



Center Panel of Frieze of Seven Panels presented to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and placed in Huntington Hall by the Class of 1905.

For other six panels see page 303.

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THE "PROPOSED AGREEMENT" WITH HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

On May 4, 1904, the Corporation of the Institute, by a majority vote, passed the following motion:—

That the Executive Committee be requested to ascertain whether any arrangement can be made with Harvard University for a combination of effort in technical education such as will substantially preserve the organization, control, traditions, and the name of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

On Dec. 14, 1904, the same body voted:—

That the President is authorized to request, on the part of the Corporation, the opinion of the Faculty as to the possible advantages or disadvantages of the proposed plan for a combination of effort with Harvard University from an educational standpoint, and is authorized further to refer the plan to the alumni for an expression of their opinion in regard to it, all this information to be available to the Corporation before definite action is taken.

On March 24, 1905, the Executive Committee of the Corporation presented to that body, without comment, a "Proposed Agreement" between the Institute and Harvard University, prepared, in obedience to the vote of May, 1904, by a Conference Committee, of which President Pritchett and Professor A. Lawrence Lowell were the members representing the Institute. This "Proposed Agreement" was discussed on that day, and again on March 30; but the Corporation took no action other than to vote:—

That the question [of the proposed agreement] be referred to the Faculty and alumni, and their opinion be reported to the Corporation not later than June 1, 1905.

On May 5, 1905, in response to the Corporation's request, and after exhaustive consideration and debate, the Faculty, by a vote of fifty-six to seven, adopted a comprehensive report, declaring the "Proposed Agreement" to be, in their opinion, educationally unsound and prejudicial to the Institute's development.

On June 1, 1905, also in response to the Corporation's request, the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association reported to the President the manner in which the vote of the alumni had been secured, and the results of that vote, as follows:—

Alumni in favor of the proposed agreement	458
Alumni opposed to proposed agreement	1,351
Alumni unclassified	22
Former students (not graduates) in favor of proposed agreement . .	376
Opposed to proposed agreement	684
Unclassified	11

The report of the Faculty (eight to one) against the "Proposed Agreement" and the figures of the alumni vote (graduates, three to one, and non-graduates, two to one, against the agreement) being before the Corporation, that body, on June 9, 1905, nevertheless voted (twenty-three to fifteen in a total membership of forty-seven) that

The Executive Committee be requested, when they may ascertain that the Institute has power to sell the land on which it now stands, to propose to Harvard University an agreement upon the terms of the tentative plan now before this Corporation.

To appreciate the full significance of this action of the Corporation in its relation to the opinions of the Faculty and alumni, it is necessary to recall the earlier statements of the President of the Institute, who is the only official means of communication between

the Corporation and the other two bodies, and those of other members of the Corporation favorable to the alliance.

Citing only such formal statements as are on record in the REVIEW, we find the following in the President's Inaugural Address (Vol. III. p. 49):—

I prefer to think of such an institution as that in which we work together not as an empire governed by the few, but as a republic in which faculty and students alike are charged with the government of the whole body.

In the address of the President at the Reunion Dinner at the Hotel Somerset, June 8, 1904, he said (Vol. VI. pp. 357 and 360):—

Just one word more as to the intention of the Corporation. It has never entered the mind of any of those gentlemen to settle this matter in a corner, to go to the consideration of any definite plan without giving to the members of the Faculty and to the alumni a full chance to record their deliberate opinion and conviction. If any such definite plan can be compassed, such as the resolution passed by the Corporation contemplates, it shall go to you in full time, that you may express and record your opinion. . . .

Whenever any plan of co-operation with Harvard University is formulated, it shall be communicated to the members of the Faculty, to the alumni, and their full and deliberate opinion obtained. All we ask is that, when this matter does come to you, it may be dealt with soberly, fairly, wisely, and in full view of all that is involved in it.

The next statement is from the Faculty Records of June 8, 1904 (Vol. VI. p. 413):—

The President thereupon stated . . . “that, if he had given the Faculty the general understanding that it should have opportunity for presentation of a collective expression, he would certainly undertake to carry out this understanding at the proper time; that the Corporation fully appreciated the moral rights of the Faculty in the consideration of the whole question.”

The Dean stated that he believed it to be the understanding of the Faculty that the President had stated that there would be opportunity for a collective expression of opinion.

The President stated that there would be opportunity for such procedure.

The fifth quotation is from the report of the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association (Vol. VII. p. 49):—

The following procedure, outlined in the recommendations of the Association of class secretaries given below, and adopted by the Executive Committee after consultation with the President of the Institute, is presented for the information of alumni:—

The Association of Class Secretaries respectfully recommends to the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association that, whenever the plan of combination of effort of the Institute with Harvard College is referred to the alumni, the Executive Committee seek to carry out the following method of procedure:—

1. That a general meeting of alumni be held for the systematic discussion of the plan presented.
2. That a report of this discussion, in print, be sent to the alumni generally.
3. That, with the report of the general meeting, there be presented to the alumni, if possible, the opinion of the Faculty on the educational issues involved.
4. That thereupon the definite opinion of the alumni upon the proposed plan of combination be obtained by letter ballot.

The sixth matter of interest is the "Circular Letter from Six Members of the Corporation," dated May 14, 1904 (Vol. VI. p. 388), in which no mention is made of any but financial reasons for the "Proposed combination of effort with Harvard University"; and the last is from the Argument—under date of April 25, 1905—of Messrs. Freeman, Draper, and Lowell (the first two being signers of the Circular Letter), in favor of the proposed agreement (Vol. VII., "Alliance Number," Part III. p. 33), in which they say:—

Upon the financial aspect of the matter we do not propose to dwell, because it is fully covered by the report made by the Treasurer, Mr. Wigglesworth, and because we consider the educational question more important.

The Corporation naturally reserved to itself the right to pass upon the financial aspects of the proposed arrangement. For giving a decision on this point the members are fitted by training and occupation, as a recital of the positions held by them would

show. Since, however, they are almost all unfamiliar with educational problems, and since they regarded the alliance with Harvard as fundamentally an educational measure, as the testimony just quoted plainly shows, they very properly referred this “Proposed Agreement” to their own body of educational experts, the Faculty, and to those other parties in interest, the alumni, who, while not expert in matters of education, are, nevertheless, familiar with the Institute system of education, and by their professional experience have given it the only conclusive test.

Upon receiving this invitation of the Corporation, the Faculty, who, at the request of the President, had studiously refrained from taking any earlier action upon the question, seriously discussed and considered the problem, upon its educational side, in a protracted series of meetings, and presented their collective opinion (there being but seven dissenting voices, including that of the President, in a membership of sixty-five) in a temperate and reasoned report. The Executive Committee of the Alumni Association, also, made every exertion to have both sides of the question presented fully and fairly to the alumni, which body deliberately expressed itself as opposed to the proposed agreement. In view of the Corporation’s subsequent vote and the failure of that body to attempt to conciliate the opposing views by suggesting any modification of the proposed agreement or even by stating its reasons for disagreeing with those views, the alumni may properly inquire why they should have been encouraged to believe their opinion to be really wanted. The Faculty may well ask why they should have been put to so much trouble if their judgment, as experienced teachers, upon a question declared to be fundamentally educational, was, after all, to receive so little respect. The Faculty had every moral right, they had every right in equity, not only to be heard, but to be heeded. Moreover, if, as the President declares, “the fame of the Institute rests upon the work and reputation of the alumni,” those alumni should certainly share with the Corporation the right of deciding the future of the school. The President, who in words asserted, and the majority of the Corporation present at the meeting, who by their votes declared that it was justifiable

to disregard the opinion of nine-tenths of the Faculty and of three-fourths of the graduates, could scarcely have realized how extraordinary and grave an exercise of corporate power, far-reaching in its effect upon education, their action involved. In giving no heed to the opinions of the two co-ordinate bodies who have done most to create the reputation of the Institute, the Corporation took the stand that its legal authority justified it in regarding its own judgment as superior to that of men more familiar with the conditions of successful technological education. What is of even greater consequence, this action of theirs imperils all higher education; for, by thus ignoring the solicited opinions of their Faculty, they reduce that body to the level of mere hirelings, and, by contravening the wishes of the alumni, they affront that graduate loyalty which is the vital principle of every efficient college.

The Charter of the Institute created a Corporation of fifty men, including, *ex officiis*, the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Secretary of the Board of Education. With the exception of these three, the body is self-perpetuating, and is responsible only to the Commonwealth. This self-elective body has included many of the most distinguished men of Massachusetts, and of these not a few have given much time and thought to the building up of the Institute and to the management of its funds and property. Many of them, too, have contributed liberally to its funds, and have induced gifts and bequests from others. Nevertheless, no one would for a moment assert that the Corporation has been the chief factor in making the high reputation or in guiding the successful policy of the Institute of Technology. That policy has been shaped almost wholly by the Faculty, whose educational prerogatives have in the past been cordially supported by the President and Corporation of the Institute; that reputation has been given by the teaching of the Faculty and by the professional and personal achievements of the five or six thousand past students. In short, the Institute, like every other college of English origin, has not been in the main the educational creation, and is not the educational property of its legal trustees. On the contrary, it has

been built up by, and should be in the keeping of, three bodies, or “estates”: the Corporation, who guard its financial and legal interests; the Faculty, who determine its educational policy; and the alumni, who, by the success of their professional careers and by their direct efforts, secure for it the support of the community. What the Faculty have done no one familiar with education and applied science needs to be told. What the past students have done professionally is shown by the honorable record in the “Register of Graduates”; what they are ready to do financially is made evident by the William Barton Rogers Fund, the Walker Memorial Fund, and the Technology Fund.

In any rational system of government there should be the closest and most cordial co-operation between these three bodies,—a co-operation that might, perhaps, best be attained through a joint advisory Council of the Corporation and Faculty, with the President as its chairman, and through direct representation of the alumni upon the Corporation and its Executive Committee. In the absence of any provision for such formal co-operation, the legal trustees were under a strong moral obligation to recognize this triple control and responsibility, and to take no final action of importance until a reasonable degree of harmony and agreement as to the step contemplated had been secured. Yet, when there arose the gravest of questions,—one affecting the autonomy and possibly the continued life of the Institute,—they ignored that co-ordinate responsibility and acted in opposition to the expressed wishes of those most vitally concerned. This is an exercise of legal power, as opposed to moral responsibility, momentous in its consequences.

Attempt has been made to excuse the ignoring of the Faculty’s opinion, on the ground that that body is too near the problem to judge it without prejudice; but is the Corporation itself likely to be thought more free from bias when it is considered that at least fourteen out of the twenty-three members who voted for the “Proposed Agreement” are alumni of, or are otherwise closely affiliated with, Harvard University, and that three out of the four conferees who drew up the agreement are officially connected with that

university? Is it maintained that devotion to the Institute blinds the Faculty (nearly half made up of men who are not Technology graduates), while zeal for Harvard does not blind members of the Corporation to the true interests of the Institute and of education?

The alumni vote was disregarded, it has been stated, because it was not more complete. That it was not larger is due, in great part, to the fact that, pressed on the one hand by the need of waiting for the opinion of the Faculty, and, on the other, by the request of the Corporation that the vote be in not later than June 1, the Executive Committee could give the alumni only ten days in which to receive and digest the great mass of argument sent to them, and to get their ballots into the hands of the Committee. Most of the members of the Corporation, however, have long been associated with many large voting bodies and must be fully aware, not only of the difficulty of securing a full vote from a widely scattered body of three thousand busy men, but also of the general experience that the ratio of voting, after the first few hundred ballots come in, remains almost constant, and that, therefore, had every alumnus registered his opinion, the final proportion (three opposed to one in favor of the plan) would have been almost exactly the same.¹

Taking into consideration, therefore, the three co-ordinate bodies which, in equity if not in law, govern the Institute of Technology, the registered vote upon the "Proposed Agreement" stands, numerically, 1,422 against the plan to 488 in its favor; and the vote by percentages is as follows:—

	<i>Against the Agreement</i>	<i>For the Agreement</i>
Corporation	40%	60%
Faculty	89%	11%
Graduates	75%	25%

¹ Significant in this connection are the votes of the last two classes, who are most intimate with the Institute as it is, and who have been directly under the influence of the alliance discussion. At the time of its graduation, a year ago, the Class of 1904 was overwhelmingly in favor of an alliance. Their recent official vote against the "Proposed Agreement," however, was 116 to 22. No vote was requested from the Class of 1905, but the poll which they took themselves stands in the ratio of 95 to 5 against the proposed alliance.

If the plan is presented to Harvard, therefore, it goes with the indorsement of only one-fourth of the men in those three bodies which have made the Institute what it is and upon which the school must depend for future strength and usefulness. Is it likely, then, that there can be a genuine and hearty “combination of effort” with Harvard University, especially in view of the well-known opposition to the alliance of practically all the Lawrence Scientific School Faculty and alumni, of many, if not most of the academic Faculty of Harvard, and of the close friends, including the chairman of the Trustees, of Mr. McKay? A partnership between Harvard and the Institute to which substantially all the parties in interest consented might be practicable; but one like this, which is repugnant to most of those whose good will and enthusiastic efforts are essential, must inevitably result, if attempt is made to force it through, not only in the wrecking of the Institute, but also in the controlling of education by purely business standards. To use the methods of industrial trusts in conducting colleges and universities is to threaten the present efficiency and ultimately the life of all higher education.