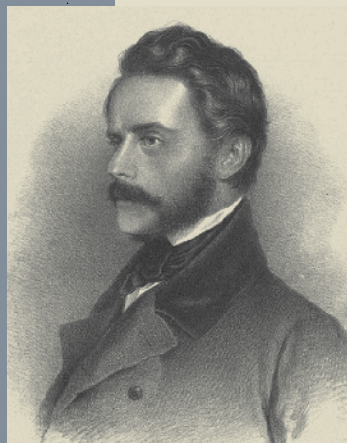


THE COLLEGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**HIGHER
EDUCATION
IN AMERICA
AND EUROPE**

AROUND 1900



**SOME PERSPECTIVES
ON OUR SHARED HISTORY
AND ITS RELEVANCE
FOR OUR TIME**

JOHN W. BOYER

OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON HIGHER EDUCATION XXIII



HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA AND EUROPE AROUND 1900

*Some Perspectives on Our Shared History and
Its Relevance for Our Time*

INTRODUCTION

The new academic year has begun splendidly, with a number of achievements that would have seemed highly unlikely just twenty years ago. The incremental work that we rightly celebrate each year culminated in the recent announcement that the College has risen to third in the 2016 *U.S. News & World Report* national college rankings, up from a ranking of fifteenth on the same list in 2006. These rankings depend on a wide variety of measures. Among these are selectivity, financial resources, class size, graduation and retention rates, alumni giving, and reputation among high-school counselors. We are now in worthy company with our top peers, and while we do not manage the College for the sake of these rankings, we can allow ourselves to be gratified to see the University of Chicago publicly acknowledged in this way. Chicago also fared well in the newest international research rankings organized by ShanghaiRanking and the *London Times*, ranking ten and ten respectively out of many hundreds of institutions. The international rankings are less interested in undergraduate admissions or in undergraduate education, focusing

This essay was originally presented as the Annual Report to the Faculty of the College on October 18, 2016. John W. Boyer is the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in History and the College, and Dean of the College.

Left: Harper Court, view from North, undated

much more on research productivity among the faculty. There can be no doubt of our faculty's status in the global academic world as a body of outstanding research scholars, and we need not be surprised by our distinguished place in the academic world as measured from London and Shanghai.

This year also brought the opening of the Campus North Residential Commons. So brilliantly reviewed in the media, the commons marks a high point in the construction of first-class facilities that now enable us to house more than three thousand undergraduates on the university campus. These facilities have many virtues, both for residents and for the broader campus, but one is the fuller integration of our housing communities and student life into the academic mission that makes Chicago unique. With each year, our students and alumni report greater enthusiasm about their time at the College, citing not only their academic preparation, but also the residential experiences and broader environment of services and support made available to them. Once again, fully 99 percent of the members of the class of 2019 have chosen to return to the College for their second year, thus confirming that the University has, once and for all, eliminated the dreadfully high first-year dropout rates that plagued Chicago as recently as twenty years ago. All of these are signs that we are supporting our students well while maintaining our academic uniqueness and rigor.

The exceptionality of the College at this time is most evident in our students. As I will have occasion to discuss later, I believe the current student body is the most impressive in our history, and indeed in any undergraduate history. The 1,593 matriculants in the Class of 2020 represent the most selective class in our history, which began with 31,411 applicants and just 2,498 offers of admission. Of these students, 98 percent graduated in the top 10 percent of their high-school class, and 90 percent

received the top rankings of one or two from the Admissions Office. Together with the Classes of 2017, 2018, and 2019, they promise to contribute much to the richness of our intellectual and campus life.

Last February, with a \$50 million gift and challenge from alumna Harriet Heyman (AM'72) and her husband, Sir Michael Moritz, we were able to launch a \$100 million expansion of our Odyssey Scholarship Program. Their gift allows us to eliminate loans and work requirements for lower-income students and to provide more robust academic and career support, both during their time in the College and afterward. What this means for the future of the College—and is already born out in our newest members—is a far more diverse student body, socially, ethnically, and internationally. Diversity, in turn, means a much greater variety of unique and powerful ideas raised in the classroom, expressed in applications for prestigious postgraduate fellowships through our new Center for Scholarly Advancement, and articulated in the form of internships and career planning through our office of Career Advancement.

Much to our benefit, the success of the College inevitably means a more plural, expansive community of scholars and alumni than we knew twenty years ago. We can rightly attribute this to our collective hard work and prudent choices, yet it has also unfolded within a matrix of social forces that has reshaped global higher education in the space of thirty-some years and facilitated the rise of Chicago and a few of its peer institutions to a vista of possibilities and challenges unknown in our own history. The achievements of the College are thus cause for celebration, but also an invitation to reflect carefully on the conjuncture of changes and expectations that characterize our current moment, along with the fate of other universities that have held similar positions of global prestige in the past. The successes of all universities, great and small, are embedded in specific national societies and national political cultures

that have changed radically over the centuries. Clark Kerr, the former president of the University of California, once asserted that only around eighty-five institutions in the Western world that were existent by 1520 are still present in some form in the modern world: the Catholic Church, the parliaments of the Isle of Man, Iceland, and Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and about seventy universities.¹ But in fact, amid the appearance of superficial continuities, the universities have functioned in very dynamic and interactive modes and have also served as guides to the cultures and values of the wider societies in which they are situated.

Universities are present communities of people who wish to know and to learn. These communities ask different roles of different people, and different people bring different talents and interests to bear in those roles—some stand on one side of the lectern or seminar table and others on the other; some are senior scholars and experienced teachers, confident of their ways of knowing and learning; others are students who are eager to grapple with big issues in ways that those same senior scholars cannot possibly anticipate. In the end, their shared, present task is to know and to learn. Universities, and particularly this University, are also creatures of history, of past lives, past ideals, past sentiments. They are the repositories of memory and affection; they are the sturdy products of generations of intellectual exchanges and friendships; and, if they are lucky, they are also the scenes of intense debates and, often, disagreements. They are

1. Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 115. On Kerr and his book, see the insightful comments of Hanna Holborn Gray, *Searching for Utopia: Universities and Their Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

For advice and assistance in preparing this essay, I wish to thank Daniel Koehler, Margarete Grandner, Thomas Grischany, Oliver Rathkolb, and Leopold Koegler.

small historic worlds, always enriched by new members, and always remembering and being remembered by members who went before. Finally, universities are communities that anticipate the future, both because they claim to be able to educate young or at least younger people to take possession of that future, and because they have a unique power and a special responsibility to frame the ways we will think about what we—young, middle-aged, and old—want that future to be.

As we look at the wider landscape of American higher education today, we confront many challenging dilemmas. Now some three and one-half centuries old, American higher education finds itself confronting paradoxes of significant and perplexing proportions. American colleges and universities are enjoying a level of success unequalled at any time in their past, and unmatched by almost any other American institution. A full chronicle of their successes would take an inordinate amount of the time available, so I mention here only four outsized features: the enormous prestige that our institutions command in the world and in the national rankings of higher education; the incessant demand for places in the top institutions of American higher education; the imagined or putative economic value of the degrees that those institutions bestow; and the willingness of proud alumni and other admirers to sustain the top American colleges and universities through extraordinarily generous gifts and bequests.

Yet, at the very same time, American colleges and universities have been the focus of decades of intensive criticisms from insiders and outsiders alike. Several of those criticisms are worth noting here: the excessive cost of attendance charged by many college and universities; the high levels of attrition experienced by students at many public universities, particularly students from low-income and minority backgrounds; the light and in some cases even declining teaching loads enjoyed by many senior faculty, leading to the growing use of part-

time and contingent teachers in lieu of regular faculty instructors; the increasing fragmentation of the undergraduate curriculum, with undergraduates becoming hostage to what Clark Kerr once called “endless subdivisions” of ever more narrow scholarly interests; the assumption by many public officials that colleges and universities are wasteful institutions, inattentive to the dictates of efficiency and productivity so important in the general American economy; and the belief that the elite colleges and universities to be sure, but the less elite institutions to an increasing degree, suffer from an overweening ambition to privilege prestige-generating research over teaching and to support teaching that (in the eyes of the critics) does not lead to gainful employment by their graduates. Universities have also become the objects of derision in recent free-speech crises, with many articles and even books denouncing the alleged lack of fortitude of many institutions to defend the principles of academic freedom. For some of our harshest critics, the emperor has no clothes.

These paradoxes cannot be dismissed lightly or abruptly, although many in higher education would wish that they could. On the contrary, the contradictions to which they point are real and in some respects require that we explain more effectively to the public and to our own constituents the fundamental operating norms and principles that undergird the work of the universities. If we believe, for example, in the importance of the integration of teaching and research in the Humboldtian model (discussed below), why is this the case, and what value does this bring to the students who are integral members of our intellectual communities? The successful resolution of these paradoxes will determine much of the future of American higher education. Because that is so, we in higher education must subject both the successes and the failures, the achievements and the indictments, to the same kind of scrutiny that we devote to our scholarship.

If American higher education is to be sustained, our present moment requires us to think very carefully about the roots of these paradoxes and their meaning for our core mission. As a way of encouraging this reflection, I want to take us back to an instructive time in the history of global higher education from 1880 to 1914, which I have called the Heroic Age. We will see that the Heroic Age is the source of many of the aspirations that define us today, even as it reveals the origins of many of the challenges that we face. Much of this report focuses on universities in Central Europe, in part because it was to that region of the world that our founders looked for inspiration in the founding and refounding of our universities at the end of the nineteenth century. Just as importantly, however, the fate of Central European universities in the twentieth century presents some striking concerns and dilemmas that we would do well to consider today. In the Heroic Age, German, Austrian, and American universities encountered a common wave of external transformations that challenged in many ways the self-understandings on which their prestige was built. The distinguished German sociologist Max Weber captured many of these tensions in his classic essays on academic freedom, and as we will see, the three national systems of higher education navigated these pressures in very different ways, and under different constraints. In each case, their choices had deep implications for their influence in the later twentieth century. The universities in the Habsburg Empire offer a particularly fascinating set of case studies, existing as they did in an ambient political culture of substantial nationalist, ethnic, and racial tensions.

In my conclusion, I will return to the present day, and offer some reflections on where we stand and where we might want to go in the broader context of American higher education.

THE AMERICAN CASE

In the history of higher education in the United States the two decades after 1945 are often referred to as a kind of Golden Age, a remarkable epoch in which American universities enjoyed expansive federal funding; massive increases in enrollments, research resources, and faculty positions; and a heightened legitimacy for the fundamental mission of institutions of higher learning among the public at large. This was the age when universities began to justify their ambitious plans for physical and financial expansion by invocations of “expanding claims to national service.”² Yet this Golden Age was preceded by an equally fertile and dynamic Heroic Age from the late 1870s to 1914 when major research universities were founded or reinvented in the United States. Older Eastern colleges dating from the antebellum era recreated themselves as major sites of transformational education and research, adopting new curricular modes (Charles William Elliot’s implementation of the elective system at Harvard) and new forms of structural organization (the creation of the graduate faculties at Columbia, particularly the School of Political Science). But an equally decisive contribution to the new model came from the “new” private research universities that emerged on the American scene after 1880, particularly Johns Hopkins, Clark, Stanford, and Chicago, and the modernization of large public universities like Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Chicago’s history was in some respects exemplary of the new paradigm. It was officially created in 1890 with massive support from John D. Rockefeller, in the wake of the collapse of an earlier Baptist college of the same name that had been

2. Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 65, 78.



established in 1857. Between 1890 and 1910 Rockefeller gave the University nearly \$35 million, which in today's currency would be the equivalent of nearly a half-billion dollars.

Critical to the success of the new private research universities like Chicago, Hopkins, and Stanford were four features that would mark their impact and distinctiveness in the twentieth century. First, these institutions embraced advanced scholarly research as a new way of professional life. In contrast to the work of the small, often frontier liberal-arts colleges that dominated much of the landscape of nineteenth-century higher education in the United States, scholarly research now became a value unto itself, and with it came conceptions of professionalized identities and professional standards on the part of faculty that would radically transform the American research university. Research was salutary not only as a way of advancing new knowledge, but as a way of demonstrating the imagination, the creativity, and the professionalism of the new, doctorally trained faculty and of mobilizing and legitimating the expertise of the new university to improve and enrich the civic world of the metropolis. As James Turner and Paul Bernard have argued, research became a fundamental feature of the "normative conception of the university professor" by the 1890s.³ This image of research as a social and professional prophylactic matched well the rising confidence and prestige of the university-based professoriate in the United States that had coalesced since the 1880s as a new professional community with enhanced scholarly standards, vigorous commitments to quality control, and rising levels of compensation—all protected by the

3. James Turner and Paul Bernard, "The German Model and the Graduate School: The University of Michigan and the Origin Myth of the American University," in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger L. Geiger, 236 (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000).

growing power and authority of the academic disciplines.⁴ The first president of Chicago, William Rainey Harper, well understood that he had the rare chance to launch his project for a new university in Chicago at a time when a new national system of higher education in the United States was being born, which explains his frenzy in spending huge sums of money, even money that he did not have, as quickly as possible to push his schemes forward.

Second, the universities engaged in a global model adapted to a national system. The new private American research universities were deeply indebted to German and Austrian models of *Wissenschaft* (scholarship) and of the ideals of *Lehr- und Lernfreiheit* (freedoms to teach and learn). Mitchell Ash and others have examined with great precision the nature and impact of the so-called Humboldtian model of the late nineteenth-century German university in Gilded Age America, and found

4. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R.* (New York: Vintage, 1955), 153–54; as well as Roger L. Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 20–39; Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 274, 404–12; Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), 269–96, 323–31; Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 121–79; Steven J. Diner, *A City and Its Universities: Public Policy in Chicago, 1892–1919* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 4–10; Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865–1905* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975), xi, 2, 107–8, 125–26, 144–45, 289; Thomas Bender, "The Erosion of Public Culture: Cities, Discourse, and Professional Disciplines," in *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. Thomas L. Haskell, 99–101 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); and Andrew Abbott, *The System of the Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 52–58, 195–211.

that the patterns of transference and modeling were extremely complex and not at all linear or unidimensional.⁵ It was striking, however, that the early US universities worried about how to keep their European counterparts apprised of their success. The first organization of the top US research universities—the Association of American Universities, established at the University of Chicago in 1900—had fourteen original members, and seven of those universities were founded just before or after 1870. The founding of the AAU was due in part to American concerns that German university leaders believed that early doctoral education in America did not meet German standards.⁶ (These apprehensions about scholarly inadequacy would change radically after 1918.) At the same time, the AAU also signaled that the new research universities had more in common than classroom instruction. They would soon become key agents of the emergence of a massive new national system of scientific research that would set its own standards rather than follow the government's lead and that would create patterns of mobility, competition, and talent transfer. Moreover, an explicit national focus was critical. As Mark Nemec has argued, “the AAU had stepped forward as an organization that would set national standards not only for graduate

5. Mitchell G. Ash, ed., *German Universities Past and Future: Crisis or Renewal?* (Providence: Berghahn, 1997), and *idem*, “Bachelor of What, Master of Whom? The Humboldt Myth and Historical Transformations of Higher Education in German-Speaking Europe and the US,” *European Journal of Education* 41, no. 2 (June 2006): 245–67; Gabriele Lingelbach, “Cultural Borrowing or Autonomous Development: American and German Universities in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *Traveling between Worlds: German-American Encounters*, ed. Thomas Adam and Ruth Gross, 100–123 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006).

6. For the founding of the AAU, see Mark R. Nemec, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds: Universities, Leadership, and the Development of the American State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 143–77.

education but for professional education as well... the AAU and its members, not the federal state, would primarily define national standards for advanced knowledge and its related credentials.”⁷ The new universities also sought to draw graduate students and faculty from across the nation and succeeded within thirty years in developing a national constituency of students and alumni, in contrast to the traditional localism of the typical nineteenth-century American college.

Third, the most successful of the new universities depended on a unique convergence of philanthropy and urbanization. Facing the absence of any significant governmental or state support, they found ways to appeal to the wealthiest segments of Gilded Age civil society. Leaving aside the history of US public universities, the leading private institutions in America were deeply indebted to massive new levels of private philanthropy. The wealth that they assembled was largely new wealth, the product of mid- and late nineteenth-century industrialism, commerce, and transportation. Chicago was a perfect example of these processes. It was (in its earliest design) a private Christian university, and its foundational rationale had much to do with the fact that the urban elites who created the *Grossstadt* of Chicago also wanted the prestige of a major university in their midst. These donors had many motivations, religious as well as civic boosterism, and the early history of the University of Chicago revealed these complex rationales very well. The foundation of the University manifested religious impulses on the part of the Rockefellers, but also the civic pride of local Gilded Age elites, who believed that science would become a panacea to remedy social ills and to enlarge the cultural visibility of the city itself. The University also expressed their ambition to valorize the worth of the scholarly life,

7. *Ibid.*, 172.

much more than mere undergraduate teaching.⁸ Yet the connections with private wealth also brought new dangers in the form of challenges to the fledgling principles of academic freedom to which these institutions aspired. It was perhaps predictable that in the early history of academic freedom in the United States several of the most salient case studies (the Edward Bemis affair at Chicago; the Richard T. Ely case at Wisconsin; the Edward A. Ross affair at Stanford) involved accusations that wealthy private donors and influential political officials sought to curb or even dissipate faculty intellectual freedoms on ideological grounds. These cases attracted international attention because they seemed to suggest the kinds of dangers that could conceivably confront universities in Europe as well.⁹

Finally, these institutions embarked on new modes of curricular planning and professional purpose. The first three structural trends of scholarly research, adaptation of international norms, and philanthropic urbanism were deployed to continue older models of collegiate instruction, largely in the liberal arts, that had constituted the rationale of the nineteenth-century American college and that would provide them with a wide public legitimacy and notoriety, but the new universities also added doctoral research training in arts and sciences graduate schools and new schools of professional education in law, business, engineering, and medicine with surprisingly flexible curricular structures.

In retrospect, the new American system had some notable advantages vis-à-vis European precedents. Certainly one of these was that it organized so much of the scientific, financial, and demographic growth in

8. Barry D. Karl and Stanley N. Katz, "Foundations and Ruling Class Elites," *Daedalus* 116, no. 1 (Win. 1987): 14–15.

9. See for example "Freiheit der Staatswissenschaft," *Der Lotse: Hamburgische Wochenschrift für deutsche Kultur*, July 6, 1901, 445–48.

higher education at the turn of the century within unified institutions under single leadership structures led by strong presidents. This allowed for a degree of experimentation across disciplines in the building of curriculum and research agendas, and also gave the American universities flexibility and access to resources that their European counterparts did not have. Second, while the new American universities were oriented toward specific labor markets, they were not, as in Europe, state-sanctioned or state-licensed machines to train and test masses of civil servants, jurists, or *Gymnasium* (advanced secondary school) teachers. Given that the American universities lacked what Hartmut Titze once described as the "neohumanist conception of the union of state and culture," they had the flexibility to define their own, more open-ended employment markets in the private sector that would soon constitute a foundational difference in patterns of higher education between the Old World and the New.¹⁰ Third, since the leading private universities in the United States did not encompass large populations of students and faculty, they were free to stress intellectual and professional quality over quantity on all fronts, leaving mass higher education to the responsibility of the state universities. The elite private universities aimed to create models of research and educational achievement that, so they believed, would also enhance the ambitions and autonomy of the public universities as well. The Harvard historian, Albert Bushnell Hart, caught this idea well when he commented that the University of Chicago's success became

10. See Hartmut Titze, "Enrollment Expansion and Academic Overcrowding in Germany," in *The Transformation of Higher Learning 1860–1930: Expansion, Diversification, Social Opening, and Professionalization in England, Germany, Russia, and the United States*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch, 87 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). See the shrewd comments of Emil G. Hirsch, "The American University," *American Journal of Sociology* 1, no. 2 (Sept. 1895): 113–31, esp. 115–16.

the success of Northwestern and the large public universities of the Middle West, as those institutions sought funds “to compete with Chicago. Every good neighbor has prospered because of the rise of the new University.”¹¹ Thus, as World War One approached, American elite universities were well positioned to flourish internationally and to bridge many of the social divisions and financial pitfalls that would roil their Central European counterparts in the first half of the twentieth century.

THE GERMAN CASE

If the story of the American research universities up to 1914 is one of heroic growth and transformation, the experience of their German cousins was equally remarkable. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, German scholars and state officials conceived of an entirely new model of higher education, articulated by visionary leaders like Wilhelm von Humboldt and Friedrich Schleiermacher. The quintessential expression of these ideas was the founding and development of the University of Berlin in 1810. Before Berlin, universities in the various German states were conservative training institutions that were more guardians of the past than guides of the future. In an appeal to the Prussian king written in July 1809, Humboldt argued that universities should, in contrast to lower academic institutions, “treat the problem of knowledge as one that has not yet been fully solved.” Hence, for Humboldt, universities should exist to nurture both teaching and research in the cause of scientific discovery, so much so that the teacher no longer exists for the sake of the

11. Albert Bushnell Hart, “William Rainey Harper,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 11, 1906, 11.

student, but both—teacher and student—exist together for the sake of scholarship and the creation of new knowledge.¹²

The new model was stunningly successful and soon garnered the attention of foreign students and scholars, most notably from the United States. One scholar has even referred to this era as the time of the *Wissenschaftswunder*.¹³ Over the course of the nineteenth century the German universities prospered and grew, especially in the decades after 1850, with both student matriculations and faculty appointments occurring on a scale of imposing proportions. Between 1870 and 1914 student enrollment at German universities increased by over 450 percent, from 13,206 to 60,748, far exceeding increases in civil population growth. Academic teaching staff expanded in corresponding dimensions with special emphasis on the hiring of more junior and auxiliary instructors: between 1880 and 1908 the size of the university student population increased by 119 percent, whereas the number of full professorial slots increased by only 31 percent; the bulk of undergraduate teaching thus fell to non-tenured instructors.¹⁴ The number of universities was relatively constant

12. See Wilhelm von Humboldt, “On Germany’s Educational System,” in *The Rise of the Research University: A Sourcebook*, ed. Louis Menand, Paul Reitter, and Chad Wellmon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 104–119; as well as Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 153–54; and Thorsten Nybom, “The Humboldt Legacy: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of the European University,” *Higher Education Policy* 16, no. 2 (June 2003): 141–59.

13. Lode Vereeck, *Das deutsche Wissenschaftswunder: Eine ökonomische Analyse des Systems Althoff (1882–1907)* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001).

14. Franz Eulenburg, *Der “akademische Nachwuchs”: Eine Untersuchung über die Lage und Aufgaben der Extraordinarien und Privatdozenten* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1908), 7, 13.

(twenty-one, of which ten were in Prussia, and eleven in other provinces of Germany; along with nine *Technische Hochschulen* [technical colleges]), but with the mushrooming of student enrollments, a system that had been structurally designed for more elite educational practices became highly stressed as new matriculants entered fields of study that could not necessarily accommodate them following graduation.¹⁵ Indeed, many scholars have argued that the German universities by 1914 were fundamentally different places than their predecessors in the 1870s in their student demography, in their personnel management structures, in their financing of research, and perhaps most significantly, in their understanding of their mission and how that mission related to the administrative power structures of the various German states, Prussia most prominently. These decades saw the development of university interest groups to represent the professional concerns of teachers and administrators (the *Hochschulkonferenzen* [Conference of University Teachers] from 1898 and the *Hochschullehrertag* [Congress of University Teachers] from 1907); the shift toward greater professional segmentation and specialization from what Charles McClelland has characterized as the “full professor university” to the “institute university”; the rise of a movement among untenured doctoral lecturers (*Privatdozenten*) as an emblem of what Professor Franz Eulenburg of the University of Leipzig termed the “unofficial university” beyond the ranks of the tenured full professors (*Ordinarien*); new forms of student mobilization; and the creation of specialized seminars, institutes, and laboratories and of great, privately funded research foundations beyond the universities like those

15. Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700–1914* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 242–49.

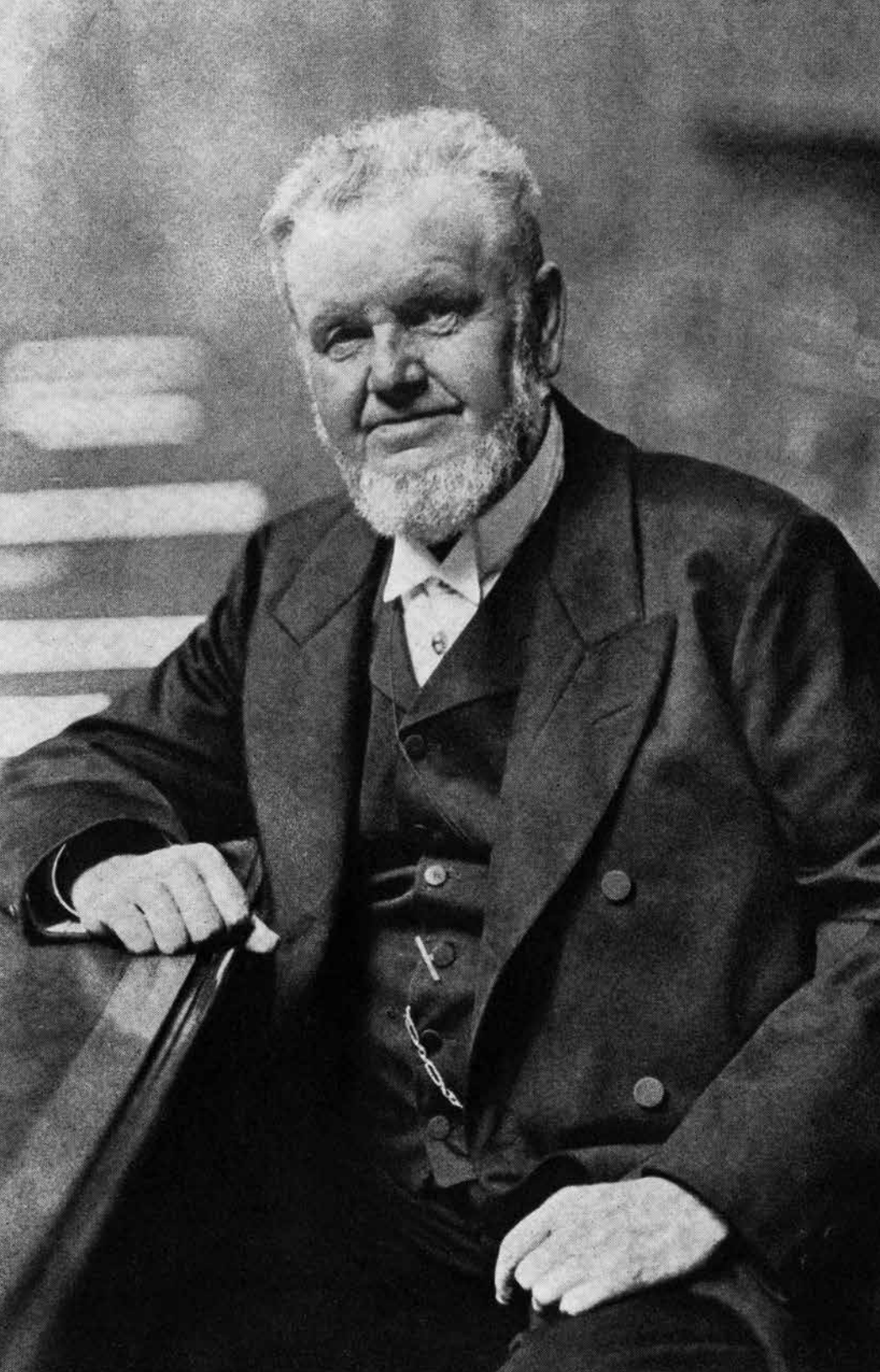
of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft (1911) that would parallel and eventually rival the resources controlled by the universities themselves.¹⁶

The rapid growth in enrollments and the pressures to sustain high levels of research productivity soon led to profound tensions between the roles of German universities as mass-based educational machines (*Grossbetriebe*) and sites of advanced scholarly research. Similarly, as the Prussian state provided more and more funding, the pressures of political influence and conformity slowly began to challenge the desires of their faculty to sustain venerable traditions of intellectual freedom and organizational autonomy. Yet their financial resources were still formidable, compared to other European systems of higher education, and their prestige was never greater. The flood of younger Americans and other foreigners seeking confirmation of status and enhancement of professional credentials was one important sign of their enduring notability. By 1900, of the University of Berlin's 7,700 students, over one thousand were foreigners seeking an introduction to German scientific methods.¹⁷

Rüdiger vom Bruch has argued that German universities in the early 1900s found themselves in a matrix of desired, but not really implemented, reforms, as they experienced massive social and economic changes

16. Among a vast literature, see Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Wissenschaft, Politik und öffentliche Meinung: Gelehrtenpolitik im Wilhelminischen Deutschland (1890–1914)* (Husum: Matthiesen, 1980); Trude Maurer, “...und wir gehören auch dazu”: *Universität und “Volksgemeinschaft” im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); Bernhard vom Brocke and Hubert Laitko, eds., *Die Kaiser-Wilhelm-/Max-Planck-Gesellschaft und ihre Institute: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte: Das Harnack-Prinzip* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996); and Charles E. McClelland, *Berlin, the Mother of All Research Universities 1860–1918* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 191.

17. Adolf Harnack, “Vom Grossbetrieb der Wissenschaft,” in *Preussische Jahrbücher* 119 (1905): 197. Cited in Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University*, 293.



in late Wilhelmine society.¹⁸ The tensions that resulted were fascinating, all the more because they seemed to call into question whether the governance and budgetary structures of the German universities could cope with the needs of a rapidly changing civil society. Most significantly, the social question and the internal web of personnel politics within the various German faculties became intertwined as rapidly growing numbers of non-tenured and associated faculty sought to mobilize to achieve stronger rights for job security, compensation, and workloads, all the while facing severe chastisement by senior full professors for whom the *Privatdozenten* movement was the equivalent of a “union” drive that would shatter the allegedly nonpolitical status of the universities as well as received social hierarchies within the universities. As Matthias Middell has noted, the government-funded German universities faced a distinct challenge, especially compared to wealthy private American counterparts, in their ability to marshal financial resources to cope with exploding student populations, while still preserving an ambience of research potential.¹⁹

In all of these trends the very imposing figure of Friedrich Althoff, from 1882 to 1907 a senior civil servant in and then the director for higher education of the Prussian Ministry of Education, has come to symbolize many of these conundrums. Peter Krüger has rightly described Althoff as “a point of crystallization, a central, dominant figure in the

18. Rüdiger vom Bruch, “Universitätsreform als soziale Bewegung: Zur Nicht-Ordinarienfrage im späten deutschen Kaiserreich,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 10 (1984): 72–91.

19. Matthias Middell, “Konfrontation auf Augenhöhe? Die Universitäten Leipzig und Berlin im Wilhelminischen Deutschland,” in *Die Berliner Universität im Kontext der deutschen Universitätslandschaft nach 1800, um 1860 und um 1910*, ed. Rüdiger vom Bruch, 189–212 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010).

politics of higher education” in the late German Empire.²⁰ As the longtime head of a powerful section of the Prussian Ministry of Education, Althoff held the ambition to make the Prussian universities the best in the world. His work—in aggressively coordinating and manipulating top faculty appointments (some of them recruited from Austrian universities) with the advice of a select number of senior faculty as private intermediaries, in sponsoring the development of new fields of scientific research, in securing external funding for new research initiatives from the wealthy industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, and in conducting private negotiations with the Court to enhance the resources he had to award—was not merely administrative, but profoundly political as well. Althoff was also instrumental in founding large numbers of new medical institutes and laboratories, and similarly impressive new institutes and seminars in the Philosophical Faculties. As Thomas Howard has noted, “their founding... expedited already strong trends towards intellectual differentiation and specialization: collegial interaction with a diversely skilled faculty increasingly gave way to more exclusive association with those who shared one’s particular expertise and research interests.”²¹ Yet for all his achievements, Althoff and his “system” left behind an aura of enlightened bureaucratic dirigisme, political manipulation, and discrimination over the traditional autonomy of the German universities

20. Peter Krüger, “Zur Einleitung,” in *Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Wissenschaftspolitik im Industriezeitalter: Das “System Althoff” in historischer Perspektive*, ed. Bernhard vom Brocke, 9 (Hildesheim: A. Lax, 1991).

21. Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University*, 295. For more detail, see Bernhard vom Brocke, “Die Entstehung der deutschen Forschungsuniversität, ihre Blüte und Krise um 1900,” in *Humboldt International: Der Export des deutschen Universitätsmodells im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rainer Christoph Schwinges, 367–401, esp. 371–81 (Basel: Schwabe, 2001).

that sparked statements of resentment from scholars like Max Weber, Adolf von Harnack, and Friedrich Paulsen. They bridled at Althoff’s political and personal style and his interventionism on behalf of a national cultural strategy that was meant to glorify the Prussian state, even though in many cases Althoff acted against the narcissism and provincialism of local faculty cliques that would have fated the system to ongoing mediocrity. Althoff represented a strong state approach to higher education, one that had progressive modernizing features but that also compromised, in the eyes of his critics, the integrity and intellectual self-governance of the universities.²²

Max Weber made striking interventions on behalf of academic freedom during this period for good reason, given the steady blurring of boundaries between a newly enlivened mass/democratic political world and the traditional conception of the German universities as elite institutions that were relatively autonomous from civil society. Weber saw academic freedom threatened not only by mass society, but also by a growing bureaucratic (federal) state, and this has obvious resonances today. Moreover, new dilemmas emerged precisely from the tensions between a rapidly modernizing state and its emergent industrial society

22. See Bernhard vom Brocke, “Friedrich Althoff: A Great Figure in Higher Education Policy in Germany,” *Minerva* 29, no. 3 (Sept. 1991): 269–93, and in more detail, *idem*, “Friedrich Althoff—Forschungsstand und Quellenlage: Bemühungen um eine Biographie,” in *Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Wissenschaftspolitik im Industriezeitalter*, 15–44; *idem*, “Hochschul- und Wissenschaftspolitik in Preussen und im Deutschen Kaiserreich, 1882–1907,” in *Bildungspolitik in Preussen zur Zeit des Kaiserreichs*, ed. Peter Baumgart, 9–118 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980); Rüdiger vom Bruch, “Vom Humboldt-Modell zum Harnack-Plan: Forschung, Disziplinierung und Gesellung an der Berliner Universität im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Jahrbücher des Historischen Kollegs 2007* (Munich: Historische Kolleg, 2008), 189–214.

on one hand and a system of higher education anchored in older corporatistic traditions and self-governance practices on the other. This raised the fundamental question: could one have a relevant, modern system of higher education if one left its fate only to an institutional status quo defined by the factionally divided faculties of the several universities, rooted as they were in administrative, hiring, and pedagogic practices that were shaped in the earlier nineteenth century? The German universities were also part of a larger framework of competitive agencies of *Kulturpolitik* seen as state-enhancing prestige instruments internationally that would reinforce the power of the authoritarian administrative state above and beyond parliamentary interventions. That said, even in a nation-state of enormous and growing wealth like late Imperial Germany, competing fiscal claims of military and naval armaments and other large-ticket public expenditures after 1900 forced a gradual slowdown in state investments in higher education, and the American historian of the University of Berlin, Charles McClelland has recently argued that by 1914 “Germany was faltering in its decades-old drive to build advanced expertise and research through its state-sponsored higher educational system.”²³ The catastrophe of World War One and Germany’s defeat in 1918 led to rampant unemployment, currency collapse, and social disarray that further undermined prewar trajectories of progress.

23. McClelland, *Berlin, the Mother of All Research Universities*, 63.

THE HABSBURG CASE

Both the United States and Germany before 1914 present images of higher-education systems undergoing impressive changes, defined by high ambition, significant scientific accomplishments, new relations with private industrially-based wealth, and fascinating governance tensions within the faculty and (for Germany) the faculty and the administrative state. In the Habsburg Empire we find an even more complex set of issues. In contrast to Germany, which was a large, single nation-state, the Habsburg Empire was a conglomeration of nine rival national groups and the site of patterns of radical populism and even political extremism. The Austrian side of the empire supported eight universities, the largest of which was the University of Vienna. Five of these universities were primarily German speaking, one was Czech, and two were essentially dominated by Polish-speaking academics and students. In contrast to Germany, Austria did not begin to modernize its universities until later in the nineteenth century, and when it did, like the Americans would do after 1880, it copied heavily from the original German model. The founder of the Austrian system in the 1850s was a conservative aristocrat, Count Leo von Thun und Hohenstein, who wanted the universities to sustain new research functions but also in their teaching to be fundamentally state supporting and nonpolitical, guaranteeing a full share of academic freedom for faculty who were to train loyal Austrian patriots, against later political spikes of rival nationalist tendencies. Thun felt that exogenous party political activities could only violate the true purposes of the university.

Yet in contrast to the relatively positive image that still obtains of the American and German universities around 1900, the image of the Austrian universities was beset by some chronically dysfunctional



features of university life—student riots, pervasive anti-Semitism, lack of serious intellectual engagement by many students, university administrators in covert sympathy with student rowdiness, and ethnic and even racial discrimination in faculty appointments.²⁴ As we will see, these conflicts increasingly reflected and even exacerbated the ethnic, class, and religious divisions that dominated public life elsewhere in the later years of the Hapsburg Empire. Some scholars have described the Austrian universities at the end of the empire in 1914 as bastions of mediocrity, racism, prejudice, and inward-looking reaction.²⁵ For example, a recent commentary on the occasion of the 650th anniversary of the University of Vienna by Professor Kamila Staudigl-Ciechowicz paints a pessimistic, gloomy picture of a university that was a hotbed of discrimination and radicalism: “the daily life of the University in this period was marked by constant fighting among the national ethnic groups and by increasing levels of anti-Semitism.”²⁶ Even earlier commentators, like Ludwig Adamovich, writing in the official centennial *Festschrift* of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education in 1948, complained about the pre-1914 universities: “for institutions that were supposed to awake and encourage an Austrian state-loyalty and consciousness, the universities rejected this duty in increasing ways and indeed positioned themselves

24. See the essays in Oliver Rathkolb, ed., *Der lange Schatten des Antisemitismus: Kritische Auseinandersetzungen mit der Geschichte der Universität Wien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2013).

25. Günter Fellner, *Ludo Moritz Hartmann und die österreichische Geschichtswissenschaft: Grundzüge eines paradigmatischen Konfliktes* (Vienna: Geyer, 1985), 119, 244.

26. Kamila Staudigl-Ciechowicz, “Zwischen Aufbegehren und Unterwerfung: Politik und Hochschulrecht 1848–1945,” in *Universität-Politik-Gesellschaft*, ed. Mitchell G. Ash and Josef Ehmer, 449 (Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2015).

in a deliberate and emphatic opposition to this responsibility.²⁷ Rising levels of student anti-Semitism marked much of the culture of the fraternities, and German-national student groups who dominated much of the student culture of the period have been portrayed as intellectually stunted and unwilling to attend the classes of faculty members whom they personally disliked, much less engage with faculty and students who espoused other ideological viewpoints. Equally dismaying, the politics of faculty appointments in the 1920s and 1930s frequently privileged sheer mediocrity over outstanding scholarly talent, leaving the university not only with the reputation for ideological partisanship and racist excess but qualitative mediocrity, and this too might be imputed backward to the condition of the universities before 1914. Finally, we also face the fundamental fact that the Austrian universities proved fruitful and eager recruiting grounds for the Nazis in the later 1920s and early 1930s.²⁸ It has been estimated that 37 percent of the students at the University of Vienna in 1931 voted for the Nazi slate in the elections for the local version of student government (the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*). Professor Michael Gehler has argued that 75 percent of all members of the Austrian pan-German fraternities and associations

27. *100 Jahre Unterrichtsministerium 1848-1948: Festschrift des Bundesministeriums für Unterricht in Wien* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1948), 48–49.

28. See Dieter A. Binder, “Der Weg der Studentenschaft in den Nationalsozialismus,” in *Die Universität und 1938*, ed. Christian Brünner and Helmut Konrad, 75–93 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989); as well as the essays in Gernot Heiss, Siegfried Mattl, Sebastian Meissl, Edith Saurer, and Karl Stuhlpfarrer, eds., *Willfähige Wissenschaft: Die Universität Wien 1938 bis 1945* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1989).

(who, together with their Catholic rivals, constituted over 50 percent of the total student bodies of the Austrian universities by the end of the 1920s) were allied with the illegal NSDAP (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) by 1933, with many more on the margins of sympathy for the Nazis.²⁹

Of course, these portrayals do not capture the full variety of the experience of the universities before 1914. Other scholars have suggested that, like their German cousins, Austrian universities and technical colleges saw tripled enrollments between 1880 and 1910, with increasing numbers of children from the middle and lower bourgeoisie attending higher educational institutions. In contrast to German universities, more sons of petty-bourgeois families attended university in Austria, especially students from the new lower-middle class of white-collar workers and teachers, thus creating pools of educated talent that were also anchored in the new mass-political world of the fin de siècle. Moreover, the Austrian government was forced to spend more money and invest more resources in response to public demands, even though the Austrian

29. Walter Höflechner, *Die Baumeister des künftigen Glücks: Fragment einer Geschichte des Hochschulwesens in Österreich vom Ausgang des 19. Jahrhundert bis in das Jahr 1938* (Graz: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), 431; Gerhard Botz, “Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904–1945),” in *Politik und Gesellschaft im Alten und Neuen Österreich: Festschrift für Rudolf Neck zum 60. Geburtstag*, vol. 2, 171, 182, 187 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1981); and Michael Gehler, “Korporationsstudenten und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich: Eine quantifizierende Untersuchung,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1984): 9–10; *idem*, “Student Corporations in Austria and the Right: A Historical Outline,” *Contemporary Austrian Studies* 4 (1996): 294; *idem*, *Studenten und Politik: Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft an der Universität Innsbruck* (Innsbruck: Haymon, 1990), 360–3, 395, 400–5. Gehler concludes that “war die Affinität zum organisierten Nationalsozialismus unter den völkisch-schlagenden Studenten stark ausgeprägt” (402).

universities were underfunded compared to their German counterparts.³⁰ The decades between 1880s and 1914 saw numerous efforts to improve faculty and lecturer salaries, as the universities struggled to mobilize allies to improve their competitive status.

Similarly, work on the mobility of scholars among Austrian universities and their attitudes towards nationalism and science highlights that on the whole the system of higher education in the late empire was marked by increased claims for operational, if not fiscal autonomy, and a growing sense of aggressive professional self-interest vis-à-vis the state ministries, which Jan Surman calls a trend toward “participative politics.”³¹ In spite of financial concerns, curricula also evolved to respond to changing professional ambitions, new social and cultural demands, and the evolution of new or renewed academic disciplines. Before 1914, even if on an individual basis they could often not compete with their *Reichdeutsch* cousins for institutional and spatial resources, the Austrian universities were impressive as a trans-ethnic and interdisciplinary educational system because, as Surman has argued, they were sites of fruitful and fascinating intellectual networks that

30. Gary B. Cohen, *Education and Middle-Class Society in Imperial Austria, 1848–1918* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1996), 59–60, 108–9, 112–13, 118–19, 152–53, 177, 184–94, 200, 205–8, 261, 266.

31. Jan Surman, “Habsburg Universities, 1848–1918: Biography of a Space” (Dr phil dissertation, University of Vienna, 2012), 216–19, 226, 350, 483, 485; and *idem*, “The Circulation of Scientific Knowledge in the Late Habsburg Monarchy: Multicultural Perspectives on Imperial Scholarship,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (April 2015): 163–82. See also Mitchell G. Ash and Jan Surman, “The Nationalization of Scientific Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Central Europe: An Introduction,” in *The Nationalization of Scientific Knowledge in the Habsburg Empire, 1848–1918*, ed. Ash and Surman, 1–29 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

spawned new talent and new ideas. The Austrian universities lost this imperial matrix in 1918, and with it their extant *internal* political dysfunctionality became much more acute. They owed their public prominence before 1914 to a complex system of ethnic-based polycratic competition and resource exchange that created many singular balance-of-power tradeoffs but which also left them as individual institutions buffeted by the political winds of change that swept through the late imperial political system. At the University of Vienna, especially, the university’s intellectual prominence reflected the presence of very large numbers of Jewish scholars and student matriculants (by 1910 almost 30 percent of the student body was Jewish, while Jews made up less than 9 percent of the civil population of Vienna). From the 1880s the Jewish students were the objects of anti-Semitic derision by callow youth in the pan-German fraternities, but their ongoing right to attend the university was never in doubt, either legally or politically, under the protection of the imperial administrative state.

Even as Austrian universities became experimental laboratories for new intellectual and curricular movements, their administrative leaders found themselves having to deal with radically changing norms within their student bodies, to contend with new understandings of academic freedom, and to negotiate new forms of alliances and partnerships with the state. Let me briefly discuss these three issues, all of which have wider relevance to our time as well.



Main Building, University of Berlin on Unter den Linden, c. 1900



Main Building, University of Vienna on the Ringstrasse



University of Chicago Harper Library, on the Midway

It is hard to miss the aesthetic similarities between Harper Library, completed in 1912, and the Main Buildings of the University of Berlin on Unter den Linden and the University of Vienna on the Ringstrasse.

With its siting on a grand boulevard (the Midway) and with many rich, decorative elements, Harper Library signaled that the University of Chicago meant to join the ranks of the great European universities.

THE UNIVERSITIES AS
REALMS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE:
STUDENT PROTESTS AND
PARTY POLITICS

In formal terms Austrian universities, like their German counterparts, were not only neutral, but they claimed a peculiar kind of traditional autonomy from the administrative state that paid their bills and from the civil servants and cabinet ministers who ultimately approved their senior faculty appointments. It was certainly the case that individual faculty could and did adopt partisan political stances and even serve in elected political positions or public policy advisory roles. Yet the most prominent feature of the political character of the universities after 1880 was not the politics of their faculties, but rather their image as sites tolerating the unruly and disruptive political activities of a large subset of their students. Beginning in the early 1880s one saw the emergence and expansion of both German Nationalist and anti-Semitic thought and advocacy on the part of significant numbers of Austrian university students who disliked and resented the large numbers of Jewish students enrolling in the university, and who also admired the cult of Otto von Bismarck and the sundry trappings of Prussian nationalism and militarism.

Over the four decades between 1880 and 1920 the Austrian universities became famous or perhaps infamous for a large volume of student disruptions and even riots provoked by these anti-Semitic students. The riots have never been systematically studied, and at this distance it is difficult to explain in detail the motives of the individual students who got caught up in them. These riots were driven by many intersecting motives, but usually included dislike of Jews, Czechs, Hungarians,

Italians, and Poles, many of whom were also in attendance at the University of Vienna. In November 1897 a particularly disturbing cluster of protests and rioting took place because the pan-German students opposed a central government initiative to give German and Czech citizens in the imperial province of Bohemia equal access to state resources by making the use of the Czech language of equal status with that of German. Supporters of the German minority in Bohemia, who viewed themselves as being culturally superior to the Czechs, violently protested, and the protests soon expanded to other parts of the empire, including the city of Vienna, and to the University of Vienna. We have large numbers of police reports on these student riots, but it is difficult to obtain a genuinely authentic sense of how most of these individual students understood the political world and how comprehensive their grasp of the issues actually was. And like many student groups, the fraternities were not political debating societies in the first order, but rather conventicles of sociability, friendship, and personal identity formation, however strange those assumptions might seem in the context of the often disruptive and unruly behavior for which they soon became publicly known.

A curious feature of these riots was the confused and, in the end, rather hapless behavior of the rector of the University of Vienna, Carl Toldt, in trying to control or at least modulate student behavior. Toldt was a prominent anatomist, author, and editor of the famous *Anatomischer Atlas für Studierende und Ärzte* and later a member of the upper House of the imperial parliament, but he was also, as were most university rectors in Central Europe, appointed to his honorific office for one year with no necessary prior administrative experience, especially in managing student life issues in an academic setting. In the liberal and pan-German press Toldt was celebrated as a de facto hero for seeking to

respect the protest rights of the students.³² But he also irritated both the government and the police, who had little patience for radical nationalist student behavior. During the late November riots the police responded aggressively by entering the precincts of the main university building in order to contain student protestors and maintain order. This in turn led to angry protests against the police by students and sympathetic faculty, for whom these incursions were fundamental violations of the geopolitical and legal autonomy of the physical precincts of the university. Yet what was evident from the police reports is that Toldt really had no plan or clear strategy for dealing with the student unrest, alternatively pleading with the students to behave and not escalate the violence and cautioning the police not to overplay their hand and provoke still more uncontrolled emotions. In the end, when he was quoted by the press as having urged the police to restrain themselves, Toldt was forced to apologize to the authorities, claiming that he had said nothing of the kind. But when they, in an equal fit of incompetence, demanded that Toldt issue a press release confirming that he had been misquoted, he dodged and prevaricated and refused to do so, obviously embarrassed by the mess in which he found himself. As is often the case with faculty leaders

32. A later commentary in 1923 by Kurt Knoll, a conservative nationalist academic in Vienna who eventually became a minor Nazi party functionary after 1938 and then went to work for the American intelligence services in an equally dubious role after 1945, praised Toldt as “seldom was a rector of the University so able to acquire the love of his students as did Karl Toldt.” See Kurt Knoll, *Die Geschichte der schlesischen akademischen Landsmannschaft “Oppavia” in Wien im Rahmen der allgemeinen studentischen Entwicklung an den Wiener Hochschulen* (Vienna: Schöler, 1923), 487. For a modern evaluation, see Tatjana Buklijas, “The Politics of *Fin-de-siècle* Anatomy,” in *The Nationalization of Scientific Knowledge in the Habsburg Empire, 1848–1918*, ed Mitchell G. Ash and Jan Surman, 218–24 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

facing heated student unrest, especially those who have assumed roles as administrative officials with no experience in dealing with such crises, Toldt was simply caught up in a high-stress situation over which he had no control, no plan, and no real guidance. The riots were complex, and Toldt himself, in his efforts to explain his fence-straddling behavior to the state authorities, made one particularly salient comment, namely, that ideology aside, the students felt that protecting the independence of the university from external political or social forces was a critical component of their self-assigned mission and indeed of their rights as students. In this particular sense of institutional defense, the students felt that they were “called” to defend the university along with the faculty.³³ Toldt’s observation was relevant not only because it illuminated the ways in which students had internalized the faculty’s own rhetoric about being agents for the university’s autonomy against the state, but because they suggested the dilemma in which the faculty found themselves when their nominal protégés asserted that autonomy in ways that fundamentally disrupted the mission of the university as a place of learning and research. Toldt himself had used such neo-corporatist rhetoric only a few weeks before the riots, when in his inaugural lecture as rector on October 28, 1897, he had invited the students to see themselves, along with the faculty, as part of a “corporation of

33. See Toldt to the Ministry of Education, December 21, 1897, J 13 ad 8202, Nr. 9506, Statt. Präs, Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv, St. Pölten. It is relevant here that, according to Franz Gall, in the early 1880s the university authorities began to allow student fraternities and other clubs to participate in official university events, thus giving the impression that they had a kind of official standing in representing the university. See Franz Gall, *Alma Mater Rudolphina 1365–1965: Die Wiener Universität und ihre Studenten* (Vienna: Austria Press, 1965), 89, 183–84.

teachers and learners, united by the spirit [*Geist*] of science [*Wissenschaft*], fresh and lively in its internal programs, with our successes generating external recognition.”³⁴ Unfortunately for Toldt the rowdy pan-German students assimilated the idea of a corporate *Geist*, but not of harmonious *Wissenschaft*.

The years that followed the 1897 riots saw a mushrooming growth of tensions among the student bodies of the German-speaking universities in Austria, as new groups associated with Catholic- and Jewish-nationalist identities emerged to claim a share of the social world of organized, late-adolescent student life. Even though these groups did not represent a majority of the total student body, their numbers were substantial and they helped to create a more pluralistic ambient culture on the campus at large. Inevitably this led to more collisions, including wild accusations from the Catholic press that anti-Semitic and Jewish students were cooperating in de facto attempts to marginalize Catholic student fraternities that had begun to gain a significant foothold in the campus in the mid-1890s.

These new student agitators created more turbulence. A second set of riots that paralyzed the university in May 1913 affords a good example. They were of a different causality and texture, but ironically like November 1897 they too were deeply focused on the norm of honor (*Ehre*). Beginning in the early 1890s Jewish Zionist student groups evolved from being academic clubs to dueling fraternities (or were founded with the latter status), and the Jewish students proved able and often successful swordsmen. In a fair description of these early efforts, Julius Schoeps has described the Jewish students as wanting to affirm their general citizenship rights and their personal dignity in the face of anti-Semitic slurs

34. See *Die feierliche Inauguration des Rectors der Wiener Universität für das Studienjahr 1897/98* (Vienna: University of Vienna Press, 1897), 26.

and taunts.³⁵ But they were also means for Jews to demonstrate their worthiness and personal courage against stereotypes of the lazy or cowardly Jew. In the case of the Jewish nationalist students, as Edmund Schechter has noted, they intended to fight assimilation by deploying assimilationist practices.³⁶

The rise of strong Jewish-national late-adolescent student clubs also created both a new target for the anti-Semitic students and a group that was prepared to strike back (and in some instances strike first); it is fitting that one of the last major academic disruptions in Vienna on the eve of the war was several days of nasty battles between Jewish-national and German-national student groups, with the majority of the students standing on the sidelines. The student riots in May 1913 led to the university suspending both lectures and exams for several days in June and generated an unusual public denunciation from an eminent Vienna faculty leader and economist, Eugen von Philippovich, of colleagues like Leopold von Schroeder who were overtly sympathetic to the

35. Julius H. Schoeps, “Modern Heirs of the Maccabees: The Beginning of the Vienna Kadimah, 1882–1897,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 27 (1982): 164–67; Adolf Gaisbauer, “Eine Jugendbewegung: Zur Geschichte der jüdisch-nationalen Studentenbewegung in Österreich 1882–1914,” *Zeitgeschichte* 2, no. 6 (Mar. 1975): 135–47; *idem*, *Davidstern und Doppeladler: Zionismus und jüdischer Nationalismus in Österreich 1882–1918* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1988), 440–51; Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York, 1983), 159–66; *idem*, “The Assertion of Identity: Jewish Student Nationalism at the University of Vienna before the First World War,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 27 (1982): 171–86.

36. Edmund Schechter, “Bemerkungen zur Geschichte des jüdisch-nationalen Couleurstudententums in Frage und Antwort,” in *Zirkel und Zionsstern: Bilder und Dokumenten aus der versunkenen Welt des jüdisch-nationalen Korporationsstudententums*, vol. 4, ed. Harald Seewann, 12 (Graz: H. Seewann, 1994).

anti-Semitic students. In a tough critique published in the *Neue Freie Presse* in early July 1913 Philippovich asked who was in charge of the university—the faculty or a group of German-national students? For Philippovich the dissidents were a noisy minority who disturbed the majority of students who simply wanted to study.³⁷ If the faculty did not take back control of the university, an ominous fate awaited, damaging not only the “prestige of the greatest German-Austrian university domestically, but also throughout the whole academic world.” One result of the May 1913 riots was pressure from the Ministry of Education that the university take matters more aggressively in hand, with Minister Max von Hussarek demanding that the faculty create mandatory honor commissions (*ehrenrätliche Schiedsgerichte*) that would hear cases involving conflicts of honor between students and render authoritative judgments, thus obviating the need for self-help duels. After protracted negotiations, the University Senate passed such a regulation in December 1913.³⁸ Even more telling was a resolution that the Senate passed in December 1908, in the aftermath of violent confrontations between

37. Eugen von Philippovich, “Disziplin und Ordnung an der Universität: Ein Rückblick und Ausblick,” *Neue Freie Presse*, July 6, 1913, (M), 7. Schroeder subsequently complained to the University Senate about Philippovich’s critique. See Schroeder to the University Senate, July 8, 1913, and Philippovich’s response of July 9, 1913, University Senate, Archive of the University of Vienna. The senate in turn affirmed the latter’s right to speak his mind, but also complained about his forthright public criticism of internal university administrative procedures. Clearly, the whole tangled episode was a serious embarrassment to the university’s leadership.

38. See Hussarek to the rector of the University of Vienna, May 24, 1913, August 28, 1913, and October 22, 1913, and the related documents in the same file no.: 1323, Archive of the University of Vienna. Hussarek’s first letter was a strong suggestion, but his second and third letters were basically a direct order that the University Senate needed to act.

pan-German and Italian students at the university in late November of that year, requesting that the Ministry of Education provide a dedicated, uniformed police force (*Wache*) of fifty to eighty men for the university, given that, as Rector Franz Exner argued, “the means available to the academic Senate to maintain order do not suffice to maintain peace and order” and that “repeated warnings from the rectors and a repeated appeal to the honor of the students and to our academic traditions have not prevented the students from perpetrating acts of violence on the university’s campus.”³⁹ The government was leery of proceeding along such lines for fear of setting an unpredictable precedent in the creation of targeted police units, and Exner soon dropped the request, but the transaction revealed that the senior faculty had grown increasingly leery of the claims of student radicals about their rights to disrupt the operations of the university. In fact, from the perspective of the pan-German dueling fraternities, these years did see heightened scrutiny of their bad behavior by both university and police authorities. It was thus all the more remarkable that their subsequent chronicler (and a later minor Nazi functionary), Professor Kurt Knoll, writing in 1923, would bemoan the fact that many pan-German students after 1900 simply turned away from any concern with public politics altogether, becoming more involved in alcoholism and rowdy behavior against fellow students and increasingly split into an array of jealous rival factions among the fraternities that disagreed about a host of issues involving the behavioral norms to be sanctioned by the groups, thus heightening the already negative image that they carried among the general public.

39. Exner to the Ministry of Education, December 13, 1908, Min. d. Innern Präis, Z. 1620, carton 2021, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Vienna.

Paradoxically, the radicalization of the student body in the German-speaking universities in Austria after the 1880s was a leading cause of the failure of the ideals that informed the founding model of Leo Thun. Rather than educating and nurturing students as state patriots, the universities ended up providing several generations of young elite leaders the means and occasions to embrace pan-German and anti-Semitic radicalism.⁴⁰ This was particularly critical in the intellectual formation of the large number of Austrian students enrolled in the various university Law Faculties, whose mandate was to train new generations of civil servants and jurists who would become the administrative custodians of the state.⁴¹ This conveyor belt of ambivalence and, in extreme cases, outright disloyalty not only had fateful consequences for the history of the Austrian state in the 1930s, but also constituted a profound challenge for the image and communications strategies of the German-speaking universities even under the old empire. At a protest meeting of Jewish citizens in late May 1913 about the disturbances at the university, an engineer on the state railways, Emil Fried, complained about the pan-German students (whom he called “hooligans”) that “[they] will remain, once they become the future judges, state prosecutors, etc. [of the Austrian state], just as rigidly anti-Semitic.” Fried’s remarks were

40. Waltraud Heindl, “Universitätsreform–Gesellschaftsreform: Bemerkungen zum Plan eines ‘Universitätsorganisationsgesetzes’ in den Jahren 1854/55,” *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 35 (1982): 149.

41. Robert Hoffmann has noted the very large percentage of anti-Semitic fraternity students in Vienna who ended up in civil service, judicial, and *Mittelschule* (secondary-school) teaching careers. See Hoffmann, “Gab es ein ‘Schönerianisches Milieu’? Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie von Mitgliedern des ‘Vereins der Salzburger Studenten in Wien,’” in *Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie*, ed. Ernst Bruckmüller, Ulrike Döcker, Hannes Stekl, and Peter Urbanitsch, 291 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1990).

made in one particular and even benign context, the imperial world of 1913, but unfortunately, his prediction proved all too true in the altered context of the 1920s and 1930s.⁴²

The story of student radicalism is an old and even venerable one. The case that I have presented today is admittedly extreme. Throughout the twentieth century, students in Europe and in America would again assert their rights to interpose and impose their political views on the nexus of university life, indeed to deploy the name and resources of the universities to advance their own political and ideological interests. In many cases, such as those that occurred on American university campuses in the 1960s, the radical political activism of the students was even congenial to many members of the faculty, or at least it did not seem to faculty to threaten basic university values. Nonetheless, the Habsburg case illustrates the dangers that arise when the autonomy of universities against external pressures becomes a tool that interest groups can mobilize for causes that have little to do with the universities’ core missions of teaching and research. This story remains particularly instructive because it calls to attention the problems that may arise when student culture and faculty culture become *so* divorced from one other as to work completely at cross purposes. The resultant damage that can impinge upon the broader identity of the universities was severe and irreversible in the Austrian case.

42. Emil Fried’s remarks at a protest meeting, May 24, 1913, *Statt. Präs., Z.* 1846, *Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv*.

THE UNIVERSITIES AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A second issue that perplexed university leaders in the years around 1900 was academic freedom. As noted above, Max Weber and other German academics issued vigorous defenses of the idea of academic freedom, about which I will comment below. Still, such principles are easy to project in theory, but often difficult to defend in practice. In 1907 a case involving a quarrelsome professor of theology, Ludwig Wahrmund, occurred in Austria that was of general notoriety across Central Europe. Wahrmund was a scholar of canon law and ecclesiastical history who had served since 1896 as a member of the Faculty of Law in the University of Innsbruck, an appointment he obtained with the support of Catholic ecclesiastical and political leaders in the province of Tyrol.⁴³ The Tyroleans soon had cause to regret their patronage, for Wahrmund proved anything but conventional in his theological opinions.⁴⁴ Although his views were unsystematic and often frustratingly vague—

43. On Wahrmund, see Matthias Höttinger, “Der Fall Wahrmund” (Dissertation, University of Vienna, 1949). Höttinger’s dissertation is unfavorable toward Wahrmund. See also Josef Fontana, *Geschichte des Landes Tirol: Vom Neubau bis zum Untergang der Habsburgermonarchie (1848–1918)* (Bolzano: Athesia, 1987), 3:270–78; Gerhard Hartmann, *Im Gestern bewährt, im Heute bereit: 100 Jahre Carolina: zur Geschichte des Verbandkatholizismus* (Graz: Styria, 1988), 94–120; and Andreas Bösch, *Zwischen Franz Joseph I. und Schönerer: Die Innsbrucker Universität und ihre Studentenverbindungen, 1859–1918* (Innsbruck: Studien, 2008), 135–55. For the pace of events in the affair I have followed Gustav Marchet’s handwritten manuscript on the “Wahrmund-Affaire” in Carton 8, NL Marchet, Haus, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna.

44. See *Pädagogischer Jahresbericht* 58, no. 2 (1906): 81.

Wahrmund was more adept at polemic than theological precision—he adopted liberal protestant views of ecclesiology and Christology after 1900, influenced by his admiration for Kant, Schleiermacher, and Harnack. He came to believe that religion was a matter of subjective feelings based on cultural and ontological inadequacy. To be religious meant to long for a state of unattainable perfection and security. In this sense religion might properly be called an “illusion,” albeit one justified by man’s moral being. Religion required and admitted little in the way of formal institutional doctrine and discipline. Hence Roman Catholicism, especially in its present “subjection” to an ignorant papacy, was a profound distortion of a collective existential illusion. It played upon the weak by offering them a false sense of security through fantasies of moral and theological objectivity.⁴⁵ Wahrmund presented these assertions in cantankerous literary forms which the British diplomat in Vienna, Duncan Gregory, aptly characterized as “offensive in every respect, even to the un-denominational forms of Christianity” and as “an inferior production by a man of inferior ability.”⁴⁶

A querulous person with a self-righteous vision of a new, revisionist theology, Wahrmund found himself increasingly at odds with the Catholic Church whose law he was hired to teach. His intellectual

45. The most elaborate presentation of Wahrmund’s polemical views is the uncensored version of his *Katholische Weltanschauung und freie Wissenschaft* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1908), esp. 28–45. See also his *Ultramontan: Eine Abwehr in vier Artikeln* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1908) and his version of the final stages of the controversy, *Lehrfreiheit? Akten und Erläuterungen zum Fall Wahrmund* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1909).

46. Duncan Gregory’s “Memorandum” in Goschen to Grey, June 26, 1908, vol. 398, no. 83, FO371, Public Record Office, London.

tirades against the church represented the most sensitive of all academic freedom cases: a self-indulgent academic who attacked the public corporation that had provided him with his initial moral and scholarly legitimacy. Professionally, as a tenured university professor, Wahrmund was an employee not of the Catholic Church but of the Habsburg state. Under any reasonable reading of the Austrian constitution of 1867 his freedom to teach or write anything he wished seemed self-evident. But Wahrmund's case was so difficult to adjudge precisely because it raised with painful clarity a characteristic dilemma for church-state relations in Germany and Austria at the beginning of the twentieth century: how far would the state extend the mantle of academic freedom into the heartland of theological scholarship? Did academic freedom guarantee not only freedom of research on theological subjects but the freedom to use that scholarship to attack the church as a political institution in the media and at political rallies? Could one use the "cover" of scholarship to make statements which, under other circumstances, might be seen as a violation of Section 303 of the Austrian criminal code, which protected "recognized religions" from slander? Where was the boundary between scholarly research and political polemic, and how would the state set and enforce that line?

As early as 1902 Wahrmund had clashed with a local Tyrolean political leader, Georg Jehly, characterizing Jehly's deeply conservative cultural values as the products of "intellectual impoverishment and blind fanaticism." His initial foray into political scandal merited Wahrmund a rebuke by the then Minister of Education, Wilhelm von Hartel, in parliament in March 1902, but subsequent events would lead him repeatedly back into the fray. In 1906, Wahrmund accepted the chairmanship of the newly founded Innsbruck branch of the anti-clerical *Verein "Freie Schule"* (Free School Association), speaking at its

dedication about the backwardness of current theology in Rome.⁴⁷ His scholarship on ecclesiastical marriage legislation, which ultimately led him to believe in the dissolubility of the marriage contract and the morality of divorce, and his responses to the antimodernist crusade of Pope Pius X, particularly the *Syllabus* of July 1907 and the encyclical *Pascendi* condemning modernism in September 1907, were deeply inflammatory. After another Tyrolean politician, Michael Mayr, produced an unflattering discussion of him in late 1907, Wahrmund sent Mayr a public letter in which, among other niceties, he called Catholic students at the University of Innsbruck "moles and parasites."⁴⁸ Matters came to a head when Wahrmund delivered his famous lecture on the Catholic worldview and academic freedom at a session sponsored by the *Freie Schule* movement in Innsbruck on January 18, 1908.⁴⁹ This talk, parts of which were later suppressed by the Austrian courts as slanderous against Catholicism, was a rage-filled condemnation of the papacy and its recent theological pronouncements.

News of the speech immediately polarized Austrian politics, with Catholics demanding that the government discipline Wahrmund by removing him from his professorship. Initially the government hesitated to intervene publicly, hoping that the storm would blow over. Yet this was impossible in a mass political climate charged by class, ethnic, and religious tensions. That the Wahrmund affair did not subside was owing to the ability of minority interests to force the major German political blocs both in and out of the Cabinet to react to their extremist tactics. Counterposed to hysterical cries for Wahrmund's dismissal

47. Höttinger, "Der Fall Wahrmund," 16–17.

48. *Ibid.*, 23.

49. See Wahrmund, *Katholische Weltanschauung und freie Wissenschaft*.

were proclamations from the anticlerical liberal press in Vienna that depicted Wahrmund as a glorious crusader for freedom of speech.

The government thus found itself caught in a crossfire in which, as the Czech political leader Thomas Masaryk was later to complain, the reaction of all serious politicians was to run for cover. As a guild the university professors again found themselves targets of abuse, and, posturing about academic freedom aside, many felt that Wahrmund was expendable. Writing to Lujo Brentano in late March 1908, Professor Karl von Amira reported that he had encountered a lack of sympathy for Wahrmund among many academics in Munich, with some arguing that the professor had transgressed the permissible bounds of discretion and decorum.⁵⁰ After months of prevarication, the Austrian Prime Minister Max von Beck gave the Catholic political leadership a firm assurance that Wahrmund would not lecture in Innsbruck during the summer. But when Wahrmund returned to Innsbruck on June 1 he announced that he would give lectures on canon law and proceeded to hold a seminar, upon which the Tyrolian Governor Markus von Spiegelfeld ordered the University of Innsbruck closed. This decision led to huge student disruptions, including a nationwide strike of the students at most Austrian universities beginning on June 3, which saw a remarkable, if awkward alliance in Vienna between anti-Semitic and Jewish-led student groups, both united on behalf of academic freedom against the specter of “clericalism.” These events then led the Austrian government to construct what became the final settlement, which Wahrmund was bullied into accepting, namely, that Wahrmund would be transferred to a professorship at the German University in Prague beginning in the fall semester, with generous financial inducements involving research leave

50. Karl von Amira to Lujo Brentano, March 30, 1908, NL Brentano, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz.

and pension status to make the move acceptable. Also on June 16, anticlimactically but with great effect, Emperor Franz Joseph publicly chastised the Minister of Education for having allowed the affair to drag on. Transferred to Prague, Wahrmund tried unsuccessfully to obtain a professorship at Vienna in 1909 and eventually disappeared into a cloud of unintended anonymity with his career in shambles. He later complained that he had suffered so many insults in Austria that he could no longer work there and that “the behavior of the so-called liberal parties has been in fact deplorable [*jämmerlich*], as was that of most of my colleagues.”⁵¹

The Wahrmund affair left important traces. This major test case of university-based academic freedom showed that while respecting the theory of professorial freedom, there were clear functional costs to the exercise of that freedom outside the classroom. These would be defined by the new mass politics, especially when the heart of the controversy lay with the Catholic Church and the church’s interests. Ethnic conflicts were still a customary and lively part of Habsburg politics, but religion was no longer a viable candidate to justify government protection, not because the system of checks and balances defining church-and-state relations that had developed in the 1860s and 1870s had failed, but because it had worked too well.⁵² Originally, free speech was an anticlerical issue in the 1860s and 1870s, but after 1890 the clericalism issue paled into insignificance next to nationalist strife, often admixed with class tensions as well. This meant that universities could no longer exclusively seek to define their “liberal” ambience by posing as critics of

51. Ludwig Wahrmund to Karl von Amira, July 10, 1908, NL Amira, Handschriftenabteilung, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

52. On this trend, see John W. Boyer, “Religion and Political Development in Central Europe around 1900: A View from Vienna,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 25 (Jan. 1994): 13–57.

traditional religious groups. Religion became a still more powerful force in mobilizing mass political loyalties in Central Europe after 1890, and if the universities wished to present themselves as sites of neutral scientific research and instruction, they could not do so by bashing traditional religious sensibilities.

Second, the affair was marked by a strange but powerful alliance of new and old conservative political elites who excoriated what they felt to be the irresponsibility and recklessness of the radical students who took it upon themselves to pose as defenders of the cause of academic freedom, depriving the majority of students who did want to study the chance to do so. One prominent aristocrat, Count Franz von Thun und Hohenstein, observed archly about the behavior of university authorities whom he criticized for refusing to discipline striking students: “agreed, the universities should have autonomy, but if autonomy brings rights it also carries with it responsibilities, and autonomy cannot be pushed to the point that a state within a state is created, in which anyone can do whatever they want, even if it is illegal.” Thun also warned about the dangers of faculty catering to radical student behavior that would compromise the future stability of the state and civil society: the students misbehaving today were the same individuals who, with their lack of discipline and failure to acknowledge authority, would eventually become elite leaders in the civil service, the courts and commerce, and “the damaging fruits of their behavior will impact the welfare of future generations.”⁵³ Thun’s attack was matched by the response of the emperor Franz Joseph to the affair—his famous quip to the Minister of Education to do something about “your rectors” who were a “sorry bunch” because they could not control their own students—was an expression of disgust

53. *Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Herrenhauses* (Vienna: Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1908), 312.

by the most preeminent figurehead of the conservative elites of the empire about the behavior of the anticlerical student radicals.

Finally, the affair challenged on several fronts and in several dimensions the conventional assertions about university autonomy that were so prevalent in public discourse about the universities in the late nineteenth century. Both Walter Höflechner and Sascha Ferz have rightly noted that the tensions resulting from the legal double identity of the Austrian universities as both (a) independent corporations under public law and (b) as (administrative) institutions of the central state itself were never fully resolved.⁵⁴ Höflechner has gone so far as to claim that, legally speaking, “up to the end of the Monarchy... it was never clarified what a university *exactly* was in Austria.”⁵⁵ This ambiguity was further magnified by the fact that Central European academics have traditionally understood academic freedom to connote both the freedom of the individual researcher to teach and write and the freedom of the university to act as an independent faculty-run corporation.⁵⁶ Even more significant than theoretical debates about autonomy was the exorable encroachment by the state on many areas of civic life, including higher education, at the same time that the very constitutional underpinnings of that state

54. Walter Höflechner, *Die österreichische Rektorenkonferenz, 1911–1938, 1945–1969* (Graz: Verein zur Förderung der Rektorenkonferenz, 1992), 22; Sascha Ferz, *Ewige Universitätsreform: Das Organisationsrecht der österreichischen Universitäten von den thesesianischen Reformen bis zum UOG 1993* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 266–70.

55. Walter Höflechner, “Wissenschaft, Hochschule und Staat bis 1938,” in *Die Universität und 1938*, ed. Christian Brünner and Helmut Konrad, 58 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989).

56. See the shrewd comments of David P. Baker and Gero Lenhardt, “The Institutional Crisis of the German Research University,” *Higher Education Policy* 21, no. 1 (Mar. 2008): 60.

were in rapid evolution. The resulting confusion of boundaries was evident in many institutional domains, such as the legal status of the rapidly increasing numbers of untenured lecturers (*Privatdozenten*), whom the universities needed to conduct their teaching programs but who had neither a purely civil-service status nor that of a private employee.⁵⁷ What the Wahrmond affair had done was to show the Austrian public that disorder in the second—the inability of the universities to control their own environments—would inevitably impact and weaken their abilities to defend the principles of the first, thus explaining the fact that, as Professor Karl von Amira of the University of Munich observed, many Austrian academics as private individuals sought to put as much distance as possible between themselves and Wahrmond.

To what degree was the Wahrmond affair an expression of the political dysfunction of the late Habsburg Empire, and to what degree was it indicative of tensions in the mission of research universities in the period generally? The particular issues of the affair, bound up as they were with popular Catholicism, mass politics at the parliamentary and the civic levels, and the residual traces of anticlericalism as a liberal mobilizing strategy, were uniquely combustible in Austria by comparison to universities in Protestant Prussia or the United States. Anti-Catholicism of Wahrmond's brand was a losing proposition for Austrian universities since it was certain to arouse hostility from the state and actors in parliament without conjuring up any compensating degree of support. It was for this reason that Wahrmond could be seen to endanger the entire, corporate enterprise of the university; there are no equivalent, religiously-based cases to my knowledge from this period in the United States.

57. Ferdinand Schmid, "Die rechtliche Stellung der Privatdozenten," *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Sozialpolitik und Verwaltung* 17 (1908): 453–89, esp. 463–66.



Yet cases of faculty activists taking unpopular and even inflammatory positions, to the consternation of colleagues, appeared frequently in the Gilded Age United States as well, albeit with different causes. The cases of Edward Bemis and Edward A. Ross at the University of Chicago and Stanford University, respectively, illuminated the limits of tolerance at private universities, which were largely dependent upon industrial philanthropy, for advocacy of socialist causes. These cases had many similarities. In both, the pointed social criticism of politically-engaged faculty threatened their university's relationships with donors on the Board of Trustees in particular (in the latter case with Jane L. Stanford, the founder's widow) and with regional or civic elites in general. It also appears that in both cases, the university presidents tried unsuccessfully to mediate between the professors in question, on one side, and donors and disapproving faculty, on the other, who did not appreciate the attention that these activities brought and were disinclined to suffer a hit to their public image for a colleague whom they felt to be disagreeable and perhaps insufficiently distinguished.⁵⁸ While the result was thus the same, given that both Bemis and Ross were dismissed, it is nonetheless the case that Presidents Harper and David Starr Jordan had a greater space for diplomatic maneuver in these scandals than did Austrian officials. The sources of funding at their disposal were somewhat more diverse, and more importantly, the public issues at stake were more carefully bracketed and less immediately explosive.

The case of Richard T. Ely, a tenured economist at the University of Wisconsin, presents a clearer comparison given that he was employed and put on trial by a state university. Ely was ultimately cleared of all

58. Hofstadter and Metzger examine the process of both cases in *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*; see also Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, 397–418.

charges, but only after a sensational national episode involving the press, concerns about railroad strikes, pressures from the State Office of Education, and negotiations between the university president and Board of Regents, none of which would have been unfamiliar to Max von Beck and Wahrmond. An outspoken supporter of the labor movement in the 1880s, Ely drew his social commitments from the social-gospel movement then incipient in American Protestant theology, and voiced strong criticisms of both laissez-faire capitalism and socialism.⁵⁹ His pro-union activities brought him to the attention of the Wisconsin State Superintendent of Education, Oliver E. Wells, who charged Ely with teaching pro-socialist views in his courses, yet masking them “by glittering generalities and mystical and metaphysical statements” to avoid trouble.⁶⁰ The events that led to Ely's trial before the regents in 1894 were complex. That he was ultimately vindicated was in no small part because he was able to present his views as the expressions of a “practical Christianity” rooted in a theological milieu rather than anarchism or socialism. In this, he showed a diplomatic and conciliatory edge that Wahrmond lacked and won the support of the civic leaders who adjudicated his case. By contrast to the Wahrmond affair, the explosive charge (here of sympathy for anarchism or socialism) could be neutralized given, apparently, that it was not substantially true. While the Ely case thus had powerful resonances in mass politics, these could be contained without unmanageable risk to the university financially or academically.

These years thus saw the beginning of a highly fluid and unpredictable set of structural recalibrations of how civil society in Austria and

59. Sidney Fine, “Richard T. Ely, Forerunner of Progressivism, 1880–1901,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 37, no. 4 (Mar. 1951): 599–624.

60. Cited in Theron F. Schlabach, “An Aristocrat on Trial: The Case of Richard T. Ely,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 47, no. 2 (Win. 1963–1964): 146–59.

Germany, now equipped with new political and economic resources, would view the mission and performance of many tax-dependent public institutions, including the universities. It also showed how problematic it might prove if the leaders of the German-speaking universities allowed their institutions to become still further divorced from the dynamics of the evolving civic culture on the eve of 1914.

RESOURCES, PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION

A final and brief issue that I want to comment on is the question of resources and budgets. Today we find ourselves thinking hard about university budget structures, and the same was true of those who were trying to assemble the first distinguished universities around 1900. In the case of Germany, the universities felt justified to make aggressive fiscal claims on the German government because they served an immensely wealthy state, but even so, other priorities collided with higher education, especially drastic rearmament programs launched by the German army and navy, and by 1914 many German university leaders had a gloomy view of their financial future. In the case of Austria, the problems were even more complex, because the universities found themselves locked in a grid of sturdy ethnic competitions, in which zero-sum nationalist conflict weakened the ability of the universities to act in concert with each other in ways that would have been oblivious to ethnic partisanship.

The financial situation of the universities did improve, but slowly and incrementally and largely because of the responsive largesse of Karl Stürgkh and Max von Hussarek, who served as imperial ministers of

education between 1909 and 1914. Neither man was fond of the pan-German radicalism of the student bodies, but there was pressure from the public to provide more resources, and just as the Austrian secondary schools (*Mittelschulen*) profited from public demands for more investments, a kind of incremental inflation in investments in the tertiary sector of higher education took place, steady but not overly generous.⁶¹ The progress was real but not outsized and, in fact, the universities fared no better than most other cultural institutions: while the absolute size of the general budget for the Ministry of Education increased each year, the relative share allocated to the universities in that budget did not increase between 1905 and 1914, hovering steadily around 14.5 percent throughout the last years before the war.⁶²

The real challenge faced by the Austrian universities lay in their inability to coalesce and define their mutual interests outside of the ethnic-national negotiating framework that the wider political system had imposed upon them after 1880, and in the case of the University of Vienna, in its peculiar isolation from the future dominant blocs (Socialist and Catholic) of German-Austrian politics. As long as the universities could depend on the good graces and rational decision making of (relatively) neutral and well-positioned senior imperial officials in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance—a new clinic here, a new physics institute there, not to mention stern warnings to the rectors from the central ministries and the imperial governors from time to

61. Gary B. Cohen, "Citizenship and Nationality in Late Imperial Austria," in *Nation, Nationalitäten und Nationalismus im östlichen Europa: Festschrift für Arnold Suppan zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Marija Wakounig, Wolfgang Mueller, and Michael Portmann, 219 (Vienna: LIT, 2010).

62. The budgets were published in the *Beilagen* of the sessions of the Austrian parliament on an annual basis.

time to keep warring student fraternities in check—significant progress might be made, in spite of the chaotic parliamentary situation. Although in the end his regime was crippled by nationalist bickering, one can only be impressed by Prime Minister Ernest von Koerber's calm, even-handed defense of what he had tried to accomplish in launching an Italian university faculty in Innsbruck when he sat through a tedious meeting of German National leaders in late 1904, who insisted that Koerber's attempt to conciliate both sides, the local Italians as well as the local Germans, and not to make the situation worse by blaming either side was in fact profoundly unfair to the Germans.⁶³ But once the strong and (relatively) ideology-free imperial administrative state with the legitimacy and power to make tough decisions and impose stringent solutions no longer existed, and its wealth had been squandered too (as was the case after 1918), the universities were left to their own institutional devices under republican ministers of education who were ruthlessly politically partisan. The flotsam and jetsam of prejudice and intellectual mediocrity emerged among both faculty and students in ways that would have been tempered and modulated, if not totally avoided, before 1914. In contrast to the fears of German academics who worried about the capricious interventions of the Prussian administrative state, in Austria that state, seeking to rise above ethnic particularisms, was in fact a staunch defender of the integrity of the universities. Yet the fact that universities were so balkanized by ethnic rivalries inevitably impaired their ability to make the case for significant new investments of public money.

63. See the "Resumé der am 19. 11. 1904 abgehaltenen Besprechung," in *Briefe und Dokumente zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des böhmisch-mährischen Raumes*, ed. Ernst Rutkowski, 3 vols. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1983–2011), 2:900–910. Koerber observed dryly that "wenn die Deutschen in der Majorität sind, stellen sie andere Prinzipien auf als dort, wo sie in der Minorität sind" (907).

CONCLUSION

In October 1911 Max Weber delivered a harsh and now famous critique of the Althoff system at a meeting of German and Austrian scholars in Dresden, which paralleled his growing unease over authoritarian governance in Imperial Germany more generally. For Friedrich Althoff was the tip of a system of control in which "the powers... available to the Prussian Ministry of Education were the most thorough imaginable, and the system through which these powers were exercised carried with it the danger of producing a new academic generation which no longer adhered to the old traditions of the German university. It was rather an approximation to an American type—not to the type of American academic, but rather to the type of American who is active in the stock exchange." In the same address Weber also commented on what he viewed to be the critical differences between the German and American systems, focusing on the variable social constituencies of students available to each system, on their different generative curricular practices and faculty employment structures, and on the more open and more competitive and entrepreneurial nature of the American universities, because they were not indebted to or controlled by the state.⁶⁴ Even so, Weber admitted that America also had its share of Althoffs, in the persons of

64. See Max Weber, "American and German Universities," in *Max Weber on Universities: The Power of the State and the Dignity of the Academic Calling in Imperial Germany*, ed. Edward Shils, 23–30 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). For the background, see Rüdiger vom Bruch, "Wissenschaftspolitik, Kulturpolitik, Weltpolitik: Hochschule und Forschungsinstitute auf dem Deutschen Hochschullehrertag in Dresden 1911," in *Transformation des Historismus: Wissenschaftsorganisation und Bildungspolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Horst Walter Blanke, 32–63 (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 1994).

university presidents who, in their own state-free domains, exercised enormous discretionary authority, often by playing one faction of faculty against others within the same institution.

Weber's portrait of the early twentieth-century German university was thus deeply conflicted. As Rüdiger vom Bruch has noted, Weber's comparison with America was not a luddite denial of new modes of organizing higher education, but rather a profound concern that the Germans were inadvertently adopting the worst features of the Americans—commercialization, massification, hyper-vocationalism—without the commitment to student quality control, administrative flexibility, and individual character development that marked the American system.⁶⁵ The university for Weber was a site of higher learning that possessed venerable historical dignity and research acumen and that could shape independent scholarly personalities, but it was also a place of increasing politicization and pressure to accommodate external political and economic forces. The result was that even in Berlin he saw an institution filled not only with independent-minded scholars “of strong character” but also with mediocrities only too ready to curry favor with powerful outside political, commercial, and administrative forces.⁶⁶ The problem of academic freedom, about which Weber also was deeply concerned in these years, not only involved freedom of the individual scholar, but freedom of universities themselves to remain vibrant, self-governing communities apart from the bureaucratizing pressures of the state or the

65. See especially Rüdiger vom Bruch, “Max Webers Kritik am ‘System Althoff’ aus universitätsgeschichtlicher Perspektive,” *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 5 (1995): 313–26.

66. “The Bernhard Affair,” in Shils, *Max Weber on Universities*, 4–8.

homogenizing pressures of civil society.⁶⁷ Weber was worried that the changing structures of civil society around 1900—the interventionist behavior of public administrative authorities, the politicization of university appointments by special public and private interests, and the quest for moral certainties on the part of students—were diminishing the ability of the universities to develop autonomous intellects, who had the courage to see the world with productive disenchantment. Academic freedom meant much more than the freedom to speak enjoyed by individual scholars without regard to political conformity or social congeniality. It also hinged upon scholars abandoning claims that they as teachers should sponsor ideological certainty or engage in roles of ideological prophecy. Hence Weber argued that “academic prophecy will never do more than create fanatical sects. It will never create a genuine [intellectual] community.”⁶⁸ Invoking one's own freedom would be an idle exercise and even disingenuous unless one was willing to balance freedom for oneself by positing freedom for others.

Weber's concern with independence of character had nothing to do with morality or sociability. Rather, it reflected his conviction that the fundamental mission of any real university was the development of individuals who would promote independent scholarly values and cultivate particular styles of intellectual clarity; for a university to nurture such values among its students and faculty it had to be free itself as a corporate institution, free from outside interference, but also free from within, in the sense that it scrupulously avoided ideological partisanship. Of course,

67. See Peter Josephson, “Lehrfreiheit, Lernfreiheit, Wertfreiheit: Max Weber and the University Teachers' Congress in Jena 1908,” *Max Weber Studies* 4, no. 2 (July 2004): 201–19.

68. John Dreijmanis, ed., *Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations*, trans. Gordon C. Wells (New York: Algora, 2008), 52.

once free, faculty leaders of the university had to protect against the ever-present dangers of mediocrity and cultural complacency; our former President Edward H. Levi once said quite rightly that the greatest danger that any university faces is “the insidious and reasonable thought that mediocrity also has its uses.”⁶⁹ But Weber’s larger point was that academic freedom is not simply a personal value, it is a characteristic of the institution itself, and the two—independent personalities and independent institutions—are inexorably linked. As he put it in 1908: “It is not the business of universities to teach a world view that is either ‘pro’ or ‘anti’ the state, or indeed any other world view. They are not institutions whose function is to teach ultimate beliefs. They analyze facts and their real conditions, laws and connections, and they analyze concepts and their logical presupposition and contents. They do not and should not teach what should happen, for this is the matter of ultimate personal value judgments... they leave it to the conscience of the individual to choose the ideals to whose service he wishes to devote himself—which ‘gods he serves’.”⁷⁰

Weber thus hit upon a crucial challenge that would define all three systems of higher education that I have discussed today, namely, the role of the university as a *politicum* (to use wonderful term from Habsburg administrative law) in a wider and complex social world around 1900, and the role of individual faculty scholars as bearers of intellectual culture. Could faculty be free if universities found themselves captives to sundry outside political interests? Could the faculty defend the ideal of

69. From Levi’s speech of March 15, 1965, to the University Board of Trustees. See John W. Boyer, *The University of Chicago. A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 367.

70. Dreijmanis, *Max Weber’s Complete Writings*, 72–73.

the autonomous universities while also seeking to protect or tolerate students who often arrayed themselves in violent ways against the very state that the universities depended upon for their material sustenance? Nor were these threats exclusive to Central Europe around 1914. At the same meeting in Dresden at which Max Weber spoke, a guest from America, Professor George S. Fullerton of Columbia University, presented an attractive description of the ideal of the new American research university. Although Fullerton found much that was equal or even superior in the American model, particularly its more democratic employment practices and lack of compulsory lecture fees (paid by students to individual German and Austrian professors), he also acknowledged that while wealthy private universities in the United States faced many fewer dangers of political pressure from the market, financially weaker institutions were more exposed. He also differentiated between the freedom of a scholar to speak in his area of expertise and the freedom of a scholar to act as a political agent or even a politically informed citizen: the former arena was protected, as long as American professors acted with “tact,” but in the case of the latter, Fullerton warned that scholars “would have to live with the consequences.”⁷¹

In the face of such disjunctions, how could the large and complex institutional systems of higher education, ever more dependent upon governments that were themselves subject to intense public scrutiny and mass political control, or, as in America, reliant on huge private philanthropy, still maintain their claims to autonomy and to organize their

71. Fullerton’s remarks at Dresden were reprinted in the *Verhandlungen des IV. deutschen Hochschulehrertages zu Dresden am 12. und 13. Oktober 1911* (Leipzig: Verlag des Literarischen Zentralblattes für Deutschland [Eduard Avenarius], 1912), 53–63, here 59.

own, self-chosen relationships to civil society? Remarkably, the universities began to scramble to find new ways to explain their self-assigned virtues just as the social priorities and political structures of their host societies were changing radically.⁷² University leaders had to decide whether to defend nineteenth-century ideals of faculty self-governance and institutional autonomy as valid and realistic norms, at a time when the growth of public demands for practical services provided by higher education meant that external social and political forces would take greater roles than heretofore in defining the mission and the identity of these institutions. Internal governance tensions were, thus, merely one facet of new relationships with the modern industrial state and with providers of private philanthropy that all universities would have to navigate in the two decades before the onset of World War One. The rise of mass politics, new industrial wealth, expanding bureaucracies, demands for expanded access to higher education and the resulting need for enormous resources all placed great strains on the identities of universities in the United States, Germany, and Austria. As we have seen, this created both great opportunities and serious dilemmas for educational leaders in the first Heroic Age of higher education.

If many of the challenges in this environment were shared, the

72. It said much about the bewilderment of the universities that as prescient a commentator as Professor Richard Wettstein, a distinguished botanist and faculty leader at the University of Vienna, would claim at the first *Hochschullehrertag* (Congress of University Teachers) in September 1907 that Austrian academics needed to organize themselves since “we can no longer count on a sufficient encouragement and support for the interests of our universities from our parliamentary institutions.” See *Verhandlungen des ersten deutschen Hochschullehrer-Tages zu Salzburg im September 1907* (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1908), 66; as well as Hans Gerber, “Entwicklungsgeschichte des Hochschulverbandes,” *Mitteilungen des Hochschulverbandes* 11 (Apr. 1963): 63.

responses and outcomes varied greatly, and in fact reflected a sea change in the global system of higher education. The stunning successes of the German system would prove unsustainable in the 1920s because they depended upon a transitional intersection of a wealthy authoritarian state with commercial-bourgeois wealth and nineteenth-century corporatist and elitist educational traditions. This conferred great status for a time on graduates, whether German or international, but this social capital decreased as the educational system expanded and began to place technical-scientific training outside the universities. The American system by contrast claimed a much greater space to establish and sustain wide public legitimacy and robust fund-raising in its integration of the collegiate with both the graduate-research and professional-technical tradition—even as these choices raised new dilemmas to be confronted later in the century, and in ours.⁷³ In the case of Austria, the status of late nineteenth-century universities as institutions of considerable research accomplishments with legal autonomy from the state met more complex obstacles. University leaders before 1918 stressed their value as publicly efficacious institutions in both imperial and nationalist tones, even as they sought to respond to changing occupational and social needs. Each cluster of “national” *Hochschulen* avidly sought support from their own ethnic-political blocs, and it was the non-German-speaking universities where faculty moved most deliberately toward “active political

73. Bernhard vom Brocke’s acerbic and unfriendly description of most American universities as being little more than “bessere Gymnasien” (“Die Entstehung der deutschen Forschungsuniversität, ihre Blüte und Krise um 1900,” 400) thus misses the unique strength of the American system. Unlike the continental model, the American system is predicated on the loyalty that undergraduate degree holders bear towards their individual college or university, which ends up providing enormous public support to the research enterprise.

participation.”⁷⁴ Then, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire and its neutral administrative traditions, the universities found themselves embattled, serving as political footballs for outside agitators and sites for rioting and anti-Semitic recruitment within. In all three cases, we see dynamic institutional expansion and growing prestige on one hand juxtaposed with an anxious sense of overreach, drift, and unintended consequences on the other. These were flip sides of the same educational coin.

Max Weber captured both sides of this dilemma brilliantly. Social transformations outside the university generated new expectations for the internal functioning and mission of the university itself. I believe the ways that universities in America and in Europe navigated these conditions circa 1900 are instructive for the challenges and opportunities we face today because we are still sorting out many of the most fundamental questions about the role of universities in late modern society that crystallized in the Heroic Age.

Let me conclude, then, by returning to the challenges that the universities face today. I have sought to demonstrate that unsettled relationships with political agents and threats to academic freedom are hardly new. They were replete in the decades surrounding the founding of the University of Chicago. Nor are collisions between the universities and the state particularly novel, nor even are internal stress points such as attempts to organize faculty into professional interest groups and even unions. Nor are anti-institutionally-oriented students whose capacity for protest may seem either refreshing or disheartening, but whose behavior in engendering a harsh adversarial culture within the academic community can prove institutionally damaging, as seen from the 1890s

74. Surman, “Habsburg Universities, 1848–1918: Biography of a Space,” 485.

to the 1930s. Looking back at the Heroic Age of 1880 to 1914 and at the subsequent Golden Age of expansion in the 1950s and 1960s, it strikes me that in both epochs the universities, in spite of these challenges, made effective claims on public and private resources because they found ways to explain effectively their mission to their general publics and to articulate their ambitions in ways that resonated with their times. The industrial and urbanizing world of the 1890s proved to be a congenial nexus in which to create the ideal of new research universities devoted to scientific innovation in the cause of improving human welfare, leading to remarkable structural experiments. In the 1950s and 1960s those times had shifted to encompass “multiversities” that claimed as their mission to educate a much larger segment of our population and to deploy scientific knowledge in a more explicit sense of national interest and even national defense. The basic teaching and research functions of the university today have not changed fundamentally from these earlier periods, but the broader social and cultural context in which colleges and universities operate has shifted in fundamental ways.

What is special about our time, and in what ways should the universities seek to engage and explain their mission for our public? Our mission today reflects several new social and cultural currents that have emerged in or broken upon our society since the 1980s and 1990s. Chief among these are the new social norms of inclusivity, equity, and pluralism that postulate that universities must welcome and empower a multiplicity of voices who can contribute productively to our public life by gaining entrance to our universities; and, moreover, that we must provide suitable structural resources to enable these students to graduate without the heavy burden of debt. Secondly, we are urged to pay much greater heed to the global resonances of our actions and to direct the benefits of our work toward and draw productive inspiration from a

greater number of global constituencies. These new challenges of diversity, equity, and globalism have come forward at a time when we are still sorting out problems that first emerged in the Heroic Age—and they are intimately related to those pressures. For example, as in the Heroic Age, expanding enrollment now means more diverse student bodies, both in terms of ethnicity and class, creating greater demands and opportunities for the social fabric of the university community to change by challenging older forms of exclusion and privilege. We too face a dynamic and unpredictable labor market—all the more fascinating because of its global nature—that frames students' future employment options in ways many parents believe are not fully accommodated by the traditional liberal-arts curriculum. We too have a vigorous economy based on new sources of revenue and new forms of creative productivity, but one pervaded by fears that a worsening maldistribution of income and wealth means that we are promising our successors unsustainable growth.

America now holds, ironically, the international position that German universities had in the 1890s, prompting increased emulation but also enhanced international competition. Few if any educational petitioners now journey to Berlin, Munich, Leipzig, or Vienna; rather they head to Harvard, Stanford, Chicago, and Columbia. Are we confident that the efficacy of our model will prove more enduring than that of the Germans? In some ways our space for maneuver is more limited than it was then. The social environment for students encompassed by the American university is more expansive than that of 1900, which means that cultural divisions and collisions of all kinds among students and faculty are more difficult to avoid and adjudicate. We cannot isolate the academic mandate of the university as cleanly as faculty and administrators did in the 1890s, and it was vexing even then. We face increasingly complex sources of revenue and wealth whose implications are not

always easy to unravel. The importance of the endowment and philanthropy for university operating budgets, together with federal research dollars and the growing role of international students, alumni, and donors, means that the fiscal maintenance of universities is entwined in a greater range of social constituencies and policy perspectives. Finally, in the face of all of these other changes, many administrators and faculty at other institutions have retreated from traditional understandings of the principle of academic freedom because the political costs of defending this norm are so high, immediate, and unpredictable.

In this historical moment, what can the University of Chicago learn from the experiences of Berlin and Vienna a century ago? How can we manage our current opportunities to guarantee our strength for the future? To quote Clark Kerr again, it is the continuous “sweep of their ideas” that makes a university great, and Chicago’s special role in American higher education has always been to strike out in search of new forms of teaching and learning.⁷⁵ We have a distinguished patrimony from which to think about our collective future. The early adoption of academic freedom as a foundational principle at the University of Chicago, which owed much to the influence of the German model, is particularly vital to understanding this patrimony in the development of our faculty and student culture. Here, at the moment of birth, an unusually high percentage of senior scholars had been shaped by the norms of the German academy, and German scholars like the distinguished historian Hermann von Holst gave the early Chicago faculty a powerful sense of what it meant to be a full professor, with freedom

75. Clark Kerr, “The Worth of Intellect: Inaugural Address by President Clark Kerr, University of California,” September 29, 1958, 2, University Archives, the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

from external forces in the pursuit of one's teaching and research at its core. This embrace of scholarly and pedagogical liberty conjoined with professional esteem as a central element of the faculty culture at Chicago has had profound consequences over our history: it enabled Robert Maynard Hutchins to take his courageous stands on academic freedom in the 1930s and 1940s and provided the underpinning of values for the Kalven Report in the 1960s. Beyond this, it encouraged the faculty and administration to make similar demands upon the student body, which unlike many of our peers was comprised of talented and ambitious students from a wide diversity of socioeconomic statuses and cultural perspectives. The University did not create tightly circumscribed boundaries to cordon off undergraduate culture from and against the rest of the University. Rather our students, representing such a range of personal and professional needs, reaffirmed the values of merit and self-achievement, and our faculty came to see them as partners in learning, in the sense that teaching these students was integral to the core mission of the University. Undergraduate teaching was not viewed as a conventional service activity, but as a mission to engender a wider milieu of scholarly values on the collegiate level that includes intellectual engagement, dispassion in the midst of controversy, and courage in the face of intellectual uncertainty. For these reasons the traditions of academic freedom that Weber championed have been woven into the DNA of the University of Chicago, and we need to make effective use of that autonomy today.

This distinguished patrimony is also expressed in the coherence of the developmental and educational process in the College. The first and second years give our students a community of common intellectual discourse and discipline as well as a rich network of friendship and collegiality. In their third and fourth years we then ask our students to use this social and intellectual platform to engage with the full breadth of

our curriculum, with the city, and then with the world. The College is enthusiastically endorsed by its students and is firmly committed to help them achieve professional success, but the College also has a very distinctive cultural profile in American higher education consisting of particularly strong intellectual values and standards and bold interdisciplinary programs (the Core, etc.). Given these assets, our future challenges and opportunities are many, but let me note five that are particularly urgent or promising or both.

First, we need to find more effective ways to model a capacity for greater civic literacy and discursive pluralism and to push back on the claustrophobic effects of identity politics, from all ideological directions. Whatever one's private views about faculty self-censorship in matters involving the curriculum, I hope that we will all reaffirm the fundamental need for the University to be a home to divergent and freely expressed viewpoints, in and outside of the classroom. Very few institutions in modern life have the legitimacy and the responsibility to serve as sturdy sites for the free expression of ideas and opinions, however congenial or controversial. The modern university was founded on the assumption that faculty and students would be free to explore the hardest and most challenging intellectual and cultural problems. Without that freedom, we would not have much of a university left. This is particularly opportune at Chicago because our culture of freedom is intimately linked with our parallel culture of rigor. I believe that the recent success of our admissions' efforts can be explained in part because we have found that intellectual rigor is back in fashion, and so too is the power of knowledge and the relevance of flexible analytical skills and disciplined inquiry, set within the context of a new climate of international perspectives. The rigorous analytical skills and the systematic training in the various disciplines that we offer so effectively to our students have never been more

valuable, and as one travels the world one learns that our students are esteemed precisely for these virtues.

Second, it would be salutary if we were willing to rethink the conventional boundaries of our curriculum for the students in their third and fourth years, by searching for creative ways to assimilate upper-level undergraduate and beginning graduate and even professional education, thus integrating more effectively the work of the College and the work of the graduate divisions and professional schools. Last year I published a large book on the history of the University, and one of the most important chapters in that book concerned the ideas and plans of Robert Maynard Hutchins.⁷⁶ In the 1930s Hutchins sought to tamper with the venerable boundary line between the last two years of high school and the first two years of college, arguing that the high schools were doing a lousy job of educating American youth, so much so that the colleges needed to step in and remediate the work of the high schools by transferring significant segments of secondary-level teaching to the colleges. In the long run Hutchins's plan failed as a national project, but the result on our campus was a brilliant fifteen-year experiment that created new patterns and structures of general education, that left many valuable and distinctive features, and that continues to inform the intellectual culture and institutional identity of the University of Chicago. The same genre of problem, perhaps even more acute, still informs the boundary lines at the other end of the college experience, namely those between upper-level undergraduate and early graduate education. In May 1969 former President Edward H. Levi (who was an ardent admirer of Hutchins) raised this particular issue relating to the temporal and substantive

76. Boyer, "One Man's Revolution: Robert Maynard Hutchins, 1929–1951," in *The University of Chicago: A History*, 215–320.

boundaries of legal education between the last years of college and the first years of law school, which he thought to be in urgent need of restructuring. It is worth quoting Levi at some length:

Education is costly. It costs the student. It costs society. For the student, a requirement of added years of formal study preempts part of his life. Should we not have as a mild principle: the required period of formal training will be as short as possible consistent with its proper purpose? To lengthen the period in order to screen or limit entry into the professions or because this is a result of the characteristic behavior of guilds, or adds prestige—these do not seem to come within a proper purpose. Our society has an educational burden which it has not met. The need is greatest at the pre-school, primary, and secondary level. It is wasteful to misallocate educational resources—to keep the total period any longer than necessary is wrong. There are other consequences of the present system. We have isolated a substantial segment of the population, denying to it experiences which it wants and needs. At the same time we have encouraged the megalomania of colleges and universities by demanding they behave as substitutes for the world at large and for the agencies of government. Thus, we have weakened the intellectual aims and life of the universities, and we have deprived students a chance to develop skills and even wisdom by working on tasks outside formal education. The results should give us pause.⁷⁷

77. Dedication of a new law school, University of Pennsylvania, speech, 15 May 1969, box 298, folder 15–16, Edward H. Levi Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

But the probing concerns raised by Levi about legal education touch upon in my view the more general issue of the relationship between undergraduate and graduate education, which would repay some tough and insistent thinking. We are now blessed with, as a group, perhaps the most talented and motivated undergraduates ever assembled in the nation, in terms of their academic abilities and passion. Surely, if ever there were a chance to think creatively about the boundary between the College and the graduate programs, we now have that opportunity staring us in the face. In a very real sense the University of Chicago has a historic possibility to show the nation how a distinguished liberal-arts college and a distinguished graduate school can be part of one unified intellectual and institutional endeavor: We recruit bright, intellectually oriented students in the College who share the faculty's scholarly values, we educate them superbly in the classroom and give them strong support outside the classroom, and we do all that we can to help them succeed in their careers after they leave us.

Third, it would also be salutary to continue to challenge conventional understandings that define our disciplines and units, most of which we have inherited from the late nineteenth century, and where appropriate to develop new modes of scholarly inquiry that have stronger links to the world of praxis, however one might want to define that slippery term. I am impressed with how much of this kind of work is now going on quietly and without fanfare on our campus: the development of the Chicago Studies Program, the new initiatives to provide in situ research courses for biology majors at the Marine Biological Laboratory, new programs in the Arts and Public Life, the Practicum Program in Public Policy Studies, the collaborations that the College has developed with the Institute of Politics, including the Sargent Shriver Program for Leadership in Public Service. This short list reveals major interventions

attempting to rethink the ways in which we can enhance the research and learning experiences of our students in new and different venues.

Fourth, we need to continue to think more creatively about the capacity of students for success beyond formal academic instructional settings by ensuring significant research experiences for all students who desire such opportunities under our new College Faculty Research Program and by continuing to invest in our unique "Chicago Careers in..." programs, the Metcalf Internships, the Human Rights Internships, and similar ventures. This is especially urgent as we move to recruit aggressively still more students from diverse socioeconomic and territorial backgrounds and to guarantee them financial and mentoring support to complete their educational programs with the same level of academic and professional success enjoyed by their wealthier peers.

Finally, we need to build out our international programs and our international support facilities to increase research partnerships and collaborations between our faculty and the faculty of other leading European and Asian universities, which could in turn lead to fascinating new collaborative teaching opportunities for our faculty and our foreign partners, thus extending the intellectual reach of the Chicago model. Much has been written about the concept of new global universities and the like, and much of it is (in my personal view) tendentious and even hackneyed. But at Chicago we have a unique chance to make a significant impact by focusing our resources in ways that encourage our faculty colleagues to foster even more significant linkages with leading foreign scholars and their doctoral and postdoctoral students, and to do so in ways that will enhance the educational opportunities available to our College students as well. One plan that I believe has considerable merit is to increase significantly the resources available to University of Chicago faculty in Europe, by acquiring a larger facility in the Rive Gauche

area near the University of Paris VII that would combine the already strong and robust instructional programs that the College now offers in Paris with innovative scholarly and public-interest programming in a new faculty-organized and faculty-led international research institute. Such an institute would provide an international platform for Chicago faculty and graduate students whose research and learning in the humanities, natural and mathematical sciences, and social sciences could benefit from exposure to Europe's intellectual and cultural wealth, bringing together scholars from across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East to participate in thematic research working groups and workshops proposed and led by University of Chicago faculty. Expanding the Paris Center's campus with more faculty and graduate-student offices, a proper conference facility for up to 125 participants, rooms for collaborative research projects, and more seminar-like classrooms for College students and developing the center's academic resources, institutional partnerships, and public forums would raise the University's profile as a hub for academic and cultural exchange in Europe and Eurasia. This heightened visibility would then facilitate faculty collaborations throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, establishing the University's leadership role in helping to generate the powerful transnational knowledge networks that will define higher education in both the European Union and in Britain. As for Britain, given the tremendous uncertainty generated among British universities about their relation to Europe in the aftermath of the Brexit vote, the Chicago Center could also become a strategic platform for significant collaborations that would bring together leading UK scholars with Chicago scholars in the context of our renewed commitment to Europe as a whole.

We should not seek to become a "borderless university," but we are on the threshold of a genuinely exciting time in European and American

scientific cooperation and humanistic collaboration. It would be wise to seek ever-more productive and ever-closer partnerships with our fellow scholars among the European democracies that house many of the leading research universities that Clark Kerr so admired forty years ago. In 1900 Émile Durkheim argued that "higher education is hardly an unnecessary luxury for democracies. It is precisely democratic societies which, in reality, have the greatest need for a higher scientific culture."⁷⁸ Protecting higher scientific culture is urgently needed on both sides of the Atlantic, and Durkheim's insight thus has even more relevance now, a hundred years later.

Over the past twenty years we have worked together to reshape the College in many positive ways, enlarging the framework of liberal learning through many new majors, minors, and Core courses; dramatically improving our admissions' competitiveness by tripling our applicant pool since 2005, with a corresponding increase in the academic quality of our matriculants; improving the morale of our students and their love of the University; and strengthening our connections with our alumni and meriting their unparalleled philanthropic support—in the current fund-raising campaign the College has already raised \$400 million, and our goal is to raise an additional \$400 million in the next three years.

We should all take pride in the improvements in a number of domains that affect College students: a more manageable and effective curriculum; more successful programs in academic and personal advising, including new resources to help students win national fellowships and gain admission to top graduate programs; a massive investment in new internship and research-fellowship programs (which this past summer

78. Émile Durkheim, "The Role Universities in the Social Education of the Country," *Minerva* 14, no. 3 (Aut. 1976): 380.

provided almost two thousand paid internships for our students); substantial increases in advanced language study, driven in part by our many international study programs; many new innovative teaching programs in drama, creative writing, and the visual arts and parallel initiatives to strengthen teaching in the biological, physical, and mathematical sciences; new collaborations with colleagues from the professional schools in molecular engineering, law, social service, public policy, business, and divinity; a significant improvement in the rates at which our students are admitted to top medical and law schools (from being at the bottom of the Ivy Plus Group ten years ago, we are now at the top in the success of our students achieving admission to medical schools); a huge investment in new foreign study programs (which both students and faculty have found very appealing); the creation of the Odyssey Scholarship Program, funded with gifts from our alumni and friends now totaling over \$200 million to increase and to better support the number of students from first-generation and lower-income family backgrounds attending the University; greatly enhanced support for student programming in the arts, in social and community service, in recreational and varsity athletics, and in many other paracurricular and extracurricular activities; and the construction of remarkable new residential housing facilities (we have opened three major new residential commons since 2001, providing additional high-quality housing resources for over three thousand students annually).

These achievements, and many more, add up to nothing less than a revolution in the College. Fifty years ago, in June 1965, Edward H. Levi urged the faculty to consider opportunities for “meaningful service” for College students, and that “attention will be given also to the opportunities for cultural enrichment for students beyond the bounds of the formal curriculum. Surely Chicago is not at the point

where credits, formal courses, or even examinations must be the measure of inclusion in the total academic program.”⁷⁹ We have finally fulfilled Levi’s challenges, fifty years after the fact. But we have done so in ways that also address many of the national issues that I have highlighted in this report today.

The well-being of the University has always rested, in considerable part, with its vocation as an educational institution and its capacity to enrich the lives of its students. Yet its educational mission is intimately linked to its research enterprise, and the culture of discovery pervades and structures the teaching we do—this fluidity makes us a very unique place, better placed than almost any other university to prevent a wall between teaching and research. The core of the College rests on its unique human capital: terrific, talented students who are highly motivated, who expect a lot from us and a lot from themselves; and an extremely distinguished faculty, colleagues who are not only renowned scholars but also caring and effective teachers. It is a College where you are not judged by the clothes you wear, by whom your parents are, by the private clubs to which you belong, or by how much money you have, but rather by how steady and wise is your judgment, how patient and careful is your thought, and how good and effective are your arguments. The College must continue to protect our cooperative, tolerant, and creative environment for learning and teaching, to bring talented teachers and highly motivated students together, and to allow them to enjoy the delights of learning. But we also have the chance to address some of the larger issues that perplex but also fascinate higher education today.

79. “The Critical Spirit,” Convocation Address, 11 June 1965, box 297, folder 7, Edward H. Levi Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

A hundred years ago young and not-so-young Americans flocked to the University of Berlin as the foundational model of higher learning and research. Berlin had become a veritable epicenter of scholarly and pedagogical distinction defining the then imagined future of higher education in Western Civilization. Now, in our time, that epicenter has shifted in dramatic ways to America and to its great private research universities that not only dominate the international rankings but draw to themselves cadres of brilliant students and teachers whose work will define the creative boundaries of future scholarly distinction. Chicago is among the very best of these American sanctuaries of the higher learning, and its position is unique among its peers in its special combination of insistent merit, hard-nosed pragmatism, and intellectual intensity. It is what a real university should be and what a great university can aspire to be. The College is the intellectual clearing house of the University, bringing together faculty from all across our institution and setting before them the common challenge of nurturing high intellectual distinction among thousands of our youngest students. Our welfare and distinction as a University depends on protecting the ideals of the College and enhancing the education of the students whom we so admire.

As always, I thank you for your strong support of the College and our students, and I wish you a stimulating and successful academic year. ❖

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