁸ Among those who received training at Johns Hopkins were Herbert Baxter Adams himself; the university's first PhD recipient, economist Henry Carter Adams; sociologist Frederick Jackson Turner; and a South Carolina minister's son who had attended Davidson College before graduating from Princeton, Woodrow Wilson.

Michigan's School of Political Science: A Limited Partner

Thomas Cooley's decision to stay in Ann Arbor was not a slight of Johns Hopkins or of Gilman's proposed program as much as it was a reflection of Cooley's loyalty to the University of Michigan and its then president, James Burrill Angell. Additionally, Michigan was developing its own program in political science and public affairs to make use

of Cooley's talents. In the summer of 1881, the University of Michigan announced plans to develop one of America's first schools of political science.¹⁹ The school's first dean was Charles Kendall Adams, a protégé of Andrew Dickson White. Though formally on the law school faculty, Cooley also was among the new school's instructors.

In response to the founding of Michigan's School of Political Science and a proposed, similar, but less ambitious, program at Columbia, the *New York Times* detailed the prospects for scientific political training in a July 1881 editorial. The *Times* remarked that if "intelligently taught and faithfully studied," the program would produce "very accomplished scientific political thinkers." However, it also raised a skeptical objection to the application of such training. Noting that the school offered no course on how to run a caucus or how to be a party "boss," the *Times* worried whether graduates of the program would "know much about the history and theory of politics, and next to nothing about men."²⁰ The *Times* did not argue that such courses and schools were pointless. Rather, it simply articulated potential obstacles of applying the knowledge and principles developed in such courses and schools to the practical world of electoral politics.

The *Times* emphasized that its commentary should be taken not as criticism but as a realistic assessment of contemporary politics: "The existence of this untoward state of things, however, is no reason for decrying schools of political science. There is need enough of political education. Anybody can see that." However, while the *Times* expressed a positive interest in the prospects for such schools, it continued to be restrained from any heightened enthusiasm.

It may be called an encouraging sign, therefore, that schools of political science are springing up at Ann Arbor, at Columbia College, and in other parts of the country. But these schools will not correct or remove the evils of our political system. . . . To cure these evils and make room for honest and competent men in political life we must destroy the spoils system. So long as bosses have the power to control the politics of a State by patronage they will take good care that no Doctors of Philosophy, political or otherwise, get into important office.

The *Times* did not devalue the prospective work being done at these schools. It did, however, express severe doubts about the number of political scientists who would be trained and about the impact they would have.

Even under the most favorable conditions and with a reformed civil service, schools of political science would have no great influence in elevating and purifying our politics. It is possible they would be very slimly attended. The

American people are not in the habit of looking upon politics as a profession to be prepared for by special study.

With this in mind, the *Times* instead stressed the need for efforts to reach out to the voting public: "it is not by special departments of political science, but by giving the greatest possible amount of instruction of that kind in their ordinary colleges of study, that the colleges can make their influence most felt in our public life."²¹

Simple applications of expertise and partnerships with government were not enough to overcome the evils of patronage. For the *Times*, if these new schools were to make any substantial impact, they would need to foster a fundamental change in how citizens viewed politics and in what they demanded of their leaders. The *Times* did not dismiss the efforts of the institutional entrepreneurs who founded schools dedicated to scientific political training. Rather, it cautioned that the problems of late nineteenth-century politics were immediately greater than any solution offered by academic training. University-developed approaches to political and social problems were like university-developed approaches to agriculture or the mechanic arts; their value would be largely determined in the field—beyond the walls of academia and through efforts to work with government.

Michigan's new program in scientific political training faced an array of challenges beyond skepticism as to its utility. Similar to most fledgling academic programs, Michigan's ambitious program was dogged by questions regarding resources, staffing, and institutional commitment. At the same time the University of Michigan was seeking to lure Herbert Baxter Adams to its school of political science, Henry Carter Adams,²² a former student and colleague of Henry Baxter Adams at Johns Hopkins, expressed to President Angell frustration with "the inadequacy of the present arrangement for the study of Political Economy in the University of Michigan."²³ From 1880 to 1887, Henry Carter Adams was splitting his time between the University of Michigan and Cornell. It was not, as the *Times* had predicted, a lack of student interest that frustrated him; rather, it was the lack of adequate faculty to handle all the students interested in political economy. Writing Angell, he raised his concerns:

under the present organization of the department, not more than 40% of those who begin the work carry it far enough to apply the principles which they learn to problems of practical interest. 80 students take the "elementary" course in Fall, the following Fall the number who continue drops to 20–40.²⁴

To Adams, the lag meant that students wandered elsewhere in their studies and failed to receive adequate training to place their “elementary” knowledge into practice, making the course of little value. Adams felt overburdened and believed that all of his students, but especially those interested in “advanced work,” suffered because of this.²⁵ After controversy at Cornell that I will discuss in more detail later, Adams ended his joint appointment and joined the Michigan faculty full-time as a professor in 1887. He was soon joined by F. A. Hicks as an assistant professor in 1888.²⁶

The department of political economy would survive. Michigan’s initial attempt to develop a full school of political science would not. Henry Carter Adams’s assessment proved prescient. Once Charles Kendall Adams left for Cornell in 1885, the school suffered. Thomas Cooley was a more than able replacement intellectually but did not have the entrepreneurial skills necessary to grow the program. Therefore, when he left to become inaugural chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, the school formally ceased to offer its program, though courses in all the relevant subfields continued to be taught.²⁷

The failure of Michigan’s initial attempt to develop a school of political science should not be seen as demonstrating ambivalence or hostility toward university efforts to establish partnerships and share expertise. Even without an institutionalized school of political science, Michigan still offered instruction and graduate degrees in the relevant subfields that had comprised the school.²⁸ Rather, such failure simply underscores the fledgling nature of those efforts and their reliance on the entrepreneurial savvy of various leading academics. In these early years of the new American state, governmental need for specialized knowledge and expertise was not necessarily enough to sustain the more formalized programs that would provide it. As the idea of applying specialized knowledge to public problems was only beginning to take hold, the success of partnerships, both large and small, often depended on the actions and availability of a few individuals. Such relative scarcity of personnel would frequently drive development for such new programs but would also sometimes undermine their sustenance.

Scholars and Partnerships: Offering Early Expertise

The story of political science’s early development is not just about efforts to institutionalize scientific political training in formal programs and schools. An emerging network of scholars would take leadership

in developing the discipline, the university, and the national state. This leadership stemmed from a unique coordination based on extensive, lifelong correspondence and an entrepreneurial ability to maximize resources.

Andrew Dickson White and Daniel Coit Gilman were not political scientists themselves. Nonetheless, these two Yale classmates, who shared a passion for education, a commitment to the university ideal, and a desire to serve their country, developed institutions that would greatly influence the development of scientific political training, the university, and the national state. They also mentored scholars who would perpetuate their efforts in both academia and public affairs.

Among the most significant innovations implemented by Gilman at Johns Hopkins was a system of graduate fellowships modeled on those at the German universities. Gilman was not necessarily the first to consider such a scheme in the United States, but Johns Hopkins was the first to attempt it, in 1876. Typical of the loosely coupled coordination of this era, Johns Hopkins's fellowship program was highly dependent on its fellow elite universities. Gilman announced the program through a widely distributed circular and personally wrote to colleagues at Cornell, Yale, Princeton, Michigan, Harvard, Columbia, and Pennsylvania. Most of the fellows were nominated by the presidents of their undergraduate institutions. At this time, there were no formal disciplinary associations to oversee selection or standards within fields of study.²⁹ Instead, fellows were nominated regardless of field.

The opportunity to promote advanced study greatly excited Gilman's friend White. Writing to nominate two students of his for consideration, including one in political science, White concluded:

These applications have set me at thinking more and more deeply than ever before regarding your system of Post-graduate courses and fellowships. If I see anything I see clearly that that is *the* thing in your organization [emphasis White's]. In that lies your greatest chance to do a great thing for this country. There are over three hundred institutions as you know ready to do the preparatory work; but this advanced work few are able to do at all and none to do it as it should be done. Were I in your place I would prize more deeply fifty advanced students than 500 undergraduates.³⁰

With such sentiments, the efforts to build the modern research university began in earnest.

To perpetuate these efforts, White eagerly offered advice as to how Gilman should develop the program and strongly suggested that Johns Hopkins expand it.

I feel sure that you could not do a better thing than immediately to double the number of these fellowships. The great thing is to start with *a good nucleus of the best men from the various colleges* [emphasis White's]; and in this way you can be sure to get such a nucleus. Ten fellowships would much more than double the efficiency of the system. Twenty is, in this matter, considerably more than twice ten.

If your applications warrant the statement, and I have no doubt they do, why not at once issue another circular stating that this number of applications for fellowships leads the trustees to double the number and that up to the first of July you will receive the names of candidates for ten additional fellowships. Depend upon it a better use of five thousand dollars can not be made.

Of course, White was not the one who needed to raise the funds or issue the additional circular; but he was convinced that there would be more than enough prospective students to make such an effort worthwhile.

As I see these most thoughtful young men willing to give up larger pecuniary prospects for the place you offer securing them a bare support, but enabling them to push their studies, I see that, much as I hoped from the system of fellowships, I did not realize the force with which it appeals to the best young men. There are others here who would doubtless apply but that they suppose that with so few fellowships and two of our resident graduates in the field they would stand no chance.³¹

Encouraged by his friend, Gilman requested that the Johns Hopkins trustees expand the program to twenty fellowships, which they did. As mentioned earlier, this system of graduate fellowships and the reputation of Johns Hopkins's burgeoning program in historical and political science attracted many men who would greatly influence the development of the national state.

Forging Partnerships: Cooley, Adams, and the ICC

Among Johns Hopkins's initial graduate fellows were Henry Carter Adams, who, in 1878, received the first PhD ever granted by the institution, and Thomas McIntyre Cooley, who served as a teaching fellow, giving twenty lectures a year. The two would eventually reunite on the faculty of the University of Michigan. Soon after, in one of the earliest examples of direct partnership between the emerging university and the new American state, Adams and Cooley would help launch the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), in 1887. Cooley served as the ICC's chairman, and Adams served as its chief economist.

Before he was appointed to the professorate at Michigan and made

chief economist for the ICC, Henry Carter Adams had served as president of the newly founded American Economic Association. In 1886, while on the faculty at Cornell, Adams encountered controversy. He had given a series of speeches that would evolve into his essay "The Relation of the State to Industrial Action." Focusing his attention on railroads, the largest industry of the day, Adams essentially argued against the simple application of *laissez-faire* and expressed concern about the industry's administration, especially in regards to capital and labor. For Adams, the solution lay in the application of expertise—in the form of guiding principles—to the economic challenges of the era.

The collapse of faith in the sufficiency of the philosophy of *laissez faire*, has left the present generation without principles adequate for the guidance of public affairs. We are now passing through a period of interregnum in the authoritative control of economic and governmental principles. This is indeed cause for grave solicitude, for never were there more difficult problems demanding solution than at the present time, and never were men so poorly equipped for the accomplishment of such a task as are those upon whom these questions are being forced.³²

Today, Adams's argument might seem a very reasonable call for limited regulation, and within a generation of his making the call, it became the operating assumption of the American state. Initially, however, his lectures and addresses, along with the expansion of his thoughts in published form, caused an uproar on the Cornell campus. He was branded a radical by the local press, and two prominent Cornell benefactors, Henry Sage and William Lago, advocated his removal. Adams vigorously defended himself against the charges but also recognized that he might do well to seek employment elsewhere.

Writing to James Burrill Angell at Michigan, he expressed doubts regarding the wisdom of staying at Cornell, since President Charles Kendall Adams "wanted to propose what would practically amount to an extension of my apprenticeship; because he feared friction, if he advocated anything else, on account of the misunderstandings of last year."³³ Henry Carter Adams boldly inquired if he might not be appointed to the Michigan faculty full time.

Angell was well aware of the controversy, as he corresponded regularly with both Henry Carter Adams and Cornell's president Charles Kendall Adams. In fact, a year earlier, when the controversy first erupted, Angell had expressed to Henry Carter Adams his concern that Adams supported a socialist agenda, and Angell had asked for a clarification of Adams's views. Agitated but feeling that his mentor and future employer deserved an explanation, Adams replied at length. In

a frustrated tone, he explicitly spelled out his economic and social philosophy in a passage almost more detailed in its practical applications than his monograph.

You ask to what extent I would advocate state socialism?

I would maintain the post office under the control of the federal government and establish in connection with it a public telegraph and parcel post. I would maintain public education even to the University, under the control of the States and establish State forestry and State ownership of mines.

I would extend largely the duties of cities, so as to give them control over gas works, water works, and street railways. They should also make the amusements and education of the citizens their care. I trust, on the basis of the above statement that I shall not be thought ignorant of the inefficiency of local governments *at the present time* [italics indicate words Adams added by hand].

On the other hand, I would oppose anything like paternal government. Tenement houses at public expense, government insurance for working men, public eating houses and such proposals of mistaken charity, would be injurious to the class whom it was desired to assist for they would work like the old English poor law.³⁴

It might seem remarkable that Adams, soon to be the economist of the first federal regulatory initiative of the new American state, would advocate for local control of various governmental activities. However, like his colleague Cooley, Adams recognized the constraints federalism would place on any efforts for reform. Most important, no matter what level of implementation reform efforts might reach, Adams's major concern was the application of knowledge and expertise. In fact, Adams believed that expertise provided a bulwark against socialism.

Adams concluded his articulation of beliefs by stressing, "it is my wish that our civilization may be saved from the sterility of what is commonly called socialism, and to that end I advocate a further development of proprietary rights and the science of government."³⁵ Adams ended the letter by expressing surprise at Angell's questions and by admitting his fear of being dropped from his position of teaching at Michigan one semester a year. He stated his hope that Angell recognized such action as unfair.

A year later, when Adams asked if he might join the Michigan faculty on a full-time basis, Angell again expressed concern about the economist's perceived socialism and the impact it would have on Angell's ability to make his appointment and on the regents' desire to approve it. Reflecting the intimacy of relationships between faculty and university presidents, Adams responded with a very direct challenge to Angell's inquiries: "you ask if I can help you see your way clear to

my nomination. I don't see as I can except it to be to suggest that, in my opinion, your point of view in this matter is not the right one."³⁶

Adams then proceeded with a rousing and spirited defense of the general principles of academic freedom.

If you make a man's opinions the basis of his election to a professorship, you do, whether you intend it or not, place bonds upon the free movement of his intellect. It seems to me that a Board has two things to hold in view. First, is a man a scholar? Can he teach in a scholarly manner? Is he fair to all parties in the controversial questions which come before him? Second, is he intellectually honest? If these questions are answered in the affirmative his influence upon young men cannot be detrimental.³⁷

Of course, Adams was not simply making his arguments in the abstract. He was fighting to retain his status in the academic community. Adams defended his own abilities and impartiality at length and concluded by summarizing both his teaching and personal philosophy: "my conscious teaching is two-fold. To portray social problems to men as they will find them to be when they leave the University." To Adams, the fundamental concern in all problems, social and economic, was "personal responsibility in the administration of all social power, no matter what shape that power may exist."³⁸ Articulating his teaching philosophy, Adams emphasized practicality and a desire to produce students who would see matters as they really are and recognize their own "personal responsibility."

Concerns about practicality and responsibility were common to Adams and others. Adams sought to bring newly developing knowledge and approaches to bear on problems of the day. Angell's concern did not lie in Adams's approach; Angell fully approved of efforts to tackle the social problems of the day. Angell's concern lie in his fear that Adams's approach was without a moral basis, as Adams's monograph largely disregarded the issue of morality. Eventually accepting Adams's defense and always recognizing Adams's talent, Angell proposed and Michigan's regents approved Adams's appointment as professor of political economy and finance in June 1887. Adams was relieved and, despite their earlier contentious exchanges, eager to join Angell's university full-time. In fact, during that summer, he expressed concern over rumors that Angell would be leaving Michigan, rumors Adams had heard at the American Economic Association meetings in Providence.³⁹

These rumors proved unfounded, and Adams joined the faculty full-time in the fall. He also recognized that his trouble lie not with the university presidents as much as with their boards of trustees. Informing

Angell of intelligence from Cornell's Charles Kendall Adams that the main obstacle to Henry's promotion was a trustee who was expected to bequeath over one million dollars upon his death, Henry wrote that he believed he could win his place at Cornell if he fought but that he declined to fight because he did "not wish to place any obstacle to the prosperity of this institution merely to gratify my pride."⁴⁰ At both Michigan and Cornell, the battle over Henry Carter Adams's alleged radicalism was soon forgotten. He would serve a distinguished career as a member of the Michigan faculty, be welcomed at Cornell as a guest lecturer, and achieve renown for his work in developing the American Economic Association, which he had cofounded in 1885.

Adams's Michigan colleague Thomas Cooley had encountered a similar professional challenge in 1884. When aligning with the mugwump Republican movement, he lost his bid for reelection to a seat on the Michigan Supreme Court. Cooley remained on the University of Michigan's law faculty and would eventually serve a brief, if unremarkable, tenure as dean of the School of Political Science. Cooley's career took a dramatic turn when President Grover Cleveland appointed him as the first chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1888. Adams soon joined him as chief economist and statistician. Two men who only a few years before had found themselves at great odds with public sentiment were now defining the nation's regulatory policy. Adams would serve as the leading light of the commission in the 1890s, and Cooley would articulate the tenets of a new theory of law to fit an alternative mode of regulation for the new American state.⁴¹

The contributions of these two men would not have been possible if not for the support of universities. Adams and Cooley were among the first generation of scholars who would use their positions to examine social problems from a scientific and analytical perspective. For earlier scholars and institutional entrepreneurs, higher education institutions served the public through the production of moral, virtuous, and patriotic men. Such concerns were still of significance to developing universities. However, the ability to produce knowledge that would help the nation and to identify and solve social problems—be they in agriculture, railroad administration, or politics—was becoming an ever more important concern. This did not happen without some trauma, as Adams's struggles make clear. Yet overall, the university provided extensive and vital institutional support. When Adams and Cooley found themselves under attack, the university provided an intellectual home for both. When they served the commission, the university

allowed them to keep their faculty appointments, offered them leaves of absence, and permitted them to appoint those who would serve as guest lecturers in their place. The university provided a network through which Adams and Cooley could develop and disseminate the ideas that they would put into practice regarding law and economic regulation. The university, in essence, subsidized their service to the national state as well as shaping the skills they brought to such service.

Beyond Politics: Partnerships, Service, and Coordination

Providing expertise in the realm of public administration was a natural partnership between universities and the national state. It was far from the only one. From foreign policy to international trade, geology to engineering, the emerging university provided individual and institutional support for the ever-specializing national state. Education and training had not been ignored in the era of the state of courts and parties, but it had not been prioritized. Additionally, in this previous era, college's education and training did not provide men with a particularized set of skills or knowledge as much as it socialized them to uphold standards of patriotism and morality. University development and provision of expertise did not stem from the simple expansion of government activity as much as it stemmed from government specialization. In providing service to the national state within these various realms of government activity, universities grew to be coordinated through the evolving network of loosely coupled academics and presidents.

Managing Growth: New Agencies and the Pendleton Act

Emerging universities did not simply develop programs dedicated to scientific political training; they also sought to provide basic manpower for the expanding array of agencies and departments that were developing as part of the growing national state. Not every agency formed extensive partnerships with universities. However, many developing agencies did offer an opportunity for universities to develop new programs and offer expertise. Sometimes, as with public administration and political science, universities developed general programs that would lead graduates to specific service. In other instances, university leaders sought to develop programs with more specific service in mind.

For both approaches, there were limits to the success of such partnerships. Political obstacles and limited resources sometimes hindered efforts at direct partnerships, and though university presidents were often well-connected and well-respected individuals, their loosely cou-

pled lobbying efforts were only moderately effective. Both areas of specific technical expertise (e.g., meteorology and engineering) and areas of general expertise (e.g., civil service) offered opportunities for development of partnerships. Though not every opportunity was to be fully realized in the “loosely coupled” era, these efforts would lay the foundation for greater entrepreneurship in developing partnerships between universities and the national state.

The passage and signing of the Pendleton Act in 1883, with its establishment of a merit system and the national Civil Service Commission, represented a significant effort to recast governmental authority and operations toward a “professional, nonpartisan discipline.”⁴² Focusing on post offices and customhouses, the act led to moderate alterations in the federal patronage system. However, while university-based reformers were pleased with the appointment of their colleague John Gregory (the new president of the University of Illinois) to the commission, their enthusiasm waned.

Writing to his good friend James Burrill Angell, Andrew Dickson White sought to rally university men for a meeting with President Benjamin Harrison to encourage the expansion of the classified civil service. Frustrated with the moderate alterations made to the old system of patronage, White believed that the meeting was urgent: “it is now or never,” he wrote. For White, a dangerous number of educators had abandoned the Republican Party, which he believed to be the party of reform.

Among other points which we wish to impress upon him [Harrison] is the change in sentiment of educated men, especially in the Colleges and Universities, toward the Republican party, mainly on account of its non-fulfillment of the promise of reform made in its platform. As regards this institution, down to a recent period I can recall but two Democrats in its entire Faculty; now, with a Faculty of one hundred and six person, I can count all who vote the Republican ticket on the fingers of one hand.

The number of College Presidents who still stand by the Republican Party is small, but if the names of Dwight and Angell and Carter and Gates are among them, they will carry weight, I am sure.⁴³

Angell expressed support for White’s efforts to promote civil service reform, saying “my heart is fully with you,” but he confessed that he himself had not voted for Harrison.⁴⁴

White and his fellow university presidents would continue to be frustrated as Harrison dismissively refused their call to expand the number of positions classified under the civil service. Describing a surprisingly enjoyable visit by Harrison when White was in Berlin a num-

ber of years later, White would recall Harrison as “rude and uncompromising” at the earlier meeting.⁴⁵ Policy failure and personal animosity aside, White’s efforts reflected the growing coordination among university leaders to influence government policy.

Expanded Opportunities, Limited Results

In 1870, Congress directed the secretary of war to institutionalize meteorological observations at military stations across the country. With the congressional directive as their initiative, the army established the country’s first school of meteorology at Fort Whipple, Virginia. In 1890, government meteorological activity was reorganized as a civilian enterprise, when the Weather Bureau was established as an agency within the Department of Agriculture. Michigan’s James Burrill Angell and Cornell’s Charles Kendall Adams attempted to use the transfer of the Weather Bureau to the Department of Agriculture as an entrepreneurial springboard for creating university-based schools of meteorology.

Writing jointly to Erwin Mecates, the assistant secretary of agriculture, Angell and Adams asked whether the department was considering the establishment of meteorological schools for the training of personnel to staff weather stations, and they offered their institutions as homes for such instruction. Mecates responded by telling the two that the transfer had been somewhat disruptive and that there were no funds immediately available for the creation of such schools. Additionally, Mecates noted, the Department of Agriculture was of two minds regarding the value of university-based research and expertise. While Mecates himself greatly valued the potential contribution offered by schools of meteorology and other similar programs of detailed investigation, he feared he was in the minority.

We stand here in the Department of Agriculture between two forces, the most effectual and powerful is urged by those who believe in the practical, and who have no patience with the slow process of investigation which they claim is only remotely of benefit to agriculture; the other force which a few of us at least appreciate, is less influential in a measure.

I stand in the department as its most strenuous representative; hence in the development of the work of the Weather Bureau, we are of necessity obliged to so conduct it as to accomplish obvious results, but we shall endeavor not to lose sight of the scientific investigation, and when we get fully engaged in the work, I am hopeful of a fair degree of research work.

For the above reasons you will understand why at present, at least, we cannot consider the proposition of establishing a meteorological school at the University.⁴⁶

While the second Morrill Act of 1890 permitted general land grants to be directed toward instruction in meteorology and other fields within the physical sciences, the Department of Agriculture never directly offered funds for such schooling. On the one hand, Mecates' frustration underscores the limits of partnership for proponents of expertise. The extension of government activities did not immediately or inherently lead to government sponsorship of programs directed toward advanced and specialized knowledge. On the other hand, a lack of direct federal sponsorship did not preclude universities from pursuing and providing expertise. Recognizing the expansion of the weather service would provide opportunities for men with advanced training, Michigan and Cornell would establish programs in meteorology by the end of the decade. While Angell and Adams were not able to secure direct federal dollars for their entrepreneurial enterprise, they did succeed in creating programs that would help with the growth of the Weather Bureau.

Just as universities helped with the growth of the federal state, the government helped with the growth of higher education institutions. This reciprocal arrangement was neatly reflected in the assignment of military officers to campuses as instructors. Formal relations between universities and the military began with the passage of the first Morrill Act. In addition to providing for instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts, the act required that land-grant institutions offer military instruction. On such campuses as Cornell and Berkeley, an officer assigned to oversee military instruction drilled a rough assembly of students, often without proper uniforms and armaments. Despite the ramshackle nature of these college units and the general disinterest of students, many university leaders supported the military presence on campus. Cornell's Andrew Dickson White welcomed the discipline and routine such instruction brought. He also believed it was important for the nation to have "college men" ready to serve in response not only to foreign threats but to domestic ones as well. Writing in *Popular Science Monthly* on the value of "scientific and industrial education," White argued, "of all things fatal for a Republic, the most fatal is to have its educated men in various professions so educated that in any civil commotion they must cower in corners, and relinquish the control of the armed forces to communists and demagogues."⁴⁷

White was not necessarily advocating military training at Cornell so that college men could protect themselves against those who were uneducated. Rather, he was replying to various critics who suggested that the military had better uses for its officers and who feared that a uni-

versity education produced men so specialized and so detached as to be unable to serve their nation in times of crisis. For White, requiring all students to take some military instruction from an officer assigned by the government was a way to answer these critics, by providing manpower that could be of immediate service to the nation. Compulsory military instruction would eventually be eliminated, but the federal government would continue to assign an officer, and during World War I, the Reserve Officers Training Corps would develop from this program.

The military did not simply provide personnel for general instruction; it also provided specific personnel for advanced training. Beginning with the establishment of the Naval Engineering Corps in 1880, the navy detailed officers to universities to serve as instructors. University leaders welcomed the program as an opportunity to expand offerings and to extend partnerships with the national state. The first engineer assigned to the University of Michigan, Mortimer Cooley, would leave the service and develop the university's engineering department. The partnership between the two was not necessarily seamless. While leading universities were happy to incorporate naval officers into their faculty and naval engineering into their curriculum, the navy was often short of available men, and turnover was high. These difficulties often meant that universities were forced to coordinate their requests with both their fellow institutions and the prospective candidate.

In one notable instance, Presidents Adams of Cornell and Angell of Michigan both sought the services of the same engineer, Joseph Carnaga. However, rather than compete for his services or appeal to the government to arbitrate the dispute, the two men settled it between themselves. Adams was the first to call attention to their mutual desire for Carnaga's services. Writing Angell, he noted that Cornell had applied for Carnaga's services only to be informed that while Carnaga requested to work at Cornell, the department had already assigned him to Michigan. Adams asked if Angell might rescind his claim on Carnaga's services. Angell wrote back detailing the troubles he had had in finding a naval engineer and expressing fear that he would continue to be without one if he relinquished his claim on Carnaga. Adams recognized his friend's situation but hoped an agreement could be had.⁴⁸ With assurances from the navy that a replacement candidate for Carnaga could be found for Michigan, Angell granted Adams's request.

Beyond the actual partnership it displays between government and the university, the Carnaga case underscores the value of coordination

and its usefulness in maximizing resources. If the navy had been working with each institution separately, a disgruntled officer would likely have served Michigan unhappy with his placement, and Cornell would have been assigned an officer possibly unfamiliar with the institution. Instead, the navy encouraged the universities to settle their disputed claims and, more generally, asked the institutions to judge the quality of the instruction offered. Notably, when the navy did assign an officer to Michigan a semester later, it asked Angell to thoroughly assess his abilities. The assigning officer stressed, "if it should turn out that he is not the right man please let us know and I will relieve you of him."⁴⁹ The partnership took on a reciprocal quality: the government would provide manpower for instruction, but it was incumbent upon universities to judge the quality and nature of the instructor's ability. Universities were testing grounds for naval expertise.

Such coordination did not necessarily assure that universities received government support. In keeping with the fledgling nature of these efforts, universities sometimes found themselves competing for resources with the government itself.⁵⁰ Though the partnership benefited universities, supplying faculty and expertise, it strained the navy. Ironically, this difficulty was in large part attributable to the lack of quality engineers coming from the U.S. Naval Academy.⁵¹ In response, the head of the program, George Miller, had recommended to his superiors that "appointments be given to the graduates of the technical departments of such Universities as Ann Arbor."⁵² Nothing came of Miller's proposal, and though many schools would continue to offer instruction by military personnel, the formal detailing of naval officers to institutions on demand was curtailed when the Naval Engineer Corps met the limit prescribed in legislation of 1882.⁵³

As universities' experience with the Naval Engineer Corps reflected, not every partnership between universities and the state worked smoothly. Initially, the partnership between the universities and the navy provided manpower to universities and instructional opportunities for naval engineers. Eventually, however, the university and the navy found themselves disjointed. Uncertainties in staffing, difficulties in renewal, and competition for instructors limited program growth and frustrated academic entrepreneurs trying to develop engineering programs. Engineers were often assigned at midterm and withdrawn on short notice. Correspondingly, while the navy initially supported such details, the demands of its own fleet eventually became so great as to make the program a burden on the corps, and the formal program of details expired with the recall of all naval instructors in 1890.

Personal Partnership: James B. Angell and National Service

Providing basic manpower to a variety of agencies was a key, but not the only, component of universities' relations with the federal government. The service of high-profile university leaders was also a fundamental element of these partnerships. Among the most prominent and notable examples of individual service to the national state was the service of University of Michigan president James Burrill Angell. It might seem peculiar to think of one individual as forming a partnership with the national state, but Angell's three distinct tours of diplomatic service provide insight into university support for the federal state and into the developing community of peer institutions.

Appointed to Michigan's presidency in 1871 after serving for five years as president of the University of Vermont, Angell was already a relatively prominent public figure at the time of his first diplomatic appointment. In February 1880, President Rutherford Hayes's secretary of state, Daniel Evarts, asked Angell to head a diplomatic mission of three envoys to China. Angell was intrigued by the offer and set about informing the regents of his plans and his need to resign the presidency of the university. However, his friend and congressman J. H. McGowan suggested an alternative, a leave of absence. He told Angell, "I am satisfied that the people of Michigan would be proud indeed to have you called to such a work, and that the regents would surely upon reflection, if they did not at once, grant you such leave of absence as was necessary."⁵⁴

McGowan's advice proved correct. The regents saw it "as quite a feather in the cap of the University to have its President chosen to fulfill so delicate a mission."⁵⁵ Angell's mission for the federal government was partially subsidized by the University of Michigan, a seemingly small price to pay. By granting Angell leave, the regents not only avoided having to replace their immensely popular and esteemed president; they also gained welcome publicity and praise for the university.

Informing Evarts that the regents would grant his leave with "generous spirit,"⁵⁶ Angell accepted the position. Angell's appointment was heralded by many as a welcome recognition of the skill and ability the academy could offer the state. Eli Blake, editor of the *Providence Journal*, summarized this view when he wrote about the appointment:

It shows that when really serious matters are to be discussed it is still possible to go outside of the "machine"; and that real worth and ability has still a value even if not bolstered up by barroom politics.

It is a good omen for the future not only in politics but in education as tending to show that a wide liberal culture and study is not without its uses in the affairs of Government.⁵⁷

In addition to gaining support from those outside academia who favored a move away from patronage and toward expertise, Angell's appointment was praised by many of his fellow academic leaders. Among the many to offer congratulations was Lerner Moss, president of Indiana University, who noted, "this worthy and admirable recognition of the 'scholar in politics' is gratifying to the scholars, whatever it may be to the politicians."⁵⁸ Provost Charles Stille of the University of Pennsylvania expanded on Moss's sentiment.

I am glad to find that among many good things which our worthy President does, he seems to have a proper appreciation of the value of College men in responsible public positions. You are a worthy representative of that club already distinguished by the work of such men as Sowell and White in the diplomatic service, and I am sure that we must all rejoice to know that these men are to have so worthy a colleague as yourself.⁵⁹

Andrew Dickson White, writing from his position as diplomatic minister in Berlin echoed Stille's sentiment: "it is pleasing to see that college people are publicly recognized from time to time."⁶⁰ Angell responded to his friend with a self-awareness and recognition of what his appointment represented for higher education.

I agree with you that for the sake of "our guild" it is pleasant to have the recognition of it which this administration has made. I fear the President may find he has opened the gates for a new class of applicants for office. Mr. Evarts told me that since my appointment applications for appointments have been made on behalf of three college presidents.⁶¹

Angell concluded his letter by stating his plan was to return by the fall of 1881, with Henry Simmons Frieze carrying on matters while he was gone. In June, Angell, with the somewhat exalted title Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to China, left to serve the federal government. He was slightly mistaken in his prediction as to how long his mission would last and ended up in China through the winter of 1882, returning a little less than two years after he left.

While Frieze served as acting president, Angell, in many ways, guided the institution in absentia. Frieze would update Angell almost monthly on the status of the university's affairs. Typical of his dispatches was a letter at the beginning of the 1880–81 school year, in which he noted an increase in the size of the entering class and in the size of the various applicant pools, discussed the success of the law

school's more stringent admissions requirements, and informed Angell of the local political news and gossip.⁶² Angell stayed well informed of national politics through his friends in Ann Arbor as well but confessed that he found himself detached from such affairs. Writing to Henry Carter Adams, he noted:

I suppose that you are in the full turmoil of the Presidential election today while I am sitting here in this scenic land. . . . I have so far caught the spirit of the people that I have hardly thought today of the election at all. But what can be expected of a man who has not heard a single campaign speech.⁶³

Such sentiments might seem remarkable if one thinks of Angell as benefiting from patronage. However, he viewed his mission as an extension of his public service, outside the realm of electoral politics. The skill and knowledge required for the position did not change under the first three presidents Angell served (Rutherford Hayes, James Garfield, and Chester Arthur). His duty was to apply his diplomatic expertise for the benefit of the nation.

The relative success of Angell's tenure as minister to China—two treaties were signed, one involving immigration, the other involving trade—meant that he would be called on to negotiate on behalf of his country again. In 1887, he was appointed by President Cleveland to represent the United States in negotiations with the British over Canadian fishing rights. In 1896, Cleveland appointed him as chairman of the Deep Waterways Commission, which began discussions with the Canadians regarding an inland waterway that would become the Saint Lawrence Seaway. In 1897, Angell was appointed by Cleveland's successor, William McKinley, as minister to Turkey, for which position Angell was granted yet another leave of absence by the regents.

Angell's subsequent missions were not uniform successes. Nonetheless, on each assignment, he gave a good account of himself and the value of university men and their expertise. Discussing the appointment of Angell to head the Fisheries Commission, the *Manitoba Record* discussed his experience negotiating with China and praised him as "an able writer" who "has contributed to various views with exceeding success." The *Record* continued: "As a public speaker he is exceedingly attractive, fluent, easy and graceful. He is an amiable and affable man, popular with the students at Ann Arbor."⁶⁴

Yet, as one of the first "university men" to serve in diplomatic circles, Angell was not immune from criticism. Reflecting a natural tension between proponents of experience and champions of expertise, Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts questioned Angell's appointment to the

Fisheries Commission during floor debate of its proposed treaty. Wondering if Angell "ever saw a mackrel until it came from the gridiron," he questioned if any of the commissioners "had had occasion to inform himself thoroughly in regard to the practical rights and interests of the vocation of the American fisherman."⁶⁵ Though Angell's fellow commissioner William Putnam, of Portland, Maine, assured Angell that the treaty was well received by fishermen in his region of the country,⁶⁶ Hoar's sentiment carried the day, and the treaty went down to defeat.

Not every opportunity for the application of expertise resulted in popular success. However, these opportunities were the leading edge in the development of partnerships between the university and the federal state. As Angell's son, James Rowland Angell, and Wilfred Shaw would recall in regard to the diplomatic service of Angell and others, such as Andrew Dickson White:⁶⁷

A new element in American public service was rising, a leaven destined to become increasingly important with the succeeding years. The peculiar fitness of university administrators and scholars for diplomatic service was becoming definitely recognized, and these appointments became the first of many similar calls upon university leaders, tributes to maturing American scholarship.

The migration of scholars from the academic world into diplomacy not only foreshadowed a broader view of our relations abroad, based on experience in foreign ways and thought, but it also recognized the desirability in history, politics, and languages on the part of our diplomats. Moreover, it served to improve the standards of our foreign service at a time when too many of our representatives abroad were selected solely on the basis of political expediency and private income.⁶⁸

James Rowland Angell himself would be intimately involved in the further maturation of relations between universities and the national state in the first decades of the twentieth century, serving as dean of the University of Chicago, founding chairman of the National Research Council, and president of Yale (succeeding Arthur Twining Hadley in 1920). As Rowland Angell underscored, the diplomatic service of such men as his father and Andrew Dickson White was not as significant for their work as individuals as it was for their work on behalf of universities as a class.

At this time, there was developing among universities a rising interest in service to the state as well as a growing awareness of the university as a distinct class of institution offering particularized skills, knowledge, and expertise. Reflecting such sentiment, James Burrill Angell wrote to White, regarding his own appointment to the Fisheries Commission:

I share your feeling of satisfaction that of late our government has shown some disposition to follow the old and well-established usage of European governments in looking to universities for some of the diplomatic representatives. Perhaps you and I may be supposed by the public not to be unbiased in this opinion, but we can speak to each other safely.⁶⁹

As they were prominent and well-connected individuals, the appointments of White and Angell to diplomatic missions do not necessarily seem remarkable. However, the basis of their appointments—particularized knowledge and skills, rather than patronage (they served both Republican and Democratic presidents)—reflects a significant evolution in the partnerships between universities and the national state.

Developing a System of National Service: Partnerships in the “Loosely Coupled” Era

Early partnerships between universities and the national state encompassed a variety of activities. For purposes from weather forecasting to shipbuilding, the university sought to both provide and receive assistance from the federal government. Despite limited immediate success, the resulting partnerships helped foster growing coordination between institutions and helped lay the groundwork for universities to expand and explore the multitude of opportunities presented by the development of the national state. The creation of new government agencies meant opportunities to develop new academic programs and further relations with both established and developing agencies.

Frequently driven by individual efforts as well as institutional support, universities began to work in conjunction with the federal government. Universities still provided expert manpower for government agencies. The federal government occasionally provided expert instructors for university faculty. The support might have been reciprocal; the initiative was not. In both instances, it was university leaders, regularly coordinating efforts among their institutions, who drove the government to extend the reach of expertise. As an evolving effort, such partnerships were not always smoothly developed and formalized. Continuing from the implementation of the first Morrill Act through the turn of the century, university partnerships with the national state reflected what might best be described as growing pains. Notwithstanding occasional hurdles, institutional entrepreneurship and coordination laid the groundwork for a new service of expertise that would help define the development of the emerging national state.