

*The president cannot ignore the alumni. In them lies much of the strength of the institution. What they mean to their alma mater depends on what their alma mater is to them, and how she deals with them after they leave the college. The president must use every resource available to unite the college with its alumni in a wholesome manner.*

## 7.

# The President and the Alumni

### *The Alumni*

The alumni make up the most important element of the public with which the president is concerned. The students of course are important, but as they are an integral part of the college itself, they should not be included in a consideration of the general public. The alumni are the major product of the college over the years of its previous history. They are largely what the college has made them. If they are cold or lukewarm in their interest, any marked advancement for the college will be impossible.

While the alumni are the most important part of the public with which a college president is concerned, he is very often shy of them because he knows so few, and embarrassed by their criticisms, as for instance on football policy. In many cases the relations of the president with the alumni are poor, but they need not be.

One fact the president should not overlook is that there are always a considerable number of professors and deans on the campus who have a wide acquaintance among the alumni and who give to visiting alumni a good deal of time. The presi-

dent would do well to identify these faculty members, to rely on their support and make due allowance for the time they spend with alumni. There are always many persons on the staff who are glad to share this burden with the president, and if their assistance is recognized, they will serve in this way more happily.

H.

*The Individual Alumnus*

"I don't know what to do about the alumni." I have heard that remark many times from the lips of a puzzled president. As a matter of fact, a university president does not know very much about the alumni. He may have a large acquaintance among the graduates of his college or university; but when the numbers run into the tens of thousands, there is a limit to his memory or even to his opportunity. The registrar knows a good many; some of the professors have a considerable following among them, and the secretary of the alumni association develops rather close contacts with groups in the cities. Yet the larger body of alumni carry on with little thought of their alma mater, unless it be in the field of athletics, where they grow enthusiastic according to the success or failure of the teams representing their college or university.

In the heyday of the *Review of Reviews*, the editors were fond of the composite photograph. This kind of picture was made by exposing the negative to a succession of persons. In that way, the editors thought that they might obtain a type characteristic of a certain group. If that were done with the alumni, the average alumnus would turn out to be thirty-five years of age, married, with two children, and living in a mortgaged house. He drives a car of medium price about two or three years behind the current models. His efforts are directed to getting on; his living costs drag him down, and he is a victim now and then of anxiety. Above this average alumnus are men and women who have attained considerable distinction or wealth, but they are not numerous. With such variation in alumni make-up, it is not remark-

able that the problem of the alumni in relation to their alma mater is something of an enigma. How can it be solved?

M.

*Working Relationship*

For several reasons college presidents and even more often university presidents fail to develop close relations with the alumni. For one thing, there are so many of them! Fifty years ago that was not true. Only an exceptional person today can claim a wide acquaintance among twenty to fifty or one hundred thousand alumni scattered over the country.

For the president who has been selected from the college staff, the problem is simpler. A certain number of alumni have worked under him as students and have known him in a less formal relationship. But perhaps two-thirds of those who are appointed to the presidency from outside the institution find the mass of strange alumni a challenge which they are never quite able to meet.

As I had attended Miami University as a student and had served as a professor and dean for twelve years prior to my appointment as president, I was well acquainted with the Miami alumni and counted many of them my close friends. At Iowa State College, however, when I came in 1927, there were 9,000 alumni; when I retired in 1936, there were 14,000; practically all were strangers to me. Fifteen years later, there were more than 40,000.

A further barrier is due to the fact that most letters from alumni are critical rather than commendatory, especially those concerning athletics. As most correspondence with alumni consists in defending the college, the idea tends to develop that they are an unfriendly group.

In numerous institutions, especially those with a large alumni, there is a definite policy on the part of the latter to keep their organization independent of the president's office. This may be due to the feeling that if the occasion arises, the organization

should be free to criticise the policy of the president. From whatever cause it springs, such a policy will form a barrier between the president and the alumni.

While in many cases it is not easy for the president to draw close to the alumni, there are a number of policies he can promote which are well worth while in themselves and which will tend to bring about a better relationship between him and the alumni of the institution which he serves.

H.

#### *Established Aids in Alumni Work*

There are a number of sources of help now available to presidents and to alumni secretaries with which they should be familiar.

The National Alumni Council holds district and national meetings in which all alumni matters are discussed. It offers advisory facilities and can be addressed through the current president of the council. It is at present looking forward to establishing national headquarters with a permanent secretary. A representative of the college alumni work should attend the national and district meetings of the council.

Three publications of the alumni council contain much valuable information and should be in the alumni office: *Manual of Alumni Work*, *Alumni Fund Survey*, and *Primer of Alumni Work*.

H.

#### *The Alumni Secretary*

This officer began his career in a voluntary, unpaid capacity. As the size of the problems became apparent to the alumni association, the secretary reached the status of a part-time employee. The association discovered the importance of registration of alumni, and of a publication, and so the office increased in importance. These duties and others foreshadowed the full-time secretary, and the association was called upon to provide the funds to meet a considerable budget.

If the alumni cannot raise all the funds required, the college

is called upon to meet the deficit. At this point the whole organization may break down. The responsibility is then upon the president and the board of trustees. As a matter of policy, the alumni association should be financed by the alumni without contributions from the college. But a compromise on this point usually brings partial support from the institution's budget at the expense of some other important function of the college, such as an increase in salaries. The president is thus presented with a dilemma which he untangles in most cases by partially granting the request. From past experience, I would say it is better either to do nothing or to support the alumni organization adequately.

M.

### *The Alumni Secretary*

While all these activities for and with the alumni are desirable and important, they are beyond the ability of the president to carry on, due largely to lack of time. Usually an alumni secretary is appointed to head the work, without assistants in a small college, but with a considerable staff in a large institution. If such a secretary has not been selected, the president should co-operate with the alumni and secure the appointment of a suitable man.

What sort of man should be selected as alumni secretary? He should certainly be a graduate of the college he is to serve, preferably one who has a wide acquaintance among the alumni. His loyalty to the college should be beyond question. He should be able to do teamwork amicably and without friction. If he is also an effective public speaker, an outstanding editor, or an able public relations man, it is all to the good. The alumni secretary must understand the college and its aims and must constantly endeavor to aid the alumni to evaluate their college, its program and policies. He must do all he can to build up satisfactory working relationships between alumni officers and leaders and the college administration and the staff. He must work closely with the president.

The alumni secretary holds an important position in the

administration. He heads the thousands of alumni whom he represents on the campus. He also represents the administration and the college to the alumni through the alumni journal and by correspondence. Where the alumni association is an integral part of the college and working closely with the administration, the alumni secretary's work is clear, if arduous. Where the alumni association is separately organized and maintains its independence of the administration, the position of the alumni secretary is often a very difficult one. If the alumni are seriously critical of the college administration, their secretary is torn between representing the critical alumni and defending the president.

The alumni are a powerful and influential body. They have a clear right to make their opinions known. The college is dear to them and they certainly should be well informed of its operation, its weakness, and its strength. The wise president will use every opportunity to inform himself as to alumni opinion and to make clear to the alumni, especially the executive committee of their association, all his plans and hopes for the welfare of the college. With the cordial support of the alumni, the president's position will be greatly strengthened. This support is worth working for.

As the alumni secretary is the representative on the campus of all alumni activities and interests as relate to the college, he has a heavy mail. He is the chief avenue of information through which the alumni apply for help of all kinds. Faculties change rapidly, and an alumnus desiring information or aid turns instinctively to the alumni secretary, who knows the institution and is on the ground. Answering alumni letters alone is an important job.

It must be this secretary's enthusiasm and drive that will keep the alumni clubs going, that will maintain alumni contributions and that will uphold all the many activities of alumni important to the welfare of the college.

The alumni office should be in a convenient central location and should maintain a friendly informal atmosphere.

H.

*Elements of an Effective Alumni Program*

One of the chief responsibilities of the alumni secretary is to maintain complete files of alumni addresses and biographical notes on each alumnus' activities. The former are usually kept in card files and the latter, in vertical folders. For each alumnus who passes his 70th birthday, a brief but comprehensive biography should be prepared and printed in permanent form every five years. When this is done his material in the files may be destroyed.

The encouragement of class activities is important, including class meetings and luncheons during reunions at the college and the election of class secretaries.

The organization and encouragement of alumni clubs in all logical cities is an important part of the alumni secretary's work.

The alumni secretary aims to act as an intermediary between individual alumni and the college. He strives to answer letters of inquiry from the alumni fully and carefully. Through the alumni journal he endeavors to keep the alumni up-to-date on all current matters of interest at the college.

The alumni secretary himself or a member of the alumni office staff heads the work of soliciting gifts from alumni.

At commencement and homecoming, the alumni secretary is the key man who sees that all the plans of various classes work out. He and his assistants are at the service of all alumni groups.

H✓

*The Alumni Association*

Too often the alumni association is a deserted child left on the college doorstep by those who were willing to bring it into the world, but not to support it. It would be worth while to look at the history of alumni associations in order to find out what they are now doing and what has been their record of accomplishment. It is too long a story to go into here, but the topic would be worth the time of some wide-awake candidate seeking a degree in the educational field.



I am of the opinion that many college presidents have been greatly disappointed in the failure of alumni associations to be helpful. The exceptions to this are more often present in the privately endowed institution than in the publicly supported college and university. The reasons for this may be found in the older traditions of some institutions, in the affection that the alumni have for the colleges in which their parents were students, and in the further fact that the students pay for a larger part of the cost of education. At any rate, the alumni of many institutions have but a lukewarm attachment to their alma mater and afford it inadequate support.

To keep an alumni organization going, a college usually is compelled to put money into it. This money is used to pay a part of the secretary's salary and to meet the cost of printing a periodical. The funds raised by the association, after much prodding, supplement the appropriation given by the institution toward the support of the alumni association. Thus the alumni, so far as their organization goes, cannot sponsor criticism of the college without endangering the financial support they receive from that college.

Most college presidents would welcome a free association of alumni that could act on its own initiative and weigh the advances and shortcomings of their alma mater independently. Very little of this type of comment is to be found in the alumni press; and in consequence, higher education lacks the benefit that might come from free alumni associations. Presidents observe little interest displayed by the alumni in the educational program but find a great drawing power in college and university athletics. The latter is something that can be seen, talked about in street and club, and that stirs the patriotic spirit of the alumnus, if and when his college is the winner.

The main obstacle in the way of a larger interest in the purpose of the college is lack of knowledge of what is going on. At banquets and dinners the president may have a place on the evening program, yet hesitates to enter upon any extended discussion of college problems. An active, independent alumni association with a live, sympathetic secretary could bring the

educational procedures to the attention of the alumni and arouse an interest that would produce constructive criticism. At present, in most institutions, there is no constructive criticism that finds its way to the president. Sometimes the critics go underground and little by little undermine the college administration. This is, of course, unfortunate and may bring about disastrous results.

There is then need for free, open talk, argument, and consideration of educational problems on the part of the alumni. An association raising its own funds and publishing a periodical without expense to the college would prove a valuable agency which undoubtedly would contribute greatly to the advancement of education.

M.

### *The Alumni Association*

The president should certainly stand cordially behind the association and give it all the help and encouragement possible.

All the officers should be elected by the association without guidance or hindrance. All officers and members of the executive committee should be elected for definite terms with limits on re-election. It is highly desirable that these several alumni responsibilities be passed around among the most interested members.

There should be small dues required of members of the association and all of them should receive the alumni journal.

The officers should have definite responsibilities of which they are aware, and they should be encouraged to discharge them efficiently.

H.

### *Alumni Clubs*

Considerable numbers of alumni are employed and live in the large centers of population. Can these be gathered into a group that would maintain a local club? The number of alumni may vary from twenty-five to several hundred persons, enough anyway to justify a meeting with the secretary of the association.

A dinner is planned and a program for the coming meeting is provided. If possible, the president of the college comes to the dinner. He visits with the alumni, greets them at a reception, and finds the committee has allowed him twenty minutes to talk about education after the dinner. The rest of the time is spent in singing and listening to recollections of college days. The emphasis is upon fellowship and the progress of alma mater's athletic teams. Can this type of program hold the group together until the next annual meeting? The answer is that it may do so, depending largely upon the enthusiasm of a few alumni. In the long run, the local club will flicker and die out, after which another effort is necessary to rekindle the fires. Such procedures are wearing and expensive and not particularly effective.

Probably a certain amount of good will that may prove valuable is developed at the meetings, but a real understanding of the college purpose, its problems, difficulties, and future is not in evidence. The secretary of the association should be in accord with the president of the university concerning the purpose of alumni gatherings and thus use them to inform the alumni what the problems are and how they can be of help. The first and important thing to be done is to build in the minds of the alumni a background of understanding of the viewpoint in higher education, followed by a thorough presentation of the part their alma mater plays in the educational process.

M.

### *Alumni Clubs*

Inasmuch as the composition of alumni clubs varies greatly with their location, each club should have full freedom to determine its own activities and programs. New York will differ from Cincinnati; both of these will differ greatly from a town of 10,000 drawing many members from the surrounding country and villages. Each club in order to succeed must adapt its activities to suit its own needs.

Probably a social program is essential to the success of most clubs.

One thing should be guarded against: Often clubs build up a program for a meeting that is too full. If a representative of the college accepts an invitation, he should have a reasonable time to speak and should not be made to feel that his address is a waste of time and that everyone would rather dance.

H.

### *Alumni Reunions*

The Dix plan for reunions provides for consecutive meetings of classes every five years. A definite time is set and plans are made to bring class members together. The purpose is to maintain interest and to continue the friendships of college days. This may be all to the good, but the testimony of many alumni is that the meetings are rather perfunctory and hardly worth the travel and expense involved. Each class has its own program consisting of a luncheon, a meeting and a general alumni dinner. Little is heard about the college and what it is doing. The older alumni find themselves strangers upon a campus larger and more impressive than in their day. To them the reunion is disappointing and without much profit.

Here again is a wasted opportunity because the time and the event of reunion is not planned as a college function, but for an alumni gathering instituted by the secretary of the association. In some places the alumni have a part in the conduct of the college through a board of visitors which actually confers with college authorities and helps to plan for and even to criticize their alma mater. Through this method the alumni enjoy real cooperation with the college administration and feel that they have a part in the direction of their college. In most instances, alumni are just company for a day—a pleasant relationship, but hardly a helpful one.

M.

*Alumni Reunions*

Any occasion which brings back to the college numbers of alumni provides an opportunity to acquaint them with some phase of the college life and work. These opportunities should be taken advantage of.

Anything that will tend to renew an interest in and affection for the college is valuable. Each institution and staff member concerned with the alumni, must work out his own plan for the accomplishment of this objective under the guidance of the president or of the alumni secretary. Alumni come back but seldom. If something can be offered which will renew their interest of student days, it will be remembered longer than the pageant of a football game.

H.

*Alumni Publications*

A careful study of alumni publications would be helpful to all who carry the burden of compiling, organizing, printing and distributing them. These printed periodicals vary from four to eight folded sheets to pamphlets and full-dress magazines. The contents are on the whole rather dry reading, but they do serve as bulletins in which events taking place on the college campus are brought to the attention of the reader. All of them contain items of deaths, marriages, births of children and new jobs or appointments. A good deal of space is devoted to athletics and kindred activities and very little to educational matters.

Most of these publications show evidences of hurried compilation and lack of careful planning. This can be accounted for by the varied and detailed duties of the alumni secretary who is editor, messenger, typist, treasurer, bookkeeper, reporter, and traveler. He emits a sigh of relief when his efforts are put into type form and come off the press ready for distribution.

M.

*Alumni Publications*

For many years I have read alumni publications, chiefly those from the five institutions with which I have had personal relations. They vary greatly and all, I believe, give news items of alumni by classes and certainly contain much of interest to their subscribers.

The divergence lies almost wholly in the remainder of the magazine. Some contain considerable heavy reading, highly technical articles, and material of slight interest to the general reader. On the other hand, some are far too heavily loaded with athletic information of slight interest to most older alumni.

Of course an alumni magazine must serve people from twenty to eighty years of age; the bulk lies between thirty and sixty. It seems to me that these people are particularly interested in articles with cuts of the most distinguished alumni in different fields and with accounts of recent accomplishments of alumni. They are also concerned with new developments in policy, in buildings and improvements, in items about entering freshmen and the honors won by graduates. Many are also interested in accomplishments and honors won by their old professors.

Some alumni magazines are full of good material. There is enough available on any campus to make such a magazine acceptable to the alumni if handled with skill.

H.

*The Alumni Register*

This is the key to all alumni work and so is of vital importance. To be of any real use it must be kept up to date. When once brought up to date, it is probable that one capable person could maintain correct records of 25,000 alumni.

If the alumni association does not have sufficient funds to finance this work properly, the president should certainly see that supplementary funds are available and that such records are properly maintained.

H.

*The Class Secretary*

This officer can be and often is a useful part of an alumni organization. When each class receives its diplomas and the members are guests of the institution at an alumni dinner, the spirit of alma mater runs high, and those who are present at the fraternal gathering feel that they must have a class secretary to keep the records and to send information from time to time to the new alumni. Like most efforts of this kind, the early enthusiasm of the new group slows down after a little while, and the poor secretary finds it more and more difficult to keep up the records. In a large institution with several colleges, a secretary should be elected from the graduates in each college.

M.

*Class Contributions*

With growing expenses and declining returns on endowments, colleges are turning to the alumni to help make up deficits. The Yale University alumni for many years have contributed large sums annually to meet the deficit occasioned by expenditures over ordinary income. In other institutions a similar plan has been used to raise funds. Experience shows that it takes a long time to build up a substantial list of regular subscribers, but it is well worth the effort. The results are to be found not only in the money contributed, but in an increased interest in the welfare of the college.

On the whole the women's colleges are more successful in organizing alumnae effort than the coeducational and vocational institutions. It would be worth while to study carefully what they have done and how they have succeeded in interesting their graduates.

M.

*Class Contributions*

In some institutions each class, upon the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary, makes a generous contribution to its alma mater. These contributions sometimes amount to \$100,000 or

more; but, of course, such gifts can come only from large classes which include a number of wealthy members.

The majority of alumni make but small contributions yearly, yet in the aggregate these total a considerable sum. Since the bulk of the money is usually unassigned, it is available for the purposes which the alumni secretary and the president regard as most important. I have found this fund of real value even when small.

H.

*Alumni Can Provide a Living Endowment*

The alumni can and should prove a great financial aid to their alma mater whether privately or publicly supported. They can be organized as a living endowment. At Oberlin College when an alumnus joins the "Living Endowment Union" he agrees to pay five per cent interest on \$\_\_\_\_\_ each year. In a private institution, it is not uncommon to secure annual gifts from fifty per cent or more of the alumni. In a public institution twenty-five per cent is considered good. The annual gifts will average at least five to ten dollars, and in many cases more than that.

Such aid is important enough to justify an organization under a competent manager. The training received from a college has been a large factor in the earning power of most alumni. In practically no case did the tuition paid cover the expense of the training secured. In a very real sense each graduate can be charged with owing his alma mater a considerable sum. For a four year course this might easily amount to from \$500 as a minimum to nearly \$5,000. Of course, the college expects its graduates to repay this debt many times in services to the people of their respective communities. In most cases the debt is so paid. Where it is possible, cash in whole or in part payment is most acceptable. I am simply urging the point that an alumnus owes his college a substantial sum, not to be begged, but collected. A very important part of the work of the alumni office is the



organization which appeals to the alumni for funds and presses these claims.

In 1947, some 384,000 alumni gave \$9,628,000 to some 150 institutions in small annual gifts.

H.

### *Alumni Are a Source of Large Gifts*

While a wide annual collection of small gifts should be sought, both for the needs of the college and to gain a place on the alumni benevolent list, larger gifts and bequests can also be secured. A careful record of wealthy alumni should be maintained, and so far as possible they should be kept advised of the work, needs and prospects of their alma mater. The university president should consider obtaining large gifts as one of his important responsibilities.

H.

### *Financial Campaigns*

Financial campaigns are carried on in various ways as circumstances may justify: by the alumni secretary himself, by an assistant working under the secretary's direction, by the alumni president or by an assistant working under his direction.

Aside from these annual drives for current support of special or general causes, a constant quest is maintained for large gifts to be used toward endowment, buildings or other purposes. The number of large gifts and bequests to colleges and universities is astonishing. If the president is not familiar with the methods of raising funds, he would do well to consult one of the recognized fund-raising organizations which work with colleges. The names of fund-raising agencies can be found in the *Alumni Fund Survey*.

H.

### *Placement of Graduates*

At Iowa State College, a technological institution, I took the stand that the college should do everything in its power to see that each graduate be placed in a position for which he is trained.

If he cannot be so placed, either the training is ineffective or we are graduating more students than the field of occupation can absorb.

A proper organization of this placement work is important. It will of necessity differ from one institution to another, but certain basic needs should be met. Any organization seeking a graduate should have its letters of inquiry reach a man at the head of the placement work who knows the current seniors and who can answer inquiries intelligently. When the representatives of an employing company calls at the campus, this personnel officer should be able to bring to his office all students who are desired for conference and also all professors whose opinions will be helpful, rather than that the prospective employer should wander over the campus in a vain effort to contact these persons.

Iowa State College employs full-time personnel officers for engineering and home economics. In agriculture, science, and in the placement of graduates in teaching positions, several part-time persons are so employed. Seniors in the engineering, agriculture, and science colleges are assisted in the preparation of a printed "Personnel Sheet" \* on which appears a reproduction of a photograph of the student and a fairly complete biographical sketch. This latter includes an outline of the person's professional preparation and some account of his participation in student and social activities of high school and college. These "Personnel Sheets" are widely used by the personnel offices. The student pays the cost of printing 100 sheets and it is well worth it.

Individual alumni and alumni clubs could give valuable help to placement officers both in securing initial jobs for graduates and in suggestions for promotions to those already employed.

H.

*Recent Graduates as Critics of Teaching*

The recent alumni really know the college. If a systematic inquiry were made within one or two years of graduation of all

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\* See Appendix, page 320.

graduates, or of 300 selected members of the last two classes, valuable and dependable information might be obtained as to who are the able teachers and who are the unsatisfactory ones. Important data could be secured on what is being well done, and what poorly done in the general operation of the institution. Of course, if such an inquiry were to be made, it should continue throughout a number of years in order to produce the best results. I regard such an inquiry as a worth-while project.

H.

#### *An Alumni Advisory Council*

Alumni advisory councils should be appointed from among the men who have been out of college twenty or thirty years and whose advice could be depended upon in matters affecting the college. If the institution includes several colleges, a council should be appointed for each college by the president, after he confers with the deans. Each council should meet with the dean and professors once a year. One member should be replaced each year. These councils, properly conducted, would give the alumni some confidence that their college is progressive educationally and in contact with world affairs. The alumni would undoubtedly feel honored to serve on such a council. In some institutions each department has an alumni advisory council.

H.

#### *Alumni Can Send Able Students*

In many cases committees of the local alumni organizations have the authority to assign scholarships to brilliant local students. Such help goes far toward encouraging fine, able young people to attend college. When the average quality of most student bodies is considered, this assistance can be important. The alumni can check on applicants for admission, and scholarships awarded for high merit can do much toward raising the quality of the students who are admitted.

H.

*Alumni Can Aid With the Legislature*

In state institutions one or two members in each county can inform state senators and representatives of the needs of their institution and can answer questions relative to the institution. These selected alumni should meet at the college early in the fall preceding the opening of the legislature and inform themselves regarding impending legislation. This same alumni group should keep their fellow alumni in their counties advised about the college and its financial needs. Such committees should be selected jointly by the president of the college and the president of the alumni association.

H.

*Alumni May Nominate Trustees*

In private institutions it is a general practice to have all or part of the trustees selected from the alumni. In public institutions the trustees are elected, or more generally, appointed by the governor. Often the governor appoints members in order to pay political debts. Some such appointments have proved to be excellent, while others have not. Many of these political appointments are made because the governor does not realize the great importance of such a post.

The president does not feel free to nominate trustees. Since, usually, some trustees whose terms expire are eligible for reappointment, the trustees themselves do not feel free to recommend for or against the reappointment, or to nominate others for the vacancy.

Here the alumni, through their executive committee or through a special committee, are in a strong position to exercise their power for the good of the institution. They can appropriately make nominations to the governor and point out the suitability of their nominees for the post. While the governor might not always make appointments from among those so nominated, certainly the alumni's interest would tend to keep his appointments on a higher level.

The appointment of trustees of our state institutions of higher education is among the most important made in a state.

H.

*Alumni of Especial Importance*

There are two groups of alumni in whom a college is always interested: those who are holding important positions and who are, or are becoming, men and women of large service and distinction in the nation, and those who are active in the alumni organization and on whom its secretary can count for help in all alumni matters. Both groups are of interest to the alumni secretary, and he can usually make up a list of each group, basing the list on the men and women in each active alumni area. I believe it will be found that both groups will include not more than 3 to 5 per cent of living alumni. It will usually be found that about 80 per cent of college graduates rise quickly to positions of influence and responsibility in their respective communities. While only a few reach wide prominence, every college can well be proud of the services its alumni are rendering in every type of leadership.

The alumni are proud of the graduates of their college who are attaining distinction, and stories of their success with photographs are among the most interesting material in any alumni magazine.

Aside from the help the college can give them, the alumni can in turn render valuable service to the college when called upon.

H.

*Distinguished Alumni*

Every college and university is proud of distinguished alumni. As I have contemplated this matter from time to time, I have had difficulty in deciding just whom to include in that classification. Recently, I set up a tentative scale of seven degrees of distinction:

- (1) Of national distinction.

- (2) Of regional distinction or of distinction in one of the 5 cities of more than 1,000,000.
- (3) Of state-wide distinction or of distinction in one of the 11 cities of 500,000 to 1,000,000.
- (4) Of distinction in one of 78 cities of from 100,000 to 500,000.
- (5) Of distinction in one of 880 cities of 25,000 to 100,000.
- (6) Of county-wide distinction or of distinction in one of 1,630 cities of 5,000 to 25,000.
- (7) Of distinction in one of 14,700 towns of under 5,000.

Of course, in each of our larger cities there would be many people of lower rank in distinction as well as those of city-wide distinction.

With this tentative scale a careful effort was made to rank two groups of graduates who have completed or largely completed their life work and whose biographies were available. These were the graduates of Miami University, 1826 to 1873, 1,045 in number; and graduates of Iowa State College, 1872 to 1889, 1,033 in number. The results of these two studies follow:

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**DISTRIBUTION OF ALUMNI IN SEVEN DEGREES OF DISTINCTION**

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**MIAMI UNIVERSITY 1826-1873: 1,045 Graduates**

Degree	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Without Distinction	
Graduates	5	13	16	59	142	254	437	118	
Percentage	0.5	1.2	1.6	5.6	13.5	24.5	41.8	11.3	100.0

**IOWA STATE COLLEGE 1872-1889: 1,033 Graduates**

Degree	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Without Distinction	
Graduates	3	6	29	49	130	221	337	258	
Percentage	0.3	0.6	2.8	4.7	12.6	21.4	32.6	25.0	100.0

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While perhaps less than 2 per cent rose sufficiently high in distinction to be widely recognized and only somewhat less than 3 per cent won state-wide distinction, it is a matter of great pride that from 70 to 85 per cent of all graduates could be classified as distinguished in that they gave useful leadership in their own

communities, a leadership in business, law, medicine, or the ministry, which was greatly needed.

If this classification could be further refined and adopted by all alumni secretaries and used, it would be of help in estimating the relative distinction of our American college graduates.

**H.**

*Publication of an Alumni "Who's Who"*

Today the University of California has more than 100,000 alumni, and fifty other institutions now have more than 20,000. It is quite impossible for many institutions to publish a complete alumni catalog. However, it would be entirely possible for any institution to publish every five years a brief biographical sketch of each of the 2 to 5 per cent of its most distinguished alumni. This should be a joint enterprise of the college and the alumni office.

A start on such a list could be made by collecting the biographies of alumni in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in Business and Commerce*, *Who's Who in Education* and *American Men of Science*. Some of these might not warrant inclusion. If the names thus selected were submitted to committees of the various alumni centers, other names could be added. Such a publication carefully edited every five years would be useful to any institution in many ways, and would be a fitting recognition of its distinguished graduates.

H.