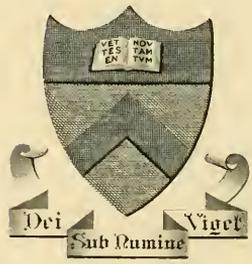


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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

PRESIDENT

OF

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

1903

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER, 1903

PRINCETON, December 10, 1903.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

I am gratified, in looking back over the fourteen months which have elapsed since my last report, to find that I can lay before you a statement of the condition of the University which is on the whole very encouraging. It is my own impression and the impression of my colleagues in the Faculty that there is manifest among the students of the University a slowly increasing soberness and diligence in their studies, a growing sense of responsibility, a frank readiness to submit to all fair and reasonable discipline; and we are convinced that it is only necessary to give the courses of study a new and more coherent organization and greater vitality of method to lift the intellectual work of the University to the highest level of interest and energy for which we can hope with our present force and equipment.

The report of the Dean of the University at the October meeting of the Board shows how marked an improvement has been noticed in the examinations, at least on the academic side of the University. Only half as many men came under discipline for failure at the June examinations as at the examinations in February. On the scientific side there was not the same improvement,—partly because our entrance requirements admit men insufficiently prepared, or rather insufficiently matured, for the severe test of such courses as that in civil engineering; partly because the rules of the University with regard to the standards to be maintained at examinations have not been as firmly and consistently enforced on the scientific as on the academic side. This latter ground of difference will presently disappear, and we shall then be in a much better position to judge what addi-

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tional requirements for entrance or what new adaptations in methods of instruction we ought to adopt to put the scholarship of the two sides of the University upon the same footing of efficiency.

Of the material growth of the University you have all been witnesses: a great gymnasium has been added by the generosity of our alumni and friends, a fine heat and light plant has been put at our disposal by the public spirited generosity of the group of gentlemen who have established the University Power Company, and the Class of '79 is pushing towards completion a new dormitory, now partially under roof, which the contractors confidently expect to finish before the close of the present university year. Every month sees something done to put our buildings and grounds into more perfect repair or to add some touch of greater beauty or convenience to them. The cost of maintenance and improvement is for the present very great and constitutes a serious and quite disproportionate drain on our income, but it is confidently hoped that when we have once put our property into a condition of thorough repair and serviceability it will be possible to maintain it for considerably less than we are now spending.

We have been so unfortunate as to lose from our Faculty by resignation two of its most conspicuous members,—men whom we could ill afford to lose,—Professor John Huston Finley, of the Department of Politics, who left us to assume the Presidency of the College of the City of New York, and Professor James Mark Baldwin, of the Department of Philosophy, who has accepted the headship of a new department in Johns Hopkins University, which is meant to afford him special opportunities to follow his favorite lines of research. Professor Finley had taken a singularly strong hold alike upon the minds and upon the affections of the undergraduates, and had endeared himself to all of us as not only a man of the finer sort of force and influence but also a most loyal friend and colleague. Professor Baldwin put all his students under the stimulus of an original mind, contributed a touch of enthusiasm to the advanced work in Psychology, and himself made Princeton one of the centres of psychological

investigation and theory. I deeply regret the necessity which took such men from us.

I hope to be able at the next meeting of the Board to nominate for Professor Baldwin's chair a man who may confidently be expected to restore to the department the full efficiency which, in our first disappointment, it seemed in danger of losing permanently by the departure of so eminent a scholar. The vacancy created by Professor Finley's withdrawal has already been filled by the election of Mr. Harry Augustus Garfield, of Cleveland, Ohio, whose acceptance of the place assures the maintenance of the best traditions of the department. Mr. Garfield has won a reputation for character and ability at the bar of Cleveland, and a reputation for public spirit and for sagacity and capacity in affairs in connection with movements to reform city government and to put the consular service of the United States upon a footing of professional efficiency, which have brought him the warm admiration of thoughtful and observant men all over the country. He has studied his profession like a scholar and followed it like a man of affairs, and contributes to our working force in the University both character and achievement.

Those of us who directly handle the affairs of the University know that it grows like a living thing, almost in spite of us and in ways which sometimes seem independent of our control. In reality, however, its vital forces need our constant guidance; and at no time has this been more apparent than it is now. The Faculty is not conveniently organized either for instruction or for business and the course of study has by mere incidental growth lost system. The curriculum has become a variety of studies, but has almost entirely lost its character as a course of study. The Faculty Committee on the Course of Study, of which I have the pleasure of being chairman, has taken up the work of reconstruction with great seriousness, and we are holding weekly meetings to push the business forward, regarding it as preliminary to all the plans of the University for the next generation.

Notwithstanding our earnest diligence in the matter, we shall, I fear, have to ask you to be very patient in awaiting the result. It is too complex a piece of business to be finished before the end of the present academic year, if, indeed, we are fortunate enough to finish it within that time. The chief earnest of our success lies in the fact that we are agreed upon the necessity and upon the method. We are agreed that the academic Freshman year should be left substantially as it is, a year in which all our new students, coming from all parts of the country and from all sorts of preparatory schools, may be whipped into shape for the work of the years which are to follow. If we make any attempt to modify it we will probably add to it a preliminary science course adapted to serve as a general introduction to the group of sciences from which the student will be called upon to choose his studies in Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years. Beyond freshman year we are planning to open to the student a choice among no less than ten courses of study.

It is our purpose to build each of these courses around some one substantial body of studies: one, for example, around the distinctively philosophical courses, one around the courses in history and politics, one around the classical studies, one around the English language and literature, one around the mathematical studies, one around the natural sciences, others around the physical sciences, etc. But each "Group," as we shall call it, though its emphasis will lie upon some one body of studies, to which the student may be said to be giving his special attention, will be made, so far as possible, symmetrical by the prescription of other studies which will round it out and give it the character of a liberal discipline. Every scientific group, for example, will be rounded by prescribed literary and philosophical studies, every literary or philosophical group by prescribed scientific courses, so that each group may be in itself, as it were, a well-considered liberal curriculum.

The variety of our courses of instruction will, we hope, enable us to do this without making any given group too rigid or too narrow. We see no reason why we may not give to the student a certain range of choice of courses within

the particular group he selects. But we have not yet got far enough into the details of our work to see exactly how this purpose is to be expressed in practice.

It is our strong conviction that the A. B. and B. S courses should be drawn together into a common system, and we confidently expect to be able when we have worked out the groups of study on the academic side of the University to open a majority of the groups thus constructed to the candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Science, adding, it may be, to our scheme a few groups specially adapted to their requirements where their studies sharply diverge, by their own choice, from those of the candidates for the degree in Arts. Such changes will do away with all that is artificial in our present distinction between the School of Science and the Academic Department of the University. The greater part of that distinction is now, as the result of many accidents of growth and development, purely artificial, and we shall gain much in facility and efficiency by closely uniting the two sides in respect of the studies which they have in common.

Such changes will no doubt render the present organization of the body of instructors into three faculties awkward and antiquated; but I shall not suggest any change of administrative organization in this respect until the courses of study are worked out and we are able to judge upon considering them as a whole what methods and machinery of administration would be likely to prove most serviceable and convenient.

There is, however, no such reason for delaying the reorganization of the teaching force of the University for the purpose of instruction which the Board was kind enough to authorize me to effect by the resolution passed at its June meeting. It has long seemed desirable to draw all instructors in the same or similar branches of study together, whether separated by the artificial line between the School of Science and the Academic Department or not, into departments, and to place each department under the chairmanship of a head. I have, therefore, organized the following departments: I. Philosophy; II. History and Politics;

III. Art and Archæology; IV. Classics; V. Mathematics; VI. English; VII. Modern Languages; VIII. The Natural Sciences; IX. Physics; X. Chemistry; XI. Astronomy. Over each of these, except the department of Art and Archæology, which is for the present to remain without a complete organization, I have placed a Chairman: over the department of Philosophy, Professor Alexander Thomas Ormond; over the department of History and Politics, Professor Winthrop More Daniels; over the department of Classics, Professor Andrew Fleming West; over the department of Mathematics, Professor Henry Burchard Fine; over the department of English, Professor Theodore Whitefield Hunt; over the department of Modern Languages, Professor Williamson Updike Vreeland; over the department of Natural Science, Professor William Berryman Scott; over the department of Physics, Professor Cyrus Fogg Brackett; over the department of Chemistry, Professor Fred Neher; and over the department of Astronomy, Professor Charles Augustus Young.

I have thought it best that, for the present at any rate, the appointment of the heads of departments should be from year to year. I have defined the duties of the head of a department as follows:

1. To call and preside over meetings of the department.
2. To effect joint counsel in the department upon all points which concern it as a whole, particularly with regard to the coördination of courses, changes in the course of study, and the distribution of duties among the several members of the department.
3. To speak for the department in all administrative dealings with the President of the University.
4. To represent the department in all nominations of instructors and in all proposals made to the Faculty with regard to the institution of new or the modification of old courses of instruction.
5. To perform such further duties in connection with the work of the department as the President of the University may assign him.

The estimate of income and expenditure made by the Treasurer of the University in his annual budget statement shows a probable deficit of several thousand dollars on the academic side and probably something over two thousand dollars surplus on the School of Science side. The number of students entering the School of Science this year for the first time exceeds the number entering the Academic Department of the University; the large majority of those who enter the School of Science pursue the courses which lead to the degree of Bachelor of Science; and the courses which the candidates for that degree select lie, at any rate in the upper years, rather more on the academic than on the scientific side, both sides of the University being open to them. No doubt, when the courses of study are reconstructed upon the plan I have already outlined it will be still harder, still more a mere arbitrary process, to distinguish between academic and scientific students, except in respect of the degree they are seeking. Candidates for the degree in science will in perhaps the majority of cases be pursuing the same courses with candidates for the degree in arts. These circumstances make it seem worth while to reconsider our budget in such a way as to devote the funds of the School of Science, so far as they will suffice, entirely to the support of strictly scientific courses, and those of the Academic Department to the support of the literary, linguistic, and philosophical studies, for the sake alike of economy and of convenience.

No readjustment of the funds, however, would make the present income of the University adequate to its existing needs. The necessity for increased endowments becomes more painfully manifest every day to those of us who are engaged in the actual work of administration. If the present condition of the money market and of the industries of the country makes the raising of such endowment as we need for the time being impracticable, it will, I think, be necessary for us to raise an emergency fund for the purpose of meeting current deficits and tiding us over a time of actual embarrassment.

WOODROW WILSON.

