

7 Working for Service

The Rise of Formal Alignment and the Furtherance of Agency

Entering the twentieth century, the nation's elite universities continued to grow in both the size of their programs and the breadth of their investigations. Correspondent to this internal growth was an expansion of the university's relationship with the national state. More students, more subjects, and more research meant more opportunities to develop active partnerships and to serve as independent agents.

The formation of the Association of American Universities greatly facilitated this expansion. When institutional entrepreneurs sought to develop new programs and demonstrate new relevancy in conjunction with the federal state, they could quickly bring their colleagues on board. Similarly, when working in place of (rather than in conjunction with) the federal government when extending the reach of the national state, the AAU served to bring elite universities together in a more formal manner than through personal friendships. The formation and emergence of the AAU did not mean that university presidents lost their intimacy and personal connections. Instead such intimacy and personal connections were now supplemented by a formal organizational structure that not only facilitated but also encouraged collective action.

Defining Alignment: Coordination and Competition

To understand the relationship between universities and the American state, we must assess not only the relationship itself but the context of its development. While the turn of the century was recognized as a milestone, the mere turn of the calendar did not drive the creation of

new programs and the growth of others. In addition to responding to various forces of governmental and societal complexity, the institutional entrepreneurs who ran American higher education were driven by dynamic forces in their own domain as well. The rise of multiple higher education organizations and disciplinary associations encouraged formal coordination and facilitated service to and on behalf of the state. The growth of elite universities was accompanied by the individual development of their national presence and the correspondent rise in competition among peers. These seemingly opposed, but actually reinforcing, forces of coordination and competition drove universities to work with the developing American state.

The AAU was not the first formal organization of universities and colleges. America's land-grant colleges created the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (AAACES) in 1887. Formed as an offshoot of the National Educational Association¹ and headed by University of Mississippi president Robert Fulton, the National Association of State Universities (NASU) was formed in 1895. The NASU included Morrill institutions as well as state universities—such as Fulton's—that were not beneficiaries of the Morrill grants but that had been supported by earlier "seminary of learning" grants.

Though these two organizations predated the AAU, their initial influence and interaction with the national state was generally limited. First, since they represented exclusively public institutions, the AAACES and the NASU were unable to claim that they spoke for higher education as a whole. Second, their public focus meant that these organizations did not count some of the nation's oldest and most influential institutions—that is, Harvard, Yale, and Columbia—among their members. Finally and perhaps most significant, neither association had the flagship institutions of their class as active members. The role of the land-grant institution Cornell University in the AAACES was marginal at best. The nation's foremost "seminary" institutions—the Universities of California, Michigan, and Wisconsin—did not even attend the 1900 NASU meetings.²

Managing Competition: The AAU and Rationales for Alignment

A supposedly elitist organization would impact the definition of higher education most significantly and most broadly. The AAU was not the only association attempting to align the institutions of higher education. It would be the only one whose influence would extend far beyond its own membership and that would look to the federal state as an active partner rather than simply as a wealthy patron. The AAU

would not only coordinate relations between the nation's leading universities and set standards for all of higher education, but it would take the lead in defining universities' relationship with the national state as well.

Not all university efforts were coordinated. Formal alignment took time to develop, and many university-government efforts remained focused on individual institutions. Additionally, competition continued between the leading universities. Noticeable tensions arose as newer wealthy institutions, such as Rockefeller's University of Chicago and Leland Stanford's Stanford University, arrived on the scene at the same time as established universities sought to take on a greater national presence. These tensions both resulted from and ramped up institutional entrepreneurship. The AAU was not founded as a mediating organization, but its attempts at coordination served as a counterweight to this modern push of institutional competition.

The University of Chicago and Stanford University were recently founded institutions with sizable endowments and generous benefactors. In keeping with the polite demeanor of the period as well as with their personal familiarity with the universities' leadership, presidents of other established institutions often offered advice and guidance to these fledgling schools. Notably, the institutions most often called on to offer such advice and guidance were the two that these new schools most directly challenged, the Universities of Michigan and California.

Michigan and California were quick to share and treated these newer institutions as peers. However, they also privately worried about the threat Chicago and Stanford posed. Berkeley's Benjamin Ide Wheeler, writing to Michigan's James Burrill Angell regarding their individual efforts to secure funding from the state, summarized such sentiments: "It will be very unfortunate for the state university idea if the University of Michigan is at this late date outridden by a private institution like that at Chicago. We have the same danger before us in the case of Stanford."³

Due to its more established reputation, its national presence, and its geographic distance from Chicago, Michigan was not as overtly threatened by the University of Chicago's presence as Berkeley was by Stanford's. Angell's son, James Rowland Angell, even took his first faculty position at Chicago. Michigan did keep a competitive awareness of its rival to the west. James Burrill Angell sustained a statesmanlike detachment from such concerns, but others, such his Board of Regents, kept a protective watch over Michigan's institutional position. For example, to Angell's general inquiry regarding rumors of a University of

Chicago plan to buy the Michigan Military Academy in 1903 for use as an annex, Regent Levi Barbour responded with a lengthy complaint regarding Chicago's perceived encroachment on Michigan's territory. Barbour explained that he had not heard of such a plan but had heard of a Chicago plan to buy Kalamazoo College. More significantly, Barbour saw a pattern.

The establishment of a private school in Detroit, practically under the wing of Chicago, the purchase of the Military Academy, the ardent work they are doing to proselyte the West shore of the state and the upper peninsula are attempts which would seem quite properly to excite our jealousy and indicate rather an over buying disposition.

Barbour also reported that the university had established a presence in Michigan through extension courses by its professors and addresses by its administrators. Coupled with Chicago's purchases, Barbour feared that such activity "may lead our citizens to forget that Michigan has a university." Barbour confessed that his disposition was "wicked enough" to rejoice in Chicago's failed attempt to create a private school in Battle Creek and expressed his belief that the Military Academy would not pay as a school.⁴

Angell might not have shared his regent's "wickedness," but he did recognize the potential influence of a wealthy competitor and sought to work actively with, rather than against, it. Angell and Harper would confer on everything from faculty hiring practices to how to rein in what they viewed as the scourge of football. Berkeley's Wheeler and Stanford's David Starr Jordan also shared administrative and academic questions. Of the major associations, the AAU was the only one to include both public and private universities; thus, while it did not initiate coordination and agreement between potential competitors, it did a great deal to further their agreement.

Institutional competition was not solely between older public institutions and newer private ones. Even the oldest and most established of the nation's universities took notice of the activities and appearance of peer institutions. Such notice was not always favorable. For example, in response to a request that his university participate in the upcoming Paris Exposition, Yale's president Arthur Twining Hadley complained to J. Howard Rogers, the director of education and social policy for the U.S. delegation, about the nature of university exhibits at the last major world's exposition: "Most of the things at Chicago which were called educational exhibits from higher institutions of learning were not educational exhibits at all, but simply displays of wealth."⁵ He noted that

because the university's corporation did not wish to compete in terms of wealth and have the exhibit simply be a show of material resources, the university was unlikely to partake in the event.

Hadley might have scoffed at others' displays of wealth, but he and his institution's alumni recognized the need for active fund-raising. Not long after taking over as Yale's president, he undertook efforts to establish a fund to coincide with Yale's bicentennial anniversary, in 1901. Though not a public capital campaign, it represented Hadley's first active attempt to raise funds to secure and further Yale's position. Reflecting a developing approach of institutional entrepreneurs, Hadley sought funds and secured challenge gifts from a variety of wealthy benefactors. Through the generosity of such alumni as Cornelius Vanderbilt, William Crocker, and others (including a small gift from the University of Chicago's benefactor, John Rockefeller), Hadley was able to raise two million dollars. While impressive and certainly the most money ever raised by his school, Hadley would soon learn that his fund-raising was not enough to keep pace with Yale's primary competitors.

Gifford Pinchot, whose family's generosity and own efforts had only a few years before been instrumental in the creation of Yale's forestry school, wrote of a meeting he had recently had with Bishop Laurence, president of the Harvard Alumni Association. Laurence had mentioned to Pinchot that a Harvard alumni committee was currently raising \$2.5 million for additional faculty and salaries. For Pinchot, this triggered memories of a conversation with Hadley during the bicentennial fund drive. Pinchot had suggested pursuing more than twice the target of two million dollars in order for Yale "to keep pace with similar institutions which are making such notable progress all over the country in general equipment for their work." Both men would eventually conclude that such a figure was unrealistic. However, in light of Harvard's effort, Pinchot felt it was "absolutely essential to the welfare of the university that it should meet, by conspicuous progress on its part, the very notable steps in advance which are being made by so many of the other universities of the country and especially by Harvard." Pinchot did not wish to seem intrusive but did want to stress his belief that Yale needed to step up its fund-raising if it were to maintain its position.

You will not, of course, misunderstand me by thinking that I have lost faith in the slightest degree either in the present or in the future of Yale. I have not. But it seems to me obvious that if Yale is to continue to hold her place in the very front rank of American institutions of learning, and is not to be sup-

planted in her standing and influence, some definite and successful effort must be made to raise the funds without which the equipment of Yale can neither be placed nor be kept on a level with that of the more progressive of her sister institutions.⁶

Having worked closely with Pinchot on developing Yale's forestry school, Hadley did not misunderstand him, and Yale quietly undertook another sizable fund-raising effort.

Yale's rivalry with Harvard was by no means unidirectional. As he had already done a few years earlier, Harvard's Charles Eliot was quick to criticize Yale's academic reforms of the period. Writing to Michigan's James Burrill Angell in anticipation of a visit to Ann Arbor, Eliot offered his critique.

Yale is simply repeating the precise steps which succeeded each other here in the development of the elective system, but she is repeating them at the interval of from twenty-five to thirty years, during which she has lost a great deal of ground in the university race. The most curious fact about it is that the men concerned with these changes at Yale seem to have an impression that they themselves invented them.

As bemused as he was by Yale's administration, Eliot was equally baffled by the response of Yale alumni, a number of whom objected to such reform: "we have a large number of young Yale graduates in our Law School, and the sentiment among them is distinctly adverse to the recent changes at Yale. They seem to think that Yale had better stand still—a suicidal policy to my thinking."⁷

In addition to Yale's curricular "reforms" and the objections of its alumni, Eliot also was puzzled, or one might say offended, by the fact that the dean of Yale's divinity school had begun actively trying to attract students to New Haven.

One curious development at Yale is the adoption of the drummer policy at their Divinity School. The present Dean of that school gives most of his time to travelling for the purpose of direct solicitation of recruits for his school. We are all accused of indirect advertising, and there is some truth in these accusations, but the frank adoption of the commercial traveler system seems to me an undesirable novelty.⁸

To contemporary observers, accustomed to large admission offices staffed by a multitude of recruiters, Eliot's comments might seem quaint and anachronistic. However, just as telling as his criticism of Yale's divinity school dean was his admission of indirect advertising. As Eliot notes, most all of the leading universities were taking a more active role in managing their public image. In part, such concern

stemmed simply from the universities' sheer size and national presence. However, underlying such efforts was an emerging institutional competition. With regional monopolies weakening, universities were more actively competing for students, dollars, and even, as I will discuss in chapter 8, federal partnerships.

The extent to which universities protected their national presence and compared themselves to one another could be seen in an exchange between James Burrill Angell and Arthur Twining Hadley. As the elder statesman of university presidents, Angell almost always stayed above the fray, often receiving combative words regarding other schools, but rarely (if ever) offering them. However, in response to a Cincinnati speech by Hadley in which the Yale president allegedly referred to the "local constituency and provincialism of Western state universities," Angell offered a lengthy defense in his university's alumni magazine. Granting that Hadley very well might have been misquoted, Angell still set out to show the diverse constituency of the Michigan student body, a constituency "more national than many Eastern colleges." Using the 1905–6 Yale catalog and the 1906–7 University of Michigan catalog, which were the latest he could obtain, Angell did an enrollment comparison (see table 3).⁹

Angell was quick to point out that Michigan had seventy-six students from New England, and he suggested that his institution's size might account for the larger percentage of in-state students. Defending western institutions as well as his own, Angell noted:

It may be maintained that the University of Michigan is exceptional among western institutions. But an exactly similar condition of things stands at the University of Chicago. The truth is that certain colleges in the East, like certain others in the West, have a constituency almost wholly local in character. But there are certain western colleges where the constituency is quite as cosmopolitan as that of any of their eastern colleagues.

TABLE 3. Angell's Michigan/Yale Comparison

	Michigan	Yale
Students	4,836	3,806
States represented	All 48	All 48
U.S. territories represented	3	2
Foreign countries represented	17	16
Students in state (%)	50	33
Pennsylvania students	181	188
New York students	299	603
Ohio students	408	135
Illinois students	315	147

Angell concluded with a wry comment on the nature of provincialism.

Moreover, it is well in this connection to recall what a clever writer recently has said of the Hub—"Boston is not a place—it is a state of mind." So provincialism is not determined by topography and geography. It is an affair of the mind, and if, as it is urged, it is chiefly characterized by a hypersensitiveness to one's own virtues, it seems improbable that the West has or soon will have any monopoly of it.¹⁰

Hadley, appropriately chastened, was contrite in his response, simply apologizing for any misunderstanding and stressing that his comments were certainly not meant to refer to Michigan or any other of the leading universities of the West. Hadley's comments had riled Angell a tad, but they were soon forgotten. A little over two years later, Angell wrote Hadley to praise his annual report as "excellent" and to express his strong agreement with Hadley's emphasis on the importance of professors teaching as well as conducting research.¹¹

While rarely overtly contentious, rivalries certainly existed among many of the nation's leading universities. Institutional competition crossed many divides: old/new, east/west, and public/private. Institutional competition also greatly influenced two forces that defined the universities' relationship to the national state, entrepreneurship and coordination. University leaders actively pursued new opportunities, often in regard to government service, with a desire to develop and maintain their institution's national stature. As rivalries grew, so did the push toward formal coordination. Recognizing the danger and difficulties of unbridled competition, universities continued to work together informally and established structures that aligned their interests more formally.

Reflecting the overlap between entrepreneurship, coordination, and public service, the chair of the 1909 reunion of alumni of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, James Munoz, wrote Angell to ask him to join a variety of leaders in offering a few words to those who would be gathered. Munoz stressed that the alumni association wished to encourage a greater sense of service and that they felt Angell would be just the person to help do that: "We are urging the Institute to emulate those universities in direct service to the upbuilding of the state and nothing could help us more than to have the greatest president, and the chiefest builder, come to the gathering of our alumni."¹² Competition was not necessarily an explicit reason for such emulation, but the leading universities had set a variety of formal and informal standards for institutional activity, and ambitious schools, such as MIT, were quick to learn and follow.

Education and Agency: Universities, National Standards, and the Rise of Formal Alignment

In the later half of the nineteenth century, informal cooperation had been essential to university efforts to define national standards and expectations for both secondary and higher education. The continuation of this systemization of American education at the beginning of the twentieth century was greatly assisted by the formal alignment of elite universities through the AAU. Additionally, the AAU worked closely with the burgeoning private foundations—most notably, the one established by Andrew Carnegie—to ensure that these standards reached more than its own members. Their serving as standard-bearer for all of education meant that the reach of America's elite universities stretched broadly across the nation.

The prestige and position of these institutions and their entrepreneurial leaders enhanced their influence over educational policy, the development of professions, and a variety of other public initiatives. Their prestige was enhanced by cooperation and coordination, which furthered the development of a national system of education. This system still reflected local differences, but it established more rationalized structures and uniform procedures across the country. Not directly supported by the federal state, the universities' efforts at rationalization and standardization were tacitly sanctioned by it. As independent agents of the national state, universities continued the practice, begun with the Morrill Act, of not only working in conjunction with the federal state but broadening policy initiatives independently.

Continuing Agency, Limited Formalization: Universities and Secondary Education

High school accreditation, examination boards, and admission by diploma were the primary mechanisms by which universities helped set national education standards in the later half of the nineteenth century. These systems of admissions both established and elevated expectations for secondary schools. By 1900, a loosely coupled, but highly influential, national system had evolved, with the nation's leading universities acting as independent agents of the American state.

The general expansion and growing complexity of education led to calls for more formalized arrangements. Existing organizations, such as the National Educational Association and the Middle States Examination Board, sought to expand the scope of their activities. Newly founded organizations, such as the AAU, expanded opportunities for

meetings and discussion and demonstrated the possibilities of formal alignment. Upon his inauguration, Yale's Arthur Twining Hadley encountered this push toward nationalization when, just weeks into office, he was asked by A. S. Downing, principal of the New York City Training School and chairman of the NEA's Department of Superintendence, to address the NEA's annual meeting that coming February. The invitation had been forwarded by Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, which had incorporated a teachers college within its institution just one year before. Butler noted that between 750 and 1,200 of the nation's leading superintendents, principals, and normal school teachers attended the annual meeting every year, with the midwestern delegation being particularly strong. Butler described the meeting as "one of the most important and influential" gatherings of those concerned with secondary education. He stressed that he knew of "no [other] meeting at which educational opinion is more effectively moulded [*sic*] because those who attend tend to report back at length to their neighbors and colleagues the ideas and plans which have been presented."¹³ Hadley respectfully declined the invitation, as it fell during a particularly busy time of year for Yale.

More striking than Hadley's particular decision to attend or not are the limits of the NEA's influence that are belied by Butler's characterization and praise of the association. The NEA could count many of the leading figures of higher and secondary education among its membership, but its size and diversity made authoritative coordination highly difficult. Charles Eliot's efforts to establish a national secondary school curriculum through the Committee of Ten in the mid-1890s was the closest university leaders came to wielding authoritative influence through the organization. By 1900, the NEA was still large and in fact growing, but it was not an effective vehicle for setting national standards in secondary education.

Rather than working through the association, Hadley found himself working within a "personal presidency." Despite the dawn of the modern university, alumni and others would still write to him asking for guidance. For example, in response to an inquiry from the parent of a prospective student, Hadley noted that Yale did not accept diplomas as basis for admission, as all prospective undergraduates were subject to examination. In response to the same parent's question regarding where his son should "prep," Hadley stated that it was "almost invidious to make suggestions" regarding such schools but that he would recommend Andover, Hotchkiss, St Paul's, Hill, Lawrenceville, or Taft.¹⁴

Hadley's "personal presidency" did not end with advice regarding choice of preparatory school. When asked, he also offered recommendations to parents regarding college selection. Herbert Beecher of Port Townsend, Washington, had written to Hadley explaining that his son wished to be a lawyer and was considering Yale, California, MIT, or Cornell for college. With striking candor, Hadley discounted MIT and Cornell as options—the former because of emphasis on technology, the latter because of the nature of its students.

I would send him to a college where he will see a great many kinds of people, and not be narrowed down to the study of one specialty. This shuts out a purely technical school like the M.I.T.; which, however excellent in its instruction, does not give a young man contact with men of letters. While Cornell might naturally suggest itself as a compromise between a technical school and a college, in the broader sense, I should not, on the whole, advise his going to that place. The men whom he meets there would be likely to be very different from those with whom he would be thrown into association in after life, if he makes a really successful career as a lawyer.

Hadley could see value in choosing Berkeley or, obviously, Yale. He concluded by stressing that Yale would be his strongest recommendation.

If he decides to go to an institution on the Pacific coast, he cannot do better than at Berkeley; if he comes East, I think he will meet more kinds of men at Yale, and get at once a clearer foretaste of what is before him in professional life, and a set of acquaintances which will be of more services to him in the hard early stages of his career, than he would be likely to do anywhere else.¹⁵

More striking than Hadley's recommendation is his rationale; it is largely functional and careerist. Throughout his tenure, Hadley would often speak of the need for educational institutions to develop good, moral citizens; but in this particular case, he seems to be appealing to baser instincts.

Beyond the details of these two anecdotes lies a more fundamental fact of the college presidency at the turn of the century. Notwithstanding the expansion of university presidents' institutional roles and missions and their burgeoning relationships with one another as well as with the national state, there still existed a personal—one might say anachronistic—element to their influence. Hadley was far from the only president to receive such letters requesting advice. Other presidents, such as Michigan's James Burrill Angell, would receive letters asking not just for educational advice but for guidance on matters ranging from grammatical usage to the physics of train travel. One might

expect such inquiries at a public institution. However, Hadley was guiding a private university. More important, Angell was of an earlier generation, in which such personal attention to any and all inquiries was expected. Hadley came from a younger generation and a more bureaucratic tradition. Yet he still replied to those seeking academic advice, as it was one way in which he could be assured of influencing educational matters. Such personal advice was by no means a substitute for national efforts at standardization. It was, however, a clear indication that even if academic leaders did not necessarily express their views publicly, they did hold strong opinions as to the proper approach to and course of education.

Moving toward "The Big Test": Coordinating Entrance Examinations

The NEA did not offer the most effective mechanism for coordination, but it did offer a significant forum and springboard for ideas. Nicholas Murray Butler returned from the association's 1899 meeting motivated to establish standard entrance examinations among the leading eastern colleges and universities. Until this period, loosely coupled, parallel systems of admission worked reasonably well. While it was not very formally defined and somewhat fragmented regionally, the nation's leading universities had established a broad national standard for admission that, in turn, had the effect of regulating secondary education. No one trigger event or force led Butler and others to push for more formal alignment and coordination in regard to standards of admission and the corresponding expectations of high schools. However, the increasingly national makeup of the student bodies of the leading universities (with the resulting implicit competition for students), the overall growth of education as a field, and a general push toward formal organization were all contributing factors.

Butler organized a meeting in Trenton, New Jersey, for December 1899. He and his colleagues gave their effort the somewhat unwieldy title "College Entrance Examination Board of the Middle States and Maryland" (hereinafter referred to as the Middle States Board).¹⁶ Meeting again in May 1900, the group adopted a constitution and governing documents. Membership was open to all colleges and universities in the region who had more than fifty freshmen in their incoming class.¹⁷

Previously, individual institutions had administered examinations and communicated with secondary schools and one another regarding standards and expectations. The proposal of the Middle States Board did not suggest a new role for universities regulating secondary education. Rather, it was an attempt to bring more formal coordination

among the regulators themselves. Interestingly, unlike almost simultaneous efforts to coordinate regulation of higher education through the AAU and other organizations (which I will discuss in greater detail later in this chapter), Butler and his colleagues did not initially attempt to establish a national system. They recognized the difficulty in immediately replacing the existing parallel systems and instead sought to graft onto them. They limited their plan to one region, but the ambition was, from the outset, national. As significant as the nature and ambition of such coordinated efforts was the fact that it was driven by university-based institutional entrepreneurs. National and state government agencies or bureaus were not the primary forces driving standardization.

Unfortunately for Butler's ambitions, Princeton was quick to declare its autonomy. President Francis Patton forwarded a faculty statement to Butler and the Middle States Board. The faculty stressed that they would not consider "even temporarily" relinquishing the right to examine students.¹⁸ Recognizing that the plan of the Middle States Board depended on the quality as well as the quantity of members and accepting institutions, Butler wrote his friend Arthur Twining Hadley to describe the effort and to inquire as to Yale's willingness to accept the results of the board's exams for admission.

Butler stressed to Hadley that though noticeably absent from membership on the Middle States Board, Princeton had agreed to accept the board's exams for admission. He described the advantages of the Middle States approach, presenting a rough procedural outline of the exams and maintaining that "for the first time they furnish what has so long been desired—a uniform test for admission to college upon a prescribed series of subjects." Despite the geographic limits of the initial membership of the Middle States Board, Butler hoped its exams might be national in the scope of their acceptance. Recognizing the regional differences that characterized admissions practices, Butler expressed a hope that the exams would be used both by schools that admitted on diploma and by those that admitted on examination.¹⁹

Saying he always welcomed opportunities for cooperation with his peers, Hadley expressed cautious interest. He also noted that the Yale faculty was very unlikely to relinquish the opportunity to examine prospective students.²⁰ Butler replied by noting that the Middle States Board had hoped "it might be possible for the Yale Faculty to attach such weight to the exams so that they serve as satisfactory alternatives to the passing of Yale's exams." Butler stressed that the plan was not to relieve individual institutions of their autonomy through exams that

would lead to the admission of “any student to any college.” Rather, he emphasized, plans called for the results to be expressed in percentages, with individual colleges and universities using them as they saw fit. While the Middle States Board would seek to set minimum standards for secondary schools, it would not attempt to standardize universities’ expectations. Butler concluded by noting that in reading Yale’s catalog, he learned that students who passed Columbia, Harvard, and Princeton’s exams were granted unique standing. With this in mind, he hoped the Middle States exams might be granted similar status.²¹

Harboring the doubts he expressed to Butler, Hadley nonetheless remained intrigued by the idea of a coordinated examination board. In fact, soon after the public announcement regarding creation of the Middle States Board, he supported a meeting to consider the formation of an examination board for the New England states; but no formal agreement came of it. Despite his colleague’s lobbying, Hadley settled into a position of “wait and see.” Summarizing his view, Hadley responded to a Brooklyn reporter’s question regarding cooperation between institutions of higher learning by noting that the success or failure of the Middle States effort would greatly influence nascent efforts in New England but that, regardless, “there is sure to be progress toward harmony in requirements.” He explained, “This does not mean that every college will require the same amount of study for entrance, but that the requirements of each college, as far as they go, will be framed as nearly as possible on the same lines with its neighbors.” Continuing on, Hadley referenced the loosely coupled relationships between institutions, speaking of a “good deal of quiet work” that had been done regarding admissions among the New England schools: “It has not advertised its existence nor passed formal resolutions, but this has made its work more effective rather than less so.” As for his colleagues at western schools who worked under a parallel system of admission by diploma, Hadley could only state, “the State Universities of the West are doing such different things that it is impossible to generalize concerning them.”²²

The “quiet work” would continue, but Hadley and others—most notably, Harvard’s Charles Eliot—would be frustrated in their efforts to develop more formal coordination among the New England colleges. After a conference of New England colleges in November 1901, Hadley and Eliot both expressed disappointment at their inability to achieve consensus and raise standards. Butler somehow heard of their dissatisfaction and was quick to again offer both institutions a place on

the Middle States Board, "in view of the fact that the smaller New England colleges seem to fear so strongly the competition of Yale and Harvard, and since this fear on their part apparently operates to hold them back from any cooperative movement." Butler argued that acceptance of his offer would not require an adjustment in Yale's or Harvard's standards of admission or represent abandonment of the New England effort. In fact, Butler believed that joining Yale and Harvard to the Middle States Board would serve as a catalyst for other institutions of the region. He concluded,

I cannot help feeling that you would begin to accomplish in New England what we feel that we have already begun to accomplish here, namely, an elevation in standard and change of point of view on the part of institutions that now admit on very easy examinations or no examinations at all."²³

Hadley and Eliot preferred to remain autonomous in making admissions decisions. However, they also embraced their responsibility to act as an independent agent, helping facilitate the development of national standards for secondary education. It was the mechanism, rather than the mission, that limited Butler's ambitious plan for formal alignment.

Simultaneous to efforts among eastern institutions to coordinate and establish a series of standard examinations, western universities that primarily admitted students on the basis of graduation from a properly accredited high school were also looking to create a more formally organized structure through which they could coordinate their efforts. The North Central Association had been founded in 1895, with a somewhat broad and overly ambitious mission.²⁴ Through its formative years, the NCA exuded little formal influence. In 1901, attempting to actively pursue its avowed goals of excellence and coordination, the NCA formed the Commission on Accredited Schools. The commission consisted of university leaders and high school principals from across the West.²⁵ Similar to efforts in the East, these meetings represented a formalization of loosely coupled cooperation regarding accreditation.

By its second meeting, the commission broached the possibility of having the association, rather than individual institutions, make accreditation visits. Michigan was quick to raise objections to the idea. Returning from the NCA meetings, University of Illinois president A. S. Draper wrote James Burrill Angell expressing concern over the NCA's plan. He noted the committee's assurances that it wished not to replace or "take control" of individual institutional inspectors but, rather, simply to

ensure greater coordination of visits and so forth. Despite such assurances, Draper was worried that the NCA would seek to take control of the inspections, and he asked Michigan to share in issuing a statement stressing that if that were the case, the leading universities of the West would “not enter into any agreement to act in concert.”²⁶ Angell was quick to state his support for a shared expression of autonomy.²⁷

Not unlike Hadley and Yale in their response to shared grading, Angell and Michigan did not object to greater coordination and standardization of expectations but did object to losing the ability to define standards and apply expectations as they saw fit. Western institutions continued to informally consult with one another regarding standards for admission and accreditation of high schools during this push toward more formalized regulation of secondary education. However, as evidenced by the responses of Hadley and Angell, the leading universities’ efforts at greater and more universal coordination generated an increased emphasis on—or at least awareness of—institutional autonomy.

In addition to witnessing attempts to create more formalized standards of admission among the eastern and western universities, this era also saw occasional efforts to bring greater uniformity to the two parallel systems of admission. Again, the debate was not over standards; the leading universities of the East did not question the expectations and regulation of secondary schools in the West. Instead, the debate revolved around the mechanism by which these standards would be established, gauged, and enforced.

The 1905 meeting of the NEA’s department of education was devoted almost exclusively to considering the relative merits of the “western system of admitting students through certificates from duly inspected secondary schools” and the “eastern method of admitting only by exam.” The meeting did little to settle the question. However, it did provide the opportunity for Missouri’s R. H. Jesse to recognize Angell as the “father of the Western system.” Angell politely demurred, reminding Jesse that this title actually belonged to Angell’s predecessor, interim president Henry Simmons Frieze. Underscoring Angell’s influence and respect among his peers, Jesse wrote to the Michigan president after the NEA meeting:

May I politely contradict you—Prof. Frieze may have planted the seed of the idea, but the plant as an effective plant was developed during your administration at Ann Arbor and has spread from Ann Arbor all over the country from the crest of the Allegheny mountains to the shore of the Pacific Ocean. The system is blooming splendidly in Missouri and we copied it consciously from you and from Michigan.²⁸

More than simply reflecting the respect and admiration with which western university presidents viewed Angell, Jesse's comments also reflected the challenges facing any efforts at formal coordination among the "admission by diploma" schools. How valuable would meetings regarding the practice be without the active input of its "father"?

Though no formal merger of the two parallel systems took place, competition for students and a desire to maintain a national presence encouraged greater overlap in the practice of admissions that characterized the regions. The leading western schools had always offered the opportunity for students to be admitted by examination and now began to offer exams more frequently and in more locations in the East. Such institutions as Michigan and Wisconsin did not, however, seek to join the examination boards, preferring to continue their autonomy. Conversely, even the most retrograde of institutions, Yale, would become a more active member of the examination boards in 1917, in response to the demands of its Sheffield Scientific School. Additionally, Yale's western alumni complained that the university's unwillingness to modify its examination system greatly hindered efforts to attract qualified students in that region. In 1911, the dean of admissions declared that Yale was "not going to have any certificate system, even if the Western Association of Yale Clubs tells us to."²⁹ In 1917, however, the school did establish an alternative admissions process by which a student's high school record was considered and the number of exams minimized.

Overlap would have little to do with the formalizing organizations. The North Central Association as well as the Middle States Board and the proponents of a New England examination board had sought to formalize relations between universities and secondary schools. They also had sought to institutionalize the mechanisms by which widely acknowledged but loosely structured national standards could be defined. However, the desire for institutional autonomy meant that university efforts as independent regulating agents were haphazardly piecemeal. Disagreement over mechanisms and a desire for exclusivity meant that formal alignment in regard to secondary schools was limited.

Defining Agency and Self-Regulation: Higher Education, the AAU, and Alignment

Efforts to standardize admission requirements failed primarily because of institutional exclusivity and concerns regarding the nature and

depth of coordination. Interestingly, these same forces drove the formation of the AAU and accounted for its success. The AAU emerged from a broader atmosphere of coordination that developed at the very turn of the century. Columbia president Nicholas Murray Butler expressed his sentiments about this atmosphere when writing to James Burrill Angell to thank him for granting leave to one of Michigan's faculty, James Hyslop, so that he might teach at Columbia.

We are, I am glad to think, entering upon a new era of university life in this country, when the various institutions of the higher learning will come to look upon themselves not as rivals in a struggle for students or for individual influence, but rather as sympathetic and helpful members of one group of cooperating forces in the development of higher civilization. It will be an important stimulus to this development, as well as evidence that it is near at hand, if such representative institutions as Columbia and the University of Michigan can lead the way in bringing about such an interchange of instructors as is suggested.³⁰

Butler perhaps overstated the end of competition. However, he did appropriately highlight the need for greater cooperation as well as the role of "representative institutions," such as Michigan and Columbia, in serving as standard-bearers and models for the whole of higher education. Additionally, Butler's suggestion also underscored the demands made by the rise of specialized knowledge and expertise among the faculty and the need for a mechanism to facilitate sharing skilled teachers and researchers. Columbia had no one to teach Hyslop's specialty of politics and ethics and was grateful for his services. Butler stressed, "the time has come when the universities of the country are sufficiently well organized and developed to permit them to undertake the occasional interchange of members of their teaching force." He also expressed his belief that such an exchange was of "great advantage" to the institutions and to professors, who gained a wider outlook and a broader experience.³¹

Demand for cooperation alone would not drive alignment and facilitate agency. The leading universities wished to coordinate with only select institutions and hoped their collective efforts would in turn influence others. Daniel Coit Gilman, upon learning of his nomination to lead the Carnegie Institution, neatly summarized these notions of exclusivity and leadership. Having been informed that Michigan's James Burrill Angell, Harvard's Charles Eliot, and Cornell's Andrew Dickson White were among those who had secured his nomination, he wrote to Angell, "we have lived to see wonderful progress in our high-

est institutions and Harvard, Cornell, and Michigan stand together in the front line of the marching column."³²

Unlike examination boards or accreditation agencies, the AAU was not conceived as—nor did it ever attempt to be—an umbrella organization, inclusive of all who wished to participate and who felt the organization was an appropriate vehicle within which to voice their concern. Instead, the AAU was essentially an organization that formalized the loosely coupled institutional cooperation (based on personal relationships) that characterized the leading universities in the post-Civil War era. Formal alignment did not arise out of the demands of independent agency or active partnership, but it greatly facilitated these efforts. This was especially true in regard to regulating the development of higher education. Rather than a federal agency, it would be the AAU, with significant support from the Carnegie Foundation, that would formally articulate and publicly present standards and expectations for academic degrees and departments, professors and facilities.

In an interesting institutional twist on America's culture of aspiration and notions regarding equality of opportunity, the AAU's exclusivity reinforced its ability to regulate the domain and to serve as standard-bearer. For example, while criticizing the AAU as a "Ph.D. trust," University of Illinois president Edmund James also actively worked to secure his school's membership, which it gained in 1908.³³ Thus, while some academic leaders might have complained of the AAU's "monopoly," almost all of them accepted (though sometimes grudgingly) its leadership role. Additionally and perhaps most important, the federal government did as well, calling upon the AAU to facilitate partnerships, consistently attending its annual meetings, and allowing the AAU to define, standardize, and speak for all of higher education as an independent agent.

*Aligning Resources: The AAU, the Carnegie Foundation,
and the Rise of Association Authority*

Having primarily been founded as a simple extension of the loosely coupled relationships that defined elite universities' early coordination, the AAU did not immediately exert a strong organizational influence. The association did serve a significant agenda-setting function, but even this was not without its hiccups. For example, in the association's formative years, Henry Walcott, a professor at Harvard, wrote to ask Yale's Arthur Twining Hadley if he would sign a letter of support and assist in bringing to the AAU a resolution requesting that Congress

pass legislation to provide tariff relief for the importation of specific research materials. Possessing his own separate agenda, Hadley was curt, to say the least.

After making such inquiries as I can, I hardly regard this as a wise thing to sign. Our leading universities have an important change in legislation in view which is vitally necessary, namely, the repeal of the US inheritance tax. This involves many hundred times as much as is connected with any matter about wax models. Under the circumstances, I think that the Presidents of our large institutions should concentrate all their attention and influence on this vital point. For that reason I am making no minor demands on the Finance committee either of the Senate or the House which distract attention from this, or can possibly weaken our influence in insisting upon it.³⁴

Hadley concluded by saying that he hoped Walcott, upon consideration, would agree with his thoughts on the matter. History does not record whether Walcott ever chose to advocate Hadley's agenda. However, properly chastened, Walcott did not call upon the AAU for support. As for the inheritance tax, despite coordinated lobbying of Congress supported by the AAU, efforts to repeal it failed. Nonetheless, the episode reflected the beginning capabilities of the association as a coordinating and agenda-setting institution.

Beyond institutional coordination and collective lobbying, the creation of the AAU allowed member schools to cooperatively pursue support from the growing number of wealthy individuals and the newly developing private foundations. Higher education had already witnessed the influence of such patronage with the founding of Rockefeller's University of Chicago.³⁵ With the foundation of the Carnegie Institution in 1902 (a research facility in Washington, D.C., initially headed by former Johns Hopkins president Daniel Coit Gilman) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1905, the nation's leading universities and the institutional entrepreneurs who guided them would work actively to cultivate the philanthropist's generosity.

Reflecting the multidirectional relationship between universities and their benefactors, Andrew Carnegie did not unilaterally develop an agenda for supporting higher education. Instead, the Carnegie Institution and the Carnegie Foundation relied on the often-coordinated entrepreneurship of university leaders. Specific foundation support was often crucial for the development of agency. The Bureau of Education's limited reach correlated with its limited resources. Universities could not rely on the government to subsidize its efforts to define national standards for higher and professional education. Instead,

leading academics worked with the Carnegie Foundation to develop standards. With the power of the purse, these national standards quickly grew to be authoritative—the criteria by which universities were assessed and to which they aspired.

One of the first efforts to cultivate specific support was spearheaded by Henry Eddy of the University of Nebraska. Writing to Cyrus Northrop of Minnesota, Charles Van Hise of Wisconsin, and James Burrill Angell of Michigan, Eddy recounted the “difficulty of providing adequate support for carrying on and enlarging graduate work.” Emphasizing that “such work has an increasingly important role in the development of higher education in this country,” Eddy expressed concern that a shortage of resources inhibited state institutions who were attempting to actively pursue graduate work.³⁶

To illuminate his point, Eddy provided a comparative analysis of graduate work (see table 4). Using data from the commissioner of education’s latest annual report (1903), Eddy concluded that private institutions were conducting graduate work of much greater value and with much greater efficiency. He also argued that the support private universities received from the Carnegie Institution contributed to this imbalance. The disparity presented troubled Eddy. Accurately foreseeing graduate education as crucial to the development of universities overall, he was alarmed by its relative absence in public institutions.

Without it [substantial graduate programs] we [state universities] are likely to suffer a steady deterioration in the morale of undergraduate faculty and students; nor need I speak of the devitalizing and asphyxiating effect of the

TABLE 4. Graduate Education at Public and Private Institutions, 1903

	Private Institutions	Public Institutions
Number of undergraduates	1,997	1,924
Number of nonprofessional graduate students	455	126
Number of instruction staff	213	150
Number of volumes in library	356,500	148,000
Value of apparatus, etc. (in million dollars)	1.098	0.243
Annual income (in million dollars)	1.021	0.557
Number of fellowships	38	2
Number of doctorates in last five years (1898–1903)	138	15

Source: U.S. Commissioner of Education, 1903 statistics.

Note: The private schools included in this analysis are: Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Pennsylvania, and Yale. The public schools included are: California, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio State, and Wisconsin.

constant withdrawal of advanced students to other institutions and the virtual discrediting of the state universities thereby.³⁷

For Eddy, the discrepancy was best addressed by active entrepreneurship—specifically, pursuing support for graduate fellowships and instruction from the Carnegie Institution. He continued: “in what way is it possible to make such a change? It seems to me that the duty and privilege of making an effective and authoritative presentation of the pressing needs of this graduate work to a well disposed and liberal capitalist rest with the leading state universities themselves.” Pursuing this end, Eddy asked Northrup, Angell, and Van Hise to enlist the cooperation of other state university presidents with the hopes of “bringing such a powerful combined influence to bear in its favor as to insure its success.” Demonstrating the tiering existent among schools, Eddy concluded by acknowledging that while the leading state universities—such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan—might not feel the need for such a push, it was hoped that they would be willing to support the “general cause.”³⁸

Northrup, Angell, and Van Hise all generally supported Eddy’s proposal. Northrup underscored his belief that if graduate education were to flourish at public institutions, it would need significant support from private benefactors, such as Carnegie.

I have always felt that we, who are connected with State universities, must keep in mind the fact, that the duty of the State is, first to provide education for the masses and that only as the lower education can be fully provided for has the State the right to spend its money for the higher education. As a result I have never felt the freedom in using the money of the State for graduate study that I feel in using it for undergraduate work.³⁹

Angell and Northrup continued to communicate and plan their approach to the Carnegie Institution. They decided that Angell, by virtue of his position as elder statesman and his relationship with Carnegie’s leadership through the AAU, should make the initial inquiry.

In reply to Angell’s inquiry asking about the possibility of Carnegie supporting graduate education at public institutions, R. S. Woodward of the Carnegie Institution noted that Angell had offered a difficult proposition. On the one hand, Woodward stressed, even Carnegie’s generosity was not enough to ensure the success of research and graduate education. On the other hand, Woodward recognized, foundation support could be useful. Woodward expressed general support for the idea but was noncommittal.⁴⁰ As Angell and his other public institution

colleagues would soon learn, there were other pressing issues that would come to top the foundation's agenda.

At the same time that Angell and his colleagues were attempting to garner Carnegie's support for graduate research and fellowship, MIT's president, Henry Pritchett, left Cambridge to assume leadership of the Carnegie Foundation. The foundation was founded to expand on the particularized research work of the Carnegie Institution and provide for the general improvement of American education. In pursuit of this end, the foundation's first priority was the establishment of pensions for college faculty. Pritchett had first proposed such a system while at MIT. As head of Carnegie's newest effort, Pritchett had the opportunity to make his entrepreneurial ambition a reality.⁴¹

Upon taking the foundation position and learning of Angell's efforts, Pritchett politely suggested to Angell that the latter's energies might be better spent elsewhere. Specifically, Pritchett advised that Angell focus on having public universities included among the institutions for which Carnegie might endow professors' pensions. As Carnegie was currently considering which institutions were to receive such funds, Pritchett's "judgment" was "that it is not well now to raise any further question with him concerning the state universities until this has been decided." Pritchett candidly stressed that his advice to Carnegie was that he refrain from including state universities "until the experiment had been tried elsewhere." He also expressed his belief that since state universities had succeeded in establishing clearly the principle that the state should support higher education, he doubted the wisdom of wholesale endowment for all the states and believed they would not suffer if they waited a year or two.⁴²

In addition to providing guidance regarding an appropriate agenda for public universities' cultivation of private philanthropy, Pritchett also worked to further interactions between Carnegie and the AAU. The Carnegie Institution had hosted the AAU's annual meeting the year before, and upon taking the leadership of the Carnegie Foundation, Pritchett built on this relationship. The CFAT itself would soon become an invitee. Thereafter, the AAU's executive committee, of which Pritchett was a member, would often meet in the CFAT's offices. Once Carnegie committed to endowing pensions for professors, AAU institutions would have a significant influence over the process. Pritchett actively communicated with Michigan's Angell, Wisconsin's Van Hise, California's Benjamin Ide Wheeler, Harvard's Charles Eliot, Columbia's Nicholas Murray Butler, and many others. The AAU thus worked with the Carnegie Foundation in a fashion similar to how it

had partnered with the federal government. The association often found itself speaking not only for its members but also for all of higher education as a domain.

The relationship between alignment and agency could most readily be seen in the controversy over pensions for professors at publicly supported institutions. When the CFAT formally announced the establishment of the pension fund, it listed forty-six colleges and universities whose faculty were entitled to support.⁴³ Noticeably omitted from the list were Rockefeller's University of Chicago as well as "all institutions having formal denominational ties" and "all institutions controlled and supported by a state, province or municipality." Additionally, as in most every "national" initiative in American higher education, schools from the South were sorely underrepresented. The announcement stressed that "a number of these institutions, in time, might make clear their right to a place in the list." It also stated that public universities would have their status considered as a class at the next meeting of the Carnegie trustees, scheduled for the coming November.⁴⁴ Such assurances did little to mitigate the inevitable controversy that followed. The foundation justified its initial decision with the argument that it hoped state legislatures would provide for such support. The presidents of state-supported institutions derided such an assumption as "highly unrealistic."⁴⁵

The November 1906 meeting of the Carnegie trustees did nothing to settle the question of public universities, and over the next year, negotiations between the representatives of public institutions and Pritchett would continue. Ostensibly, the National Association of State Universities was to discuss appropriate standards and expectations with the Carnegie Foundation. However, as negotiations continued, Pritchett and Harvard's Eliot, who was chairman of the foundation's trustees, worked almost exclusively with their colleagues from the AAU, Wisconsin's Van Hise (whose institution was a member of the NASU), and Michigan's Angell (whose institution was not), in an effort to reach a compromise. Beyond the issue of state legislatures' responsibility for the pensions was the question of exact qualifying criteria that should be applied to petitioning institutions.

After meeting with Pritchett and Eliot in Chicago in January 1908, Van Hise expressed to Angell his disappointment with the fact that Pritchett seemed permanently wedded "to [the] view that ultimately state universities should provide for their own retirement allowances." Van Hise still was hopeful, as further conversations with Eliot suggested that there might be room for compromise. With this in mind, he

attached a statement for publication, which he requested Angell join his fellow public university presidents in signing. The brief statement simply urged the Carnegie Foundation to broaden its scope and stressed the belief that “the great and admirable purpose of CFAT to elevate the profession of teaching in American cannot be accomplished until tax-supported institutions are embraced by it.”⁴⁶

Angell signed Van Hise’s statement and, more important, continued to work with all of those concerned (Van Hise, Pritchett, and Eliot) to develop an acceptable set of standards. Additionally, all four men worked closely with their colleagues at the AAU to ensure consensus among the leading universities. In March 1908, Carnegie wrote Pritchett of his intentions to add to the fund in order to extend opportunities to public institutions as well: “from the numerous letters I have received from pensioners and their wives and the warm approval of the press and the public, I am satisfied that this Fund is, and must be for all time, productive of lasting good, not only to the recipients but to the cause of higher education.”⁴⁷ Though subtly, Carnegie’s announcement underscored the significance he placed on the development of standards.

With this motivation, Van Hise, Angell, and Pritchett intensified their efforts. Among the largest hurdles was a debate between Van Hise and Angell over whether the foundation should have separate standards for public institutions in regard to income and endowment. Angell believed such distinctions were necessary, as state legislatures were rarely as generous in their appropriations as private benefactors were in their endowments. Van Hise disagreed with Angell. In a letter to Pritchett that he forwarded to Angell, Van Hise argued that there should be general rules governing all institutions. Saying that the “gracious thing” would be to have a strictly general rule, Van Hise asked, “why should a good college named a university and supported by the state be treated differently than private schools” with the same name.⁴⁸

After another series of meetings and further letter writing, Pritchett, Eliot, Angell, and Van Hise finally came to a workable compromise. In May, the CFAT issued a public statement establishing criteria for public universities that could petition it. Admission to the “list of approved institutions” was open to “all universities whose educational standard, plan of government, and endowment” met CFAT standards, which were specified at length. Fearing that bad publicity and a backlash might come from the perception that it was forcing these pensions on the states, the foundation stressed that public institutions would need the support of the governor and the state legislature to apply. How-

ever, the foundation also “reserve[d] the right to decline application of a school if it is subject to political control or interference which, in the opinion of the Trustees of the Foundation, impairs its educational efficiency.” The foundation also reserved the right to discontinue the program for any school not meeting requirements but stressed that such an action should not affect those already granted pensions.⁴⁹

Despite these restrictions, a number of public universities applied for consideration. Initially, only four were accepted, three in the United States (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) and one in Canada (the University of Toronto). Writing Angell to inform him of the foundation’s decision, Pritchett implied that others who were possibly worthy of acceptance but did not meet all of the foundation’s stated requirements, such as California and Virginia, had their applications “post-poned” in the belief that such a decision would lead these state universities to “take action” in order to make “academic progress.”⁵⁰

By including public universities as well as private, Pritchett and the Carnegie Institution, with the significant assistance of Angell and Van Hise, had now brought greater force to efforts at standardization and regulation of higher education. Notably, the federal government was all the while a bystander. The pension fund had become a mechanism for enforcing standards and expectations and furthering pursuit of a “national university.” Carnegie’s money had become the carrot that those seeking to improve the quality of higher education attached to the stick of minimum expectations. A minimum definition of a college or university had been established. The foundation’s authority was by no means absolute, nor was it necessarily arbitrary.

Strikingly, the standards had been primarily defined through a consensus between members of the AAU and representatives of the Carnegie Foundation. Pritchett, Eliot, Angell, and Van Hise all represented a plurality of interests. Pritchett might have been president of the CFAT, but he was also chairman of the AAU’s committee on purpose and scope. Thus, the Carnegie Foundation provided the required money and power to support efforts at standardization, while the AAU provided the necessary credibility and institutional authority.

Defining by Degrees: The AAU and the Standardization of Credentials

Correspondent to their efforts in conjunction with Carnegie, members of the AAU worked actively to define the specifics of higher education. Their work with the Carnegie Foundation had focused primarily on internal factors: income, admissions, and governance. The AAU, on its

own, sought to more thoroughly define and standardize universities' relationships with one another as well as with the national state and society as a whole. Thus, while the Carnegie Foundation established expectations to which universities could aspire, the AAU set about developing a common language and universal expectations by which all the nation's universities could interact.

As had occurred with the joint Carnegie-AAU efforts to establish minimum requirements, the common language and shared expectations were developed not by the government itself but, rather, by coordinated universities working as its agent. The uniqueness of this arrangement was even more apparent when one recognized that the AAU and its member institutions would frequently stand as representatives of American interests in dealings with foreign governments. The leading universities often served as academic ambassadors, doing so not just as active partners of the national state—such as when sending delegates to international conferences—but also as independent agents making their own entrepreneurial arrangements on behalf of American higher education.

One remarkable example of this was the creation of the Theodore Roosevelt Professorship in 1905 between Columbia University and the University of Berlin. Less than fifteen years before their two nations would be at war, Columbia's president Nicholas Murray Butler had arranged for a leading American scholar to be appointed to the University of Berlin faculty for a year to lecture in areas that "reasonably well represent the field of American History and Institutions." In Berlin, the appointments were to be formally made by the Prussian ministry of education, with the emperor's sanction. Contrastingly, in the United States, nominations to these professorships were to be made by Columbia, in consultation with the nation's "other leading universities."⁵¹

In the previous year, the Prussian ministry of education not only decided to accept bachelor's degrees from AAU institutions as the equivalent of certificates from gymnasiums but also agreed to grant credit for graduate work done at AAU institutions. With this Prussian acceptance in mind, as well as a general desire to facilitate "graduate migration" (students attending graduate school at institutions different than those at which they went to college), the AAU set about trying to define what various academic credentials and curriculum meant. In doing so, the AAU had quickly moved beyond its initial concern with solely graduate education. The AAU's leaders did stress that their primary concern was "advanced study," but this term was purposely vague and taken to include even sophisticated undergraduate work.⁵²

Since the leading universities were becoming ever more concerned

with “advanced study,” the association’s scope naturally expanded in relevance, if not in breadth. The association’s two broadest efforts to define standards involved university nomenclature and academic credentials. Both efforts were critical not only for seeking standards and expectations but also for attempting to create a template by which American universities could interact with one another and with other organizations and institutions, even those of other countries.

The association’s Committee on Nomenclature presented its first report at the meeting of January 1909. The committee expressed frustration at the fact that “no consensus” existed even among the nation’s leading institutions on the definition for such common terms as *course*, *school*, *college*, *department*, and *division*.

It appears from the foregoing that universities, the institutions which are supposed to systematize and advance knowledge, which ought to illustrate the principles of education in their organizations as far as practicable, have permitted without protest a hopeless confusion of nomenclature which would not be tolerated in any of the sciences.

In sorting through the confusion of academic phraseology, the committee stressed the importance of the term *college*.

It is clear that the history of the college in America, worthy of its English source, demands that the term should be the largest and most dignified in the university. The very fact that this term has been applied at Columbia, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, from one to three centuries, for their colleges of liberal arts, or what was until recently almost their entire institutions, requires this.

The committee continued on to define the terms *school*, *course*, *department*, and *division*. The committee stressed that such specificity was necessary for the appropriate systemization and specialization of higher education concerns.

The definitions suggested appear to your committee to assign to the various terms the meanings which are the fairest compromises they have been able to work out under the principles of giving each term its best and widest uses, and at the same time, restricting each term to a single meaning, and this last must be done if the theorists of education are ever to gain the respect of the scientists.⁵³

To the modern observer, it might seem a bit elementary and pedantic to define such terms as *college*, *school*, or *course*. However, as newly redefined organizations, the leading universities sought to establish parameters through which their activities, their missions, and their relations to state and society would be universally understood.

Having defined the structures that housed specialized knowledge and expertise, the AAU next sought to define the degrees and credentials that publicly represented such knowledge and expertise. Once again, as good organizational men of the early twentieth century, these academic leaders did not undertake this effort through a large, inclusive and democratic initiative. Instead, they assigned a committee to study the matter. After surveying their membership as well as others, the AAU's Committee on Academic and Professional Degrees reported to the association in November 1916.

The committee began by stressing it had worked under two assumptions. Its first assumption was that it was the "function of the committee to formulate an acceptable statement of principles regarding academic degrees and the conditions under which they should be conferred." The committee maintained, "Advice rather than precept is intended." In presenting this report, the committee and, by extension, the overall association did not wish to appear autocratic. However, as I will discuss further, they also had reason to believe that their recommendations would be heeded. The committee's second assumption was that "the existing status is comparatively satisfactory as regards the degrees more commonly conferred."⁵⁴

The committee then summarized their assumptions regarding the shared standards for academic degrees: a four-year curriculum for a bachelor's and at least one year of advanced work beyond the bachelor's for a master's. It was believed that the PhD should be only "conferred for advanced work in which independent investigation occupies an essential place." The committee stipulated: "The results of this investigation should be set forth in a thesis worthy of publication. The amount and character of the work should be such that the degree rarely could be attained in less than 3 years following the attainment of a bachelor's degree or its equivalent."⁵⁵

Having developed standards for the primary university credentials, the committee then undertook efforts to coordinate these fundamental degrees with professional degrees, helped by the American Medical Association, the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education, and the Association of American Law Schools. After conferring with these professional associations, the committee reported back with eleven specific recommendations. Some recommendations—for example, that "multiplication of degrees is to be avoided" and that bachelor's students who complete a second bachelor's curriculum should get a second bachelor's degree—were fairly obvious. Other recommendations were more substantial and reflected significant efforts to bring

order to the chaotic academic marketplace. Among these was the acceptance of the growing practice, driven by ever increasing specialization, of supplementing degrees with the fields of study, as with a "BA (Commerce)." The committee also felt that while the sciences and the professions offered opportunities for research, such efforts were not "higher training in research as opposed to practice"; they thus believed that, rather than the PhD, efforts at advanced work in a professional field should be recognized with the degree Doctor of Science. Though ambitious in its recommendations, the committee also recognized that there would be limits to its influence. It stated in its report: "certain exceptions to the principles above outlined have become so firmly established in practice that they must be regarded as permanent. Chief among these is the degree of MD."⁵⁶ The committee recognized the great flux and transition of higher education in the early twentieth century. Not wishing the association to be stagnant or caught unaware of credentialing challenges that would naturally occur with the increase in specialized knowledge and expertise, the committee concluded,

"for dealing with outstanding cases and others that will probably arise, the committee recommends creation of a standing committee to observe the development of academic and professional degrees, to aid so far as feasible in directing such development along lines acceptable to the Association, and to report to the Association."⁵⁷

The association unanimously accepted the committee's recommendations and gladly established a standing committee. The accomplishment in establishing basic standards was substantial. Incidents from a prospective graduate student inquiring as to the possibility of receiving a PhD in absentia for practical life experience and individual research to university presidents suggesting the creation of new degrees (e.g., Western Reserve University's Phillip Twilling proposed a Doctor of Arts)⁵⁸ showed that a shared understanding of the specific scope and meaning of university credentials was lacking. The AAU, acting as an independent regulatory agency, provided that necessary commonality for the American state.

The Authority of Aspiration: Formal Alignment and the Expansion of Membership

Considering the AAU's authority and ability to influence the shape of higher education and, thereby, all the fields, disciplines, and professions that relied on universities for the production and codification of specialized knowledge and expertise, one is still left wondering from

whence its authority came. The power underwriting the influence of such an organization as the Carnegie Foundation was clear. Colleges and universities needed to meet specific standards enforced, if not fully established, by the CFAT for their professors to be eligible for pensions. The authority of the AAU was much subtler and thus, I would argue, much more significant.

The association's authority was built on two independent but very highly related factors, exclusivity and aspiration. As an organization consisting of the leading universities in the country, the AAU would provide a benchmark for all of higher education. Correspondingly, many universities and their presidents who were not members of the association would eagerly seek membership even, as I have discussed earlier, while criticizing the association as monopolistic. The AAU's authority was enhanced by the sanction it received from the federal state. By turning to the AAU for representation at international meetings or for guidance in partnerships with universities, the federal government acknowledged the AAU's role as arbiter and overseer and, more important, its position as a collective "national university." The association's relations with and parallels to foreign governments' ministries of education served to enhance this position as well.

The association was keenly aware of the stir its perceived exclusivity and membership practices caused. Recognizing its standardizing and sanctioning role, especially in regard to American schools and their students' relationships with foreign universities, the association expressed a desire to ensure that all "reasonably qualified" institutions were admitted. In 1904, the University of Virginia was admitted. Over the next few years, a large group of institutions would ask to be considered for membership. Among them were a number of midwestern state universities (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Ohio State) that would eventually be admitted to the AAU. The inclusion of these schools would expand the representation of western institutions, but the South, aside from Virginia, remained an essentially nonexistent presence on the national academic scene. The association accepted the midwestern state universities gradually. After announcing its interest in expanding in 1906, the AAU, upon receiving the applications of all those interested, chose to postpone action. Van Hise reported to Angell:

There were such a large number of institutions considered and no one or two of these could be picked out as distinctly superior to the others, that the Association took no action in favor of admitting any institution, and no nominations were made for admission for next year, so that question seems to be postponed for at least two years.⁵⁹

The University of Illinois and the University of Minnesota were admitted soon thereafter. The process of expansion had begun.

Typical of the pursuit of membership were the efforts of Northwestern University. In 1908, Northwestern asked to be considered for membership. Before formally contacting the association, the university's president, A. W. Harris, asked for the advice of his colleague James Burrill Angell, former AAU secretary. Harris claimed (one would assume mistakenly rather than falsely) that when the association was founded, Northwestern had been asked to join but, owing to the absence of the university's President from the country, was not able to attend the initial meeting.⁶⁰ Harris expressed understanding that the AAU was "adverse" to expansion of its members, but he said that he felt compelled by this historical anecdote—no matter its accuracy—to ask for consideration. Additionally, he stressed:

We have been embarrassed, as I suppose other institutions have been, by the fact that membership in this association has been made the basis for public recognition of graduate work in this country, and I am now troubled by finding that it is likely to interfere with the foreign recognition of some of our professional degrees.

Harris was hesitant to push the issue but maintained that "the embarrassments noted above and the admission of several universities at the last meeting of the Association make me feel that I ought to do so."⁶¹

Angell was less than encouraging, underscoring the association's desire to remain limited in size.⁶² Harris was grateful for Angell's advice. However, again he felt compelled to press the question despite his personal misgivings: "it seems a little like presenting myself at a social function uninvited. But I feel I am forced to do so because of the embarrassment to which you refer arising out of the action of the foreign universities."⁶³ Angell understood Harris's concerns and forwarded his request to the AAU's secretary for consideration. No formal application procedure existed, but Harris's request was acknowledged and forwarded on to the AAU's committee on aim and scope.

At its next meeting, in October 1908, the committee considered Northwestern's request as well as that of the University of Louisville. Both were "passed over without prejudice." Disappointed and concerned about the consequences for its professional and graduate students seeking experience in Europe, Harris still expressed understanding. The AAU's charter was to focus on "advanced study," and the lack of a formally organized graduate school did not help Northwestern's chances. Not coincidentally, soon after the university formally organized a graduate school in 1917, it was asked to join.

The AAU clearly was in many ways a club. However, exclusivity was not its only asset; tangible benefits in terms of recognition of degrees and opportunities to define the national educational and public agenda through partnerships and agency accompanied membership. Reflecting generally on his efforts as president and specifically on pursuit of AAU membership as well as Carnegie funding, Edwin Alderman of Virginia dramatically explained his ambition. In a fairly personal expression, Alderman underscored to his friend Henry Higginson that AAU membership and placement on the list of Carnegie institutions were fundamental to his efforts. He then spoke of his overall aspirations.

I came to the University of Virginia because I believed it to be a creative Institution. The University of Virginia was in sore need of more means and better organization and of a more democratic attitude towards society. In architectural setting, in material equipment, in number and strength of faculty, and a certain dignity of achievement, it was, and is, unquestionably the most considerable educational achievement of the States between the Gulf and the Potomac river. I sought to enrich it, and to organize and to democratize it, as its Founder intended, by so relating it to all the other phases of education as to achieve unity of purpose in our whole educational order, and to introduce into it a concept of service to the state and Nation as the ruling idea.

My desire was to do all this, and yet not vulgarize or cheapen its conceptions of culture, nor to put out of sight its fellowship with high feeling and poetic understanding. In other words, I wished it to be what Jefferson intended it to be, the leader of a great region entering into an industrial democracy, and somewhat tardily getting ready to reap the benefits and face the perils of such a social order. I think I have done a number of these things under conditions of fair difficulty. There is a new spirit, compounded of reasonableness and hope and adaptation to environment and passion for service to the State and country.⁶⁴

Needless to say, membership in the AAU and inclusion in the Carnegie fund were not solely responsible for Alderman's sense of accomplishment. However, his words reflect a desire to establish and maintain a national presence.

Before the foundation of the AAU, a university's national presence and ability to shape the American educational and policy agenda was largely dictated by personal connections. The AAU did not eliminate such considerations, but it did institutionalize relations that had been previously informal. More important, it greatly expanded the capabilities for coordination. As witnessed by the AAU's relations with prospective members, such coordination accentuated the ability of leading institutions to act as independent agents of the national state. It

was not only the prestige of the AAU but also the opportunity it represented that provided leverage and led to its essential position as a practical substitute for a federally chartered university and/or regulatory agency.

The Great War and Redefinition: The AAU as Network

The escalation of tensions in Europe and the United States' eventual entry into World War I did not alter the AAU's fundamental role as primary coordinator and representative of America's higher education interests. The war would place new demands and expectations on America's universities. Starting with the height of the war and especially intensifying at its conclusion, public debate began over the role and function of education generally and higher education specifically.

Some academics, such as Columbia Teachers College dean James Russell, complained that not enough time was being spent "teaching democracy" and stressed a desire to free American education from "German standards of scholarship and efficiency which have controlled the policy of our universities."⁶⁵ Others, such as an editorialist identified in the *New York Times* only as "a university professor now in the service of the United States," praised universities' work on behalf of the war effort and suggested that, after the war, they would become simply "schools for national efficiency." He continued: "if ever an institution has justified itself, in the eyes of the public at a time of national crisis, it is the American university of today. It rendered an invaluable service in helping to mobilize and direct the nation's resources."⁶⁶ This sentiment had been expressed earlier in a report by Secretary of the Interior Arthur Lane. Lane, in conjunction with a number of leading academics, issued a report "upholding higher education."

In the progress of its work the committee has sought to show how essential it is, if the Government's far-reaching military plans are to be carried out successfully, that the processes of higher education be maintained at the highest possible efficiency, especially those which have to do with the future supply of men and women trained in scientific and technical subjects, including teachers in these fields. The people of the United States should recognize that the maintenance of the war strength of the nation in its full power demands the utmost efforts of all existing well organized and adequately equipped colleges, universities, and technical schools. This means ever increasing and more devoted bodies of students as well as faculties.

Young people . . . should develop especially those scientific and practical branches of study which are essential to the winning of the war, to the development of our industries and commerce, and to accomplishment of the

tasks of the civic and political life of the nation. Educational institutions should use every effort to make the opportunities and privileges of training for public service accessible to all suitably prepared men and women of college age.⁶⁷

As the war came to its conclusion, the debate still raged, with many of the leading universities taking a centrist position. On the one hand, academics wished to continue emphasizing research and expertise. On the other, the war experience had cautioned them against pursuing expertise for its own sake. Speaking soon after the war, Columbia's Nicholas Murray Butler warned:

We have forgotten what we study for. There has been too much study of the machinery and details of government, and not enough comprehension of the principles on which good government is based.

The war has taught the lesson that the proper place of efficiency is the servant of a moral ideal. We shall make a criminal blunder if the war teaches us to imitate Germany in any particular.⁶⁸

At the same time that academics pursued such moral ideals, there also remained a fear of excessive patriotism and emotion in governance, at the price of rationality. Speaking at Yale's 1919 convocation, Hadley stressed that the expansion of the national state had heightened the need for the university to pursue expertise and supply calm.

Democracy is a very different thing now from what it was twenty years ago. The public demands government action on a great many matters which previous generations left individuals to settle for themselves. The motives for demanding government action are generally good; but the results are often bad.

It is just this emotional attitude of passion that creates the chief danger to American politics today. Men have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They mistake prejudice for fact, and think that good intentions can take the place of careful examination of evidence. No government which manages its affairs on the basis of prejudice rather than evidence can long endure. We must help the community to examine evidence and exercise self-control; and the best way that we can do this for many years to come is by ourselves setting the example of self-control.⁶⁹

At war's end, the university, like much of American society, found itself undergoing redefinition, especially in regard to pursuing research and defining expertise.

Crucially, the leading universities had mechanisms in place to facilitate this process. The recently expanded AAU would be essential in maintaining and refining universities' relationships as active partners and independent agents of the national state. The association's agenda for its annual meetings of 1919 and 1920 dealt almost exclusively with

the role of research and specialized knowledge in universities' relations with government, private industry, and one another. Correspondingly, as the primary organization responsible for defining such relationships, the meetings of this supposedly exclusive organization were attended not only by member institutions but by representatives of forty-three other colleges and universities, as well as representatives of a variety of related organizations.⁷⁰ Despite the upheaval accompanying the war, the formal alignment and institutional prestige of the institutions of the AAU had helped collectively establish the association and its members as a defining force for the American state's enterprise of expertise.