

HAND BOOK OF THE ALUMNI WORK

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Hand Book of the Alumni Work by Various

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VARIOUS

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THE ALUMNI WORK**

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THE ASSOCIATION OF
ALUMNI SECRETARIES

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CALIFORNIA

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FOREWORD.

The collecting of material for this book was begun nearly two years ago by two secretaries who felt that there was need of such a publication. When the Association of Alumni Secretaries met at San Francisco, in the summer of 1915, it was discovered that others also had reached the conclusion that there was need for such a manual. The question was taken up at that meeting and it was decided that the Association should undertake to publish such a book. A committee was appointed to gather material and put it into shape for the printer.

In compiling this book the committee has endeavored to state general principles which a limited experience has shown to be well founded, and to arrange all material obtainable in form to be instantly available for the use of any one interested in alumni problems and alumni work.

The committee realizes how inadequate such a book must necessarily be, but hopes that it may serve a useful purpose and may also serve as a basis for a fuller and more adequate publication along similar lines in later years.

I. A SHORT SURVEY OF ALUMNI ORGANIZATION.

Alumni organization in American colleges and universities is a comparatively recent development. Though the graduates of the earlier American colleges had a certain influence on the policies and growth of their alma mater, it is only within the last twenty-five years that these organizations have become a factor of any great importance. In fact, this development is so recent that its significance is not sufficiently realized, least of all perhaps by the alumni themselves. When it is considered how vitally alumni influence enters into the life of our colleges and universities at the present time, the small space devoted to these organizations in most university histories and works on higher education in America is significant. It suggests at least just how much of a departure from those long educational precedents which lie behind our college system, is this habit of graduates to organize for fellowship and for the good of their respective institutions.

The desire to perpetuate college friendships and to revive memories of college days was undoubtedly the underlying cause which first brought the alumni together in these organizations, and not a few associations have progressed no further in their activities. Gradually, however, the alumni organization came to play a more important part in the development of the college. Nothing was more natural than for the authorities to look to the successful alumni when adding to the membership of its governing board, and just as naturally the organization of the alumni, either directly or indirectly, and almost invariably after a struggle with established customs, furnished the machinery for making the selection. The college authorities also came to recognize other possibilities in the alumni associations; use was made of them in securing financial assistance in the form of endowments and alumni funds, new buildings and equipment. Their aid was also invoked in efforts to increase the attendance.

Thus it has come about that while the alumni have come to take an ever increasingly important part in the life of the institution, the chief direction of such activity has come from the administration, and the chief executive alumni officer has been very often a paid officer of the institution.

It is only recently that the alumni have organized, not as an adjunct of the college administration, but as a body designed to formulate independent alumni opinion, and to make intelligent alumni sentiment really effective for the good of the institution. With this new phase of alumni activity came new elements—the alumni-paid secretary, and the alumni journal. Practically every college or university in this country now has some sort of an alumni publication, either weekly, monthly or quarterly, designed to keep the graduates informed of the progress of their institution. All the larger institutions and many of the smaller ones also have an officer who devotes all or at least a part of his time to the work.

This organization of college graduates is distinctively an American institution. There is little in European universities to correspond, particularly in the continental universities where they do not even have a real equivalent to our term "alumni." The graduates do not feel the same personal ties, nor do they idealize Alma Mater, as does the American graduate. The reason lies undoubtedly in the differing educational systems. In Germany as in France, though the universities are self-governing in many particulars, they are essentially state institutions. A certain amount of university training is absolutely essential to enter any of the professions, but it is not the degree, or evidence of the work accomplished which counts; the state examination is the all-important thing. The fact that, in Germany, at least half of our usual college course is provided in the secondary schools, the *gymnasien* and the *realschulen*, gives a greater freedom to the university curriculum. There is therefore little or no tendency toward hard and fast courses in the universities, leading to a bachelor's degree. The emphasis is placed rather on the teacher than upon the university, and the student, because of the governmental control of the whole system of education finds it easy to pass from one university to another. There is in

fact no real equivalent to our A. B. degree, and many men complete their college work, after a longer or shorter period of residence, with no degree. Lacking thus our more relatively rigid system of undergraduate instruction, there is really nothing upon which to build an alumni organization as we understand it.

Whatever sentiment the former student in Germany has for his university is expressed through his relationship to student and university organizations. The former members of the distinctive student social associations, the *Corps*, the *Burschenschaften* and *Landsmannschaften* have very much the same feeling of loyalty that the American fraternity man feels towards his chapter. They return to the houses in the same way and find the traditions and records of the former members carefully preserved. For the more studiously inclined there are, too, the various *Vereins*, such as the *Mathematische Verein* and the *Philologische Verein*, which meet at stated periods usually in favored restaurants and whose traditions are carefully preserved. But to the university as such the former student has no tie. He has no voice in its control, and the university makes little effort to keep in touch with its former students.

In France the situation is practically the same, with the exception that there are no student organizations which correspond to the German *Corps*. The tie between the French university and its former students is even more tenuous.

In English and Scotch universities it is somewhat different. There the returning alumni are organized and have a considerable voice in the control of the university. At Oxford and Cambridge, where traditions have the prestige of centuries of growth, the convocations of the different colleges, composed of the faculties, the fellows and the holders of the master's degree, can exert legislative powers in the conduct of the affairs of the college. Only as they act through the college, however, have they any voice in the affairs of the university. These holders of the A. M. degree are A. B. men who have retained their membership in the college through the payment of certain fees during a stated period, after which they receive the M. A. in course, as has been the practice in

the past in this country. This, in effect, produces a body of loyal and interested graduates who prove their vital interest in the affairs of the various colleges in many a well-attended session where warm debates are held upon college policies. The alumni of the colleges composing the two universities also hold an annual meeting during the year which in many ways corresponds to our alumni reunions in American universities at commencement time. Most of the English colleges also publish some sort of a journal, which appears annually or semi-annually, giving information concerning the former students. Otherwise, with the exception of university clubs, there is no organization in the two English universities which performs the general functions of the alumni association in American universities. Systematic organization of reunions, local alumni clubs and classes, or the solicitation of funds, is for the most part unknown. Our organization, in fact, is more nearly paralleled in England by the former students of the great public school, where the alumni, known as "old boys," meet annually for dinner, publish journals, and in general lay great store on their status as old "Etonians" or old "Paulines."

With the Scotch universities, such as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and with the English provincial universities, such as London, Manchester and Liverpool, which are all of more recent organization, the case is quite different. There the alumni have a very practical share in the control of the university. They are privileged to elect a certain proportion of the members of the governing board. In the Scotch universities, which may be taken as representative, the alumni are known as the General Council, in which all holders of a degree are eligible for membership. This body has several prerogatives, of which the privilege of electing four representatives upon the governing body of the university, the University Court, which consists of fourteen members, is the most important. The faculty also chooses four members of this body. The General Council meets twice a year, or at the call of the chancellor, and has the privilege of electing the Lord Chancellor of the university and also of electing a member of Parliament. The fact that the latter