

The Effects of Isomorphism on the American State Normal School:
The Case of the Institution in Cedar Falls, Iowa from 1890 to 1915

By:

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The Effects of Isomorphism on the American State Normal School:
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Abstract

This case study analyzes the transition of the American state normal school to teacher's colleges using a theoretical lens of isomorphism. This research draws upon mostly primary sources including journals, personal correspondence, published speeches, newspaper articles, and year books. Upon examination of the transition which took place at the institution located in Cedar Falls, Iowa it becomes clear that the state normal school adopted more than simply a title change in hopes of elevating its status among other institutions of higher learning. Curricular additions, department organization, new titles for faculty and staff, and administrative transitions were among the changes which took place in Iowa. This study finds that isomorphic pressures eventually led to the state normal school emanating institutional trends at the state university in order to survive as an institution of higher learning.

For
Keith R. Connerly, J.D.

To my husband, whose unfailing love and support made this dissertation possible.

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Introduction

Policy talk surrounding current reform strategies and practices aimed at improving teacher education has included discussions about higher education and the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. In a recent speech given in 2011, National Education Association (NEA) President Dennis Van Roekel called for increased financial support from the federal government in order to improve teacher preparation programs. He discussed how strong teacher preparation improves teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Van Roekel closed his speech by urging the federal government to provide incentives to states that created “world-class teacher preparation programs.”¹

Van Roekel’s speech illustrates that the topic of improving departments of education on college campuses is a key factor in the broader discussion of overall teacher preparedness. Though Van Roekel’s speech reflects recent concerns about teacher training, for decades education leaders, academics, and policy makers have discussed the role of departments of education in terms of teacher preparation. Throughout its history, teacher education and teacher training programs have amended their curricula and course objectives to reflect the research and pedagogical trends of the era. Teacher education is constantly evolving; and programs in colleges and universities reflect this trend.

Historians of education have devoted considerable attention to the evolution of teacher training. For example, in Larry Cuban’s *How Teacher’s Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms 1890-1990*, Mr. Cuban discusses the history of teaching practice in the United States and the evolution of school curriculum. Through an analysis of different education institutions such as high schools, normal schools, colleges, and universities, *Preparing*

¹ Kevin Hart, "Great Public Schools Begin with Great Teachers," National Education Association.

America's Teacher's: A History by James W. Fraser examines the development of teacher training over the course of two centuries. Christine Ogren's book *The American State Normal School* focuses specifically on the historical narrative of the American state normal school and how it contributed to the foundations of education and teacher preparation. These texts, along with many other scholarly publications and news articles, represent the body of work devoted to understanding the history and development of teacher training. This study seeks to add to the literature by examining normal schools as institutions of teacher preparation. Specifically, this study focuses on why these institutions transitioned from normal schools into teacher's colleges, and how that transition occurred.

Why Study History of Teacher Preparation?

Much of the policy talk regarding education has included plans to transform the ways in which schools of education prepare future teachers. It is not uncommon to hear reformers talk about developments involving certification, testing, performance-based teacher pay all aimed at improving the quality of education.² Historically, education leaders and researchers have debated what the proper pedagogies and curricula should include in training our nations teachers. Though many scholars have devoted research to higher education in general, the attention devoted specifically to normal training institutes and teachers colleges is limited. Additionally, in studies focused on normal schools, there is limited research on the evolution of these schools to teacher's colleges (and later universities) or the evolution of teacher training in general. Understanding the history and evolution of teacher training programs can assist today's education leaders in the development of strategies and programs aimed at improving teacher

² David F. Labaree, "Career Ladders and the Early Public High-School Teacher: A Study of Inequality and Opportunity," in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company 1989).

training. The study of institutions and the process of isomorphism can show how institutional dynamics affect teacher training in addition to shaping policy debates and other reforms regarding the training of teachers. History is indeed important in understanding the evolution of the preparation of our nation's teachers and the transition of normal schools to teachers colleges remains a substantial part of that evolution. To borrow from David Tyack and Larry Cuban, "all people and institutions are a product of history, and all people use history when they make choices about the present and the future."³ By analyzing how the process of isomorphism shapes institutional dynamics, reformers can better understand how teacher training programs fit into the larger picture of higher educational training. They can better assess how to adopt strategies to improve the status of teacher education programs and departments of education.

Isomorphism and Institutions of Higher Education

In the international encyclopedia of social sciences, institutional isomorphism is described by Amos Hawley as "a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions."⁴ John Meyer and Brian Rowan in their article "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony" discuss the processes that result in organizations and institutions looking and functioning similarly. They argue that institutional isomorphism promotes the success and survival of organizations. They suggest that the institutions in an organizational field which incorporate the reforms and innovations that are viewed as desirable buffer themselves from failure and secure their survival among other institutions in their field. By adhering to

³ David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 6.

⁴ Amos Hawley, "Human Ecology," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

prescriptions of success set forth by the leading institutions, the organization protects itself from having its conduct questioned and therefore becomes legitimate.⁵ They go on to say that the institutions which deviate from the standards set by the most contemporary institutions and what the field views as worthy will fail because they will not be seen as desirable or worthy of public resources. They conclude by arguing that organizations gain legitimacy and resources needed to survive by successfully becoming isomorphic with their intuitional environments.⁶

Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell discuss the concept of institutional isomorphism by identifying three mechanisms through which this type of institutional change occurs; coercive, mimetic, and normative.⁷ They describe coercive (regulatory) isomorphism as change that results from “both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function.”⁸ For example, some organizational change is the direct result of a government mandate such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in public school education. Public schools had to adopt changes to meet the provisions set forth by the NCLB legislation in order to receive funding and support from the government.

The second form of isomorphic change, mimetic isomorphism, DiMaggio and Powell describe as change that occurs as a result of institutional uncertainty. They suggest that when organizational goals are ambiguous or uncertain, organizations model themselves after other successful organizations in their field.⁹ Modeling is the response to uncertainty. Modeled organizations serve as “convenient sources of practices that the borrowing organization may

⁵ John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structures as Myth and Ceremony," *American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 2 (1977), p. 349

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 352

⁷ Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (1983), p. 150

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 151

use." According to the authors, "models may be diffused indirectly through employee transfer or turnover, or explicitly by organizations such as consulting firms or industry trade associations."¹⁰ They conclude that organizations tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that they perceive as more legitimate or successful.¹¹

The third and final form of isomorphic change discussed is normative isomorphism which stems from professionalization. The two aspects of professionalization are formal education produced by university specialists and growth of professional networks that span across organizations. According to the authors, these mechanisms "create a pool of interchangeable individuals who occupy similar positions across a range of organizational and possess a similarity of orientation and disposition."¹² DiMaggio and Powell conclude that organizations are rewarded for being similar to other organizations in their field. They argue that this similarity "can make it easier for organizations to transact with other organizations, to attract career-minded staff, to be acknowledged as legitimate, and reputable, and to fit into administrative categories that define eligibility for public and private grants and contracts."¹³

Normal schools as institutions were particularly vulnerable to this type of influence. Their goals, their interactions with other institutions of higher learning, and their dependence on the state for vital resources created a situation for normal schools which made them more prone to succumb to isomorphic pressure. The State Normal School at Cedar Falls, Iowa exemplified some of the above mentioned characteristics which DiMaggio and Powell also used as predictors of levels of isomorphic change. The state of Iowa agreed to open a state normal school several decades after funding a State University in Iowa City, and a College of Agriculture and

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 151

¹¹ Ibid., p. 152

¹² Ibid., p. 152

¹³ Ibid., p. 153

Mechanic Arts in Ames. The State Normal School in Cedar Falls opened its doors in 1876, nearly thirty years after the state established the State University of Iowa. Despite the fact that The University provided students with training in education, the state believed in funding a school devoted specifically to the training of common school teachers. Firmly established in Iowa City, the State University provided an example to the institution at Cedar Falls of how to successfully organize an institution of higher learning. As the state normal school progressed, it eventually adopted mechanisms used by the state university including business operation procedures, department organizational structure, and their system of rank ordering faculty for better department organization. DiMaggio and Powell hypothesized that “the greater the dependence of an organization on another organization, the more similar it will become to that organization in structure”¹⁴. The situation in the state of Iowa provides an example of how this particular hypothesis presented by DiMaggio and Powell is a predictor of isomorphic change.

DiMaggio and Powell also posited that “the more ambiguous the goals of an organization, the greater the extent to which the organization will model itself after organizations that it perceives to be successful.”¹⁵ Throughout its history, skeptics criticized the normal schools for not offering any academic advantages to those who trained in them. They also claimed that the courses offered by normal schools lacked intellectual coherency, and their contributions to teacher training remained uneven as the schools did not supply states with a very large number of trained teachers.¹⁶ Additionally, many students enrolled in state normal schools for the purpose of experiencing higher education rather than receiving teacher training. As a result, normal schools offered a smattering of classes to accommodate the wide array of students who enrolled. The attempt by the normal schools to

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 154

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 155

¹⁶ Richard J. Altenbaugh and Kathleen Underwood, "The Evolution of Normal Schools," in *Places Where Teachers Are Taught*, ed. John I. Goodlad, Roger Soder, and Kenneth A. Sirotnik (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers 1990), p. 143

accommodate many students with different agendas resulted in ambiguous institutional goals. In Iowa for example, the state normal school offered several different programs to accommodate students of all levels enrolling in various programs. Over the years, the course offerings portion of the college catalog revealed a jumbled mess of classes which changed rather frequently. Nearly every year, program requirements and course offerings differed from the previous year. Over time, the state normal school's organization more closely reflected that of the college of liberal arts and the department of teacher training at the State University. It modeled itself after the organization it perceived as successful.

High levels of isomorphic pressure on normal schools also existed because of the institution's interactions with the state and their dependence upon the state for funding. DiMaggio and Powell postulated that "the greater the extent to which an organizational field is dependent upon a single source of support for vital resources, the higher the level of isomorphism" while also predicting that "the greater the extent to which the organizations in a field transact with agencies of the state, the greater the extent of isomorphism in the field as a whole."¹⁷ First, many state normal schools (along with other state supported higher education institutions) depended upon allocations of state funds in order to support the expenditures of the institution. This centralization of financial resources caused homogenization among institutions of higher learning because it placed schools under similar pressures to obtain financial resources. Also, the state regulated standards which the state schools had to adopt in order to continue to receive funding. The regulative pressures from the state forced higher education institutions to become similar. In the state of Iowa, the normal school competed with The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts and The State University for funding. Over the course of time, the state normal school's operating procedures became more like those of the other state schools which received substantially higher amounts of money from the state. For example, the state

¹⁷ DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields.", p. 155

normal school adopted the state universities' method of conducting matters of business and maintenance of financial records. By providing the state with more accurate records and bookkeeping procedures, the institution hoped to gain additional appropriations from the state. Additionally, when the state decided to condense the governing bodies of the school into one unified state board of education, all three state schools complied resulting in the adoption of similar governing procedures by all three state supported schools. The state required all three schools to change their governing body which resulted in coercive isomorphic change.

State normal schools were particularly susceptible to mimetic and coercive isomorphic pressures. The situation in the state of Iowa showed how the some predictors of isomorphic change including ambiguous goals, interactions with the state, and dependence upon another institution increased the level of isomorphic change in the state normal school. The interactions between the state schools of higher education in Iowa exemplified DiMaggio and Powell's hypothesis of predictors of isomorphism, especially relating to mimetic and coercive change.

This study incorporates DiMaggio and Powel's interpretation of institutional isomorphism as a theoretical framework for studying the evolution of normal schools into teacher's colleges. Due to the complexities involved in the transition process, some schools evolved into teachers colleges and remained institutions devoted to the distinct purpose of training teachers, while other normal schools became departments of education on collegiate campuses, or simply ceased to exist. It specifically focuses on the case of the Iowa State Normal School (now formally known as the University of Northern Iowa). It explores several aspects of this transition including how this particular institution adjusted to changing expectations concerning the training of teachers. It also identifies changes adopted by the institution in order to function better and survive among other institutions in the field of higher education.

This study specifically focuses on the state of Iowa and the case of the Iowa State Normal School. Currently, the state of Iowa is home to three public universities: The University of Iowa (U of I), Iowa State University (ISU), and The University of Northern Iowa (UNI). While these are the current titles of each of the three state schools, during the time period this study focuses on (1890 – 1915), all three schools had different titles. The title given to the University of Iowa during the time frame was “The State University of Iowa.” Iowa State University was called “The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts.” Finally, the University of Northern Iowa was known as “The Iowa State Normal School”, which later adopted the title “The Iowa State Teacher’s College.” This study examines different aspects of each of the schools, and uses their former titles in the discussion of higher education in the state of Iowa. To clarify, the three state school’s examined in this study, from 1890 to 1915, were known as The State University of Iowa, The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, and The Iowa State Normal School. The Iowa State Normal School (now the University of Northern Iowa) is the major institution in question, and its transition from a normal school to collegiate status is the central focus of this study.

Chapter 1:

Historical Context: A Synopsis of the History and Development of the Normal School

Normal Schools were originally created during the mid-nineteenth century as a solution to the teacher shortage problem. Supporters of the normal school idea also hoped this type of institution would address growing concerns regarding teacher quality. The leaders responsible for the development of these institutions hoped that these schools could better prepare teachers to lead and instruct students in their classrooms. In general, normal schools offered a broad curriculum with a wide variety of classes to accommodate different students and teachers with varying levels of education preparation and background. Though many educators attended normal schools to receive some sort of teacher preparation, David Felmley, president of the Illinois State Normal in Normal Illinois, noted in 1923 the limited impact normal schools had in the teacher profession as a whole.¹⁸ Critics scrutinized normal schools for their watered down curriculum and low standards of admission. Eventually, isomorphic pressures lead to the transformation of normal schools to teacher's colleges and to the adoption of standards used by other higher education institutions. Before this transition took place, normal schools provided pupils with an opportunity to extend their education beyond the high school level. Despite its contentious existence, normal school education spanned over the course of several decades, and its history and development is still relevant in the foundation of teacher training

Teacher Institutes and Assemblies

Before the creation of normal schools, states offered few formal opportunities for the professional development and training of teachers. When opportunities for teacher training arose,

¹⁸ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 131

oftentimes they occurred in conference format. These conferences, which began during the 1830s became known as Teacher Institutes.¹⁹ The idea to hold teacher institutes originally grew from a combination of Henry Barnard's six week course of instruction in pedagogies for young men and classes taught at Emma Willard's Troy Seminary for Women.²⁰ While some teacher institutes afforded school teachers the opportunity to listen to guest lecturers and speakers, most gatherings consisted of discussions among teachers on different teaching practices and experiences.²¹ These meetings allowed teachers throughout various districts to come together for the purpose of sharing thoughts, ideas, and experiences as school teachers. Mary Hurbut Cordier, a historian of rural teachers and teacher training, considered Teacher Institutes as one of the more widely spread forms of pedagogical training available to educators during this period. Her book, *School Women of the Prairies and Plains*, provides a description of teacher conferences, defining them as "a series of courses in basic content of the school subjects and in teaching methods."²² According to Cordier, teacher institutes generally met from one to six weeks during the summer. The subjects frequently offered included content on curriculum, methods of instruction, and school management, spelling, penmanship, language, grammar, reading, drawing, music, geography, history, civics, arithmetic, physiology and hygiene, agriculture, sewing, and

¹⁹ Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* 2ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)., 137

²⁰ Ibid. p.137. James W. Fraser and his study *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, provides more in-depth information regarding female seminaries and their contribution to the education of teachers, specifically, female teachers. He not only discusses the function of Emma Willard and the Troy Seminary for Women but also Catherine Beecher's Hartford Female Seminary and how these institutions contributed to the preparation of teachers. For additional information, see Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*., p. 35 – 42. On teacher institutes, see also Christopher J. Lucas, *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

²¹ *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century*., 21

²² Mary Hurbut Cordier, *School Women of the Prairies and Plains* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press 1992). Shortly following Henry Barnard's six week course, the county superintendent of New York's schools offered a similar pedagogical convention for his public school teachers in 1843. The fact that more districts began offering conventions of this nature, shows that educational leaders of the time acknowledged the necessity of teacher training.

cooking.²³ According to Cordier, the institutes afforded rural teachers a way in which to improve their teaching skills without the expense of a college degree.

In his history of teacher education in America, Christopher Lucas provides readers additional detail on teacher institutes. Lucas explains that depending on the location, different leaders organized the institutes. For example, in New York State, Samuel N. Sweet organized an institute for prospective teachers in Ithaca, New York.²⁴ The Tompkins county superintendent of schools also organized a “pedagogical convention” for teachers.²⁵ Other states supported these institutes including New Hampshire, Maine, Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois.²⁶ Lucas explained that during these meetings, groups of gentlemen received a thorough review of all subject taught in common schools, along with practical counsel in teaching methods. Along with instruction on content, according to Lucas, these institutes were a pedagogical convention where guest lecturers gave inspirational talks motivating current teachers. Discussion groups on topics of general interest and evening campfire meetings generally followed lectures and speeches.²⁷ These assemblies usually only lasted a few days, and were meant as a supplement to a teacher’s certification, much like teacher in-service programs and educational workshops today. Unlike required teacher in-service training, attendance at teacher institutes during the mid-nineteenth century was mostly voluntary. In order to encourage participation in these types of training conferences, in 1846 the state of Massachusetts budgeted public funds for stipends and scholarships.²⁸ A few years later, other communities in New York, New Hampshire, Maine, Ohio,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Lucas, *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century.*, 21

²⁵ Ibid., 21

²⁶ Ibid., 21. In his discussion of teacher institutes and the states that supported them, Lucas does not mention who specifically organized these meetings nor does he mention where they received their funding. However, he does note that some states such as Massachusetts made public funds available to defray the cost of attending.

²⁷ *American Higher Education: A History*

²⁸ *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century.*, p. 21.

Michigan and Illinois followed suit, sponsoring teacher assemblies for their public school educators. It is important to recognize, according to Lucas, that “few observers could have supposed that teachers’ institutes afforded an adequate or complete response to the problem of teachers’ preparation”²⁹ However modest the training, according to Lucas, institutes often supplied the only form of teacher education available to working, tenured school masters during early portions of the nineteenth century.³⁰

The High School

During the post-civil war era, the number of pupils attending school drastically changed, increasing the demand for public school teachers. John L. Rury acknowledged this shift in his book *Education and Women’s Work*. He discussed how during this period, the high school “underwent a rapid process of expansion.”³¹ He also noted that high schools appeared to be the avenue through which prospective teachers prepared for their role as classroom instructors. Rury discussed how nineteenth century educators believed in the use of high schools in preparing teachers citing examples from school districts in Detroit, New Haven, Connecticut, and St. Louis.³²

Other education historians note this shift in education as well including historian James Fraser. He notes that during the post-civil war period American education underwent major transformations. Elementary school enrollments grew substantially, and so did the number of

²⁹ *American Higher Education: A History*, p.139.

³⁰ *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century.*, p. 22.

³¹ John L. Rury, *Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor in Urban America, 1870-1930* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p.17

³² *Ibid.*, p. 22

students entering high school.³³ The increase in population growth necessitated the increase in common schools. This, in turn, demanded the hiring of greater numbers of trained teachers.³⁴ Schools needed an efficient way for training teachers, and training them quickly. For educational leaders and district superintendents, high schools offered a solution to the demand for teachers. Before any type of unified teacher education program was in place, completion of high school programs by those candidates desiring to become common school teachers satisfied school leaders. In his book on the history of teacher training programs, James Fraser points out that though high schools prepared some students for college and for advanced places in the working world, they also prepared teachers.³⁵ Fraser provides two examples of this. Chicago's high schools offered two year normal training courses to students who desired to become teacher and students who completed the two year course received their certification to teach at the elementary school level.³⁶ Throughout most of the later nineteenth century, Philadelphia's Model School, which became a high school training facility for girls, trained teachers for the elementary grades of the city's schools.³⁷

Other studies provide additional examples of using high schools for training elementary educators. In 1852, The Girls' High and Normal School of Boston became the institution responsible for training women teachers for the city's grammar schools.³⁸ In fact, many of the larger high schools and coeducational institutions in different cities offered teacher training

³³ John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Contours in The History of American Schooling*, 3 ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009); John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press 2004).

³⁴ Jurgen Herbst, "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes," in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989).

³⁵ Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Herbst, "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes.", p. 221.

curriculum for young women.³⁹ The potential to receive education beyond grammar school training allured many young women to the teaching profession, and as a result, more and more girls attended high school and received training to become teachers.⁴⁰ Teacher training at local high schools became so popular, that one of Indiana's high school superintendents predicated in 1853 "that high schools would long serve as an important 'nursery of teachers'".⁴¹ However, an analysis of contemporaneous school systems revealed that the level and quality of common school education varied from city to city and across states, which education leaders of the time attributed to the modest, often inadequate training of school masters. In order to improve the quality of common school education, education leaders considered ways in which to improve teacher training. Reformers urged state legislatures to "full-fill their responsibility to ensure a supply of well-trained teachers for the nation's common schools."⁴² This led to legislation which created institutions designed specifically for the purpose of training elementary teachers. These institutes for teacher training became formally known as normal schools. In the summer of 1839, Massachusetts became the first state to establish the first state supported normal school in Lexington.⁴³ In the beginning, the main purpose of the normal school was to impart a broad range of academic knowledge to its students, while also providing lessons in pedagogy and teaching skills.

³⁹ William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1995).

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 249.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 250.

⁴² Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History*, 139

⁴³ Herbst, "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes."; Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History.*, p. 51; Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

The Campaign for Normal Schools

In addition to inadequate teacher training, another reason behind the creation of special schools devoted specifically to the training of teachers was indifference on the part of universities and academies to in preparing teachers. Horace Mann, a leading campaigner for normal schools, complained that “the existing work in pedagogy did not command the utmost attention from educators, and argued “that the normal school offered an experience that combined practice with methodical training.⁴⁴ Reformers continued to campaign for what seemed essential to generate adequate, well trained teachers: a system of publicly supported normal schools." Education leaders Henry Edwin Dwight and James C. Carter also advocated funding institutions that would provide teacher training after high school which could be universal for all of the nation’s teachers.⁴⁵ This type of specific training, according to Dwight and Carter, would not only instruct students using sound philosophies in teacher education but they would also provide curricula and instruction devoted specifically to the development of teaching methods, pedagogy, and the preparation of teachers for the district schools.⁴⁶ Finally, in response to a donation of \$10,000 by Edward Dwight “for the purpose of qualifying teachers of the common schools” the Massachusetts state legislature appropriated an additional \$10,000 in order for the State Board of Education to open the first normal school.⁴⁷ The State Board of Education elected to open three separate schools in different regions of the state where members of the state board determined the need for better trained teachers was greatest.

⁴⁴ Geraldine Joncich Clifford and James W. Guthrie, *Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1988)., p. 57.; Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*.

⁴⁵ William R. Johnson, "Teachers and Teacher Training in the Twentieth Century," in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989).

⁴⁶ Jurgen Herbst, *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press 1989).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

The first school, an all-girls school, opened in Lexington on July 3, 1839 under Principal Cyrus Pierce; or as he was known to his students, "Father Pierce." Pierce graduated from Harvard College and the Harvard School of Divinity. After graduations, he worked as a school teacher prior to his ordination. He served as pastor of North Reading Unitarian church, and following that, returned to lead a town school in Nantucket. By September of 1839, Pierce enrolled twelve students in the normal school under his leadership. By October, he opened a model school which functioned as a practice school for some thirty normal students.⁴⁸ The state's second normal school was located in central Massachusetts in the town of Barre. School leaders selected Reverend Samuel P. Newman to serve as its first principal. Unlike Lexington, the school in Barre was coeducational. Barre Normal opened its doors in the town academy to twelve women and eight men in September of 1839. In the southeast corner of the state, under the direction of Colonel Nicholas Tillingcast, the third school, located in the town Bridgewater, opened to both men and women. Eventually, Massachusetts opened a fourth school in Salem in 1854 under the leadership of Richard Edwards. In order to attract more students and increase enrollments, a tuition waiver was offered to those students who promised to teach in the common schools upon completion of a one-year course. At Barre, attendance increased so rapidly, that just two years after opening, it moved into its own building and was officially dubbed a state normal school.⁴⁹

Who went to Normals?

In the beginning, entrance requirements at state normal schools were not very strict. The normals at both Lexington and Barre, simply mandated that women seeking to enroll be at least

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

16 years of age, and men at least 17. Salem normal school in Massachusetts required applicants to pass an examination in the common school subjects, and “prove their intellectual capability and high moral character.”⁵⁰ Though admission requirements in these institutions varied to some extent, most state normal schools required students to be in good health, and most importantly, asked students to declare their intention to teach in the common schools of Massachusetts upon completion of their course work.⁵¹ Once enrolled, normalites thoroughly reviewed “the common school subjects of spelling, reading, writing, grammar, geography, and arithmetic.” If they remained enrolled, these pupils added more advanced studies such as “rhetoric, logic, geometry, bookkeeping, navigation, surveying, history, physiology, mental and natural philosophy, and ‘the principles of piety and morality common to all sects of Christians’.”⁵²

Because normal school was inexpensive, it was a convenient way for many who otherwise would have not been granted the opportunity, to resume their formal education or to prepare themselves for gainful employment. The vast majority of students who enrolled in the early normals came from farming families; and those whose parents were not farmers, were often employed as merchants in nonprofessional white-collar occupations, or in blue-collar occupations.⁵³ The average age of the entering student was just a little below 19, and female students were often younger than the men. Because normal schools afforded girls an opportunity to continue their education which they may not have received by applying to colleges or academies, enrollment of girls often far outnumbered enrollment of boys. The male presence in normal schools continued to gradually decline as enrollment levels increased.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 62.

⁵² Ibid., p. 62; "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes."

⁵³ *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture*, p. 77

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Faculty members and principals at the first normal schools reported that the educational background of those pupils who enrolled was dismal and inadequate, and not what they expected or desired in future teachers. Cyrus Pierce, principal of Massachusetts normal school in Nantucket, voiced his disappointment in students' prior training as well as their current capabilities. In his journals, Pierce wrote that he found their academic knowledge and skills to be discouragingly defective. He declared that they "definitely needed at least one year of instruction even though it would take three to prepare them fully for their tasks."⁵⁵ Paul Mattingly, in his book *The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century*, noted that "over and over again" Pierce complained "I have exhausted alternatives in the face of poorly prepared students and the necessity to maintain the school with unprofessional talents."⁵⁶

Criticisms

Through the founding of normal schools, education reformers attempted to meet the pressing needs of common schools for adequately trained teachers. Building new institutions devoted solely to the purpose of training teachers, however, did not come without criticism. There was much skepticism as to whether these new normal schools offered real preparatory training or satisfied "genuine" need of the schools.⁵⁷ Skeptics claimed that normal schools weren't necessary because any person who had a general understanding of the subject matter taught in elementary schools could teach.⁵⁸ Those in opposition suggested several reasons why it

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁵⁶ Paul H. Mattingly, *The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), p. 140.

⁵⁷ Lucas, *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century*.

⁵⁸ Charles A. Harper, *A Century of Public Teacher Education: The Story of State Teachers Colleges as They Evolved from the Normal Schools* (Washington DC: National Education Association of the United States 1939), p. 108.

was unnecessary for the state to supply funding to the normals. Critics asserted that when compared to existing academies and high schools “as far as the normal schools were concerned, they did not appear to offer any peculiar or distinguishing advantages.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, some argued that the “real cause” for badly performing teachers was not in their insufficient preparation, but rather, in the depressing salary paid to current practicing teachers.⁶⁰

Proponents of the normals maintained that a unique mission did exist, as normals first and foremost provided remedial instruction to common-school graduates, and proceeded to then prepare them further as elementary school teachers. However, critics held that their quality of instruction was inferior compared to what was available in public schools and academies. They persistently argued that the academic caliber of normal schools fell below a regular secondary education, and that a normal education amounted to “little more than a brief review of the subjects they were expected to teach once they returned to primary classrooms.”⁶¹ Critics further claimed that even when pedagogical training was offered, normal schools merely taught only a smattering of pedagogy and advice on school discipline and classroom management.⁶² In sum, skeptics had the perception that normal schools did not accomplish their original purpose. In spite of these negative perceptions, however, normal schools continued to grow and receive state support. By the end of the century, states had built well over 100 normal schools across the nation and they remained a dominant force in the education of teachers until well after the turn of the twentieth century.

⁵⁹ Herbst, *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture.*, p. 64.

⁶⁰ "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes."

⁶¹ E. Alden Dunham, *Colleges of the Forgotten Americans* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969)., p.30.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Curriculum and Expansion

Over the course of the next half century, normal schools expanded to the south and Midwest. Christine Ogren, who studied the development of state normal schools, reported in her book *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Greater Good* that in 1869, approximately 35 state normal schools existed throughout the United States.⁶³ Among them were schools like Illinois State Normal, which opened its doors in 1857. Kansas elected to open Emporia State Normal School in 1865 (which was reported to be the largest state normal school in the nation by 1890), and Platteville State Normal school which opened in Wisconsin in 1876.⁶⁴ Between 1870 and 1900 normal school enrollment grew from 10,000 to 70,000. While this number was only a small portion of teachers across the United States, estimates indicate that unlike in earlier decades, many more teachers received some type of normal instruction prior to teaching.⁶⁵

Once firmly established, normal school leaders focused on curriculum development and the pedagogies offered in their coursework. Principals not only thought about what to teach but *how* to teach. They wanted to offer students a practical education for their futures as classroom teachers. Many leaders felt that a significant portion of the normal school curricula should be devoted to character training and moral development rather than rigorous, academic training.⁶⁶ Therefore, the original learning outcomes of normal schools focused on providing teachers with character and philosophical training so they could become moral leaders in their classrooms. But, once principals realized that many pupils arrived with inadequate academic preparation, it forced many schools to add an academically focused course of study for entry level students entitled

⁶³ Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good*.

⁶⁴ Dunham, *Colleges of the Forgotten Americans*.

⁶⁵ Altenbaugh and Underwood, "The Evolution of Normal Schools."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

“uniform course of study.”⁶⁷ Principals hoped that by adding the uniform coursework that students pursuing teacher training received the academic preparation they otherwise lacked from their previous years of schooling. Most training coursework for elementary teachers usually consisted of either a one or two-year program (though, many early pupils did not complete all of the suggested coursework in their program). These programs began with a review of elementary instruction to make up for academic deficiencies from the student’s common school days. Character training courses and advanced academic instruction generally followed entry level instruction.⁶⁸ The baseline curriculum “included specific courses in grammar, orthoepy and reading, composition, spelling, penmanship, literature, American history, civics, European history, a choice between economic or sociology, arithmetic, algebra, geometry plane & solid, geography, physiography or additional physics, physics, botany, physiology, chemistry or zoology, and agriculture, plus one elective.”⁶⁹ Advanced classes included coursework in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, advanced chemistry, physics, botany, English literature, and general history.⁷⁰ Normal school leaders felt confident that their curricular decisions provided adequate general education for would-be common school teachers.⁷¹

As the nineteenth century progressed, enrollment rates in normal schools substantially increased. The curriculum at these institutions expanded as well. According to Mattingly, during the period between 1870 and 1880, a major curricular transformation included the decision by normal school leaders to create classes designed to prepare students to teach at the secondary level. Normal school officials also decided to add courses that prepared individuals to become

⁶⁷ Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History.*, p. 120.

⁶⁸ Herbst, "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes."; Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History.*;

⁶⁹ *Preparing America's Teachers: A History.*, p. 122.

⁷⁰ Herbst, "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes."

⁷¹ Merle L. Borrowman, *The Liberal and Technical in Teacher Education* (New York: Bureau of Publications, 1956).

education leaders and school administrators. Some normals offered a two-year course for high school graduates in addition to their four-year course for those students with less preparation.⁷² Most course offerings included a two year high school training program designed for secondary teachers, and a three- or four-year program designed for principals and superintendents.⁷³ Harper provided a detailed example of the five general curricula offered at Michigan State Normal College: “[1] general degree course of two years; [2] specialized degree course of two years [3] general diploma course of four years; [4] specialized four-year course; [5] course of one year for college graduates. Students would not receive special preparation for: [1] rural, ungraded, and village schools; [2] public and private kindergartens; [3] primary work and the lower grades of the elementary schools; [5] general grade work; [6] special subjects and departments; [7] supervision of the particular branches, such as music and drawing; and [8] general supervision and administration.”⁷⁴

Normal schools also expanded their curriculum to include coursework in manual training and domestic science. The decision to add these types of courses to the normal school program proved beneficial for normal enrollments, as many of their students came from farm and laboring families.⁷⁵ Vocational courses became extremely popular among many normalites, and historians have observed that by the turn of the twentieth century, vocational training of students overtook enrollments in some normal schools. They argued that this may have contributed to the criticism that normal schools lacked serious academic training.⁷⁶

⁷² Harper, *A Century of Public Teacher Education: The Story of State Teachers Colleges as They Evolved from the Normal Schools*

⁷³ Altenbaugh and Underwood, "The Evolution of Normal Schools."

⁷⁴ Harper, *A Century of Public Teacher Education: The Story of State Teachers Colleges as They Evolved from the Normal Schools*, p. 108.

⁷⁵ Clifford and Guthrie, *Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education*, p.59.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*.

Soon after these adaptations, teachers and students came to view normal schools as extensions of secondary schooling, and many used normal schools to extend their education past high school. Slowly, as high school attendance and graduation increased, state legislatures and normal school authorities increased admission standards and required high school diplomas for admission.

The Pedagogical Debate

Once normal schools gained momentum and began training more of the nation's educators, conflicts arose as to what type of education was best suited for the preparation of school teachers. Curricular debates arose concerning the adaptation of a liberal arts based education versus professionalism. This debate "pitted those having a teachers college view point against those with the liberal arts outlook."⁷⁷ According to Borrowman, the conservative liberal arts advocates "were anxious to keep the general and professional sequences apart in order to preserve the purity of the liberal arts from what they considered professionalism."⁷⁸ Despite arguments, most educators recognized the need for both the liberal and technical training of teachers in normal schools across the country, and studies of time showed that the state normal school, with its emphasis on methods and classroom management, "focused on the practical aspects of the teaching enterprise."⁷⁹ In addition to in-depth knowledge of the subject matter presented in each course, students also received instruction about the best methods of imparting knowledge to their students.⁸⁰ A number of normals developed courses on "the methods of

⁷⁷ Borrowman, *The Liberal and Technical in Teacher Education.*, p.2.; David Tyack, "The Future of the Past: What Do We Need to Know About the History of Teaching?," in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989).

⁷⁸ Borrowman, *The Liberal and Technical in Teacher Education.*, p. 50.

⁷⁹ Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good.*, p. 125.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

teaching particular subjects,” which included instruction in classroom management and the organization of schools alongside method training. According to Christine Ogren, not only did students become familiar with methods for teaching subjects, but they also familiarized themselves with how schools operated and the roles administrative officers played in maintaining and running school districts.⁸¹

During the 1870s and 1880s, with growing interest in child psychology, scholars in education began to value the study of child development. Interest in child development fostered an increased awareness of a pedagogical theory called Herbartianism. Herbartians, as they called themselves, were a group of American educators that studied in Germany under the disciples of philosopher Johan Friedrich Herbart.⁸² They founded a society called “The National Herbart Society for the Scientific Study of Teaching” at the annual meeting of the National Education Association in 1895. Herbartianists strongly believed that the highest purpose in education was “the development of ethical character.”⁸³ This type of doctrine meant that a moral education was the product of instruction and it focused on the acquisition of ideas which affected the will “the chief element of morality.”⁸⁴ For Herbartians, the full development of the child, a realization of all his capabilities, should be the constant aim of the process of education. To achieve this type of education, Herbart actually proposed five phases of pedagogical technique. He first emphasized child preparation; “the stimulation of readiness in the student to assimilate new learning”⁸⁵ The remaining four stages included “presentation of material in ways appropriate to each student’s background; association that relates new material to past ideas and experiences;

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 127.

⁸² Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum 1893-1958* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004), p. 14

⁸³ Ray Hiner, "Herbartians, History, and Moral Education," *The School Review* 79, no. 4 (1971), 590

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 591

⁸⁵ John Gribbin, "Herbartianism."

generalization, or formulation of rules, laws, principles and guides; and application, by expression and use.”⁸⁶ Additionally, Herbartians felt that the principle of “apperception” (the process of understanding new material based on previous experiences, knowledge, and feelings) was an important tool in understanding how the child learned.⁸⁷ Ultimately, Herbartianists believed that good character could be obtained by teachers introducing their students to ethical ideas contained in the course of study.

Both Herbartianism and child psychology became a large component of the normal school curriculum. According to Ogren, the developing field of psychology, and the more specialized field of educational psychology, “provided both a theoretical base for principles of teaching and substantive questions for the ongoing inquiry into the learning process.”⁸⁸ This new interest in child development fostered the growth Herbartianism movement in normal schools. Prior to the addition of this school of thought, drill, recitation, and rote memorization were the most common method of education in public schools. According to Fraser, Herbartianism “systemized psychological theories into concrete approaches into teaching based on engaging and fostering children’s interests.” The ideas behind this movement placed renewed importance on the model school and practice teaching. After herbartian theory grew in popularity among teachers, professors, and principals, many normal schools adopted Herbartianism as a guide for instruction and inquiry in their teacher education programs.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Herbst, *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture.*, p. 146

⁸⁸ Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good.*, 129; Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History.*

⁸⁹ Herbst, "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes."; Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good.*; Mattingly, *The Classess Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century* ; Harper, *A Century of Public Teacher Education: The Story of State Teachers Colleges as They Evolved from the Normal Schools* ; Harold Rugg, *The Teacher of Teachers: Frontiers of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1952).

20th Century Developments and Social Change

From the end of the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth, normal school enrollments continued to grow. From 1879 to 1905, the number of normal schools operated by states, city and county authorities, and private sponsors increased from 69 to almost 200. Forty-six of the forty-eight legislatures authorized the operation of normal schools in their states.⁹⁰ Though these institutions continued to grow in number, many of the students who enrolled elected to take vocational training courses and did not complete the teacher training program in its entirety.⁹¹ In fact, only a fraction of the students enrolled actually became common school teachers.⁹² The majority of students used normal schools as a means of obtaining vocational training, advancing career opportunities, furthering their education, or to prepare for the collegiate environment.

During the same period, high schools gained attention and enrollments in these institutions nearly doubled. Historians Dunham and Herbst attribute the growth of the normal school enrollments and changes to entrance requirements to increased attendance and graduation from high schools. The increase in the number of high school graduates prompted normal schools to adjust their entry requirements. Because more students attended high school, higher numbers of students graduated with a high school degree. This allowed normal schools to raise their entry requirements without limiting the number of students who could potentially enroll in their institutions. Normal school officials hoped that by requiring a high school diploma upon entrance to their institutions, the student body would gradually be comprised of students with similar academic backgrounds.

⁹⁰ Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good.*; Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History.*

⁹¹ Altenbaugh and Underwood, "The Evolution of Normal Schools."

⁹² Dunham, *Colleges of the Forgotten Americans.*

Increased numbers of high school students required that more teachers be trained to lead instruction in high school classrooms. This prompted discussion concerning which institutions would be responsible for the training of high school teachers. Despite the fact that leaders from private colleges, academies, universities and normal schools debated which institutions should take on the responsibility of training high school teachers and other educational professionals, normal schools proceeded to add programs to their course offerings designed to train secondary teachers. Normal schools argued that they were better suited for the training of secondary education professionals because these teachers should be trained in the same intuitions and environments as elementary teachers. The addition of programs for the preparation of school administrators soon followed, and as some researchers argue, the original purpose of the normal school – the training of primary teachers – began to fade.⁹³ In 1905, the Kansas legislature permitted Emporia State Normal school to grant degrees, and other state legislatures soon followed.⁹⁴

Even though normal schools continued to add programs to their course offerings and enrollment rates continued to increase, author Christopher Lucas notes that students in state normal school teacher training programs represented only a fraction of the total number of students preparing to become teachers.⁹⁵ The fact that a large percentage of teachers received training through other means raised questions concerning the legitimacy and purpose of state normal schools. In fact, Lucas argues that as fast as normal schools were built, they dwindled just as quickly. Negative perceptions of normal schools' ability to provide education of substance followed the institutions into the twentieth century and threatened their survival. The reputation

⁹³ Lucas, *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century.*; Herbst, "Teacher Preparation in the Nineteenth Century: Institutions and Purposes."

⁹⁴ *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture.*; p. 165.

⁹⁵ Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History*, p. 230.

of setting low entrance standards and offering inferior academic courses compared to their university counterparts never truly disappeared. In the opening years of the twentieth century, this reputation continued to plague them. Lucas notes that normal schools were criticized for other reasons as well, and that “they never actually succeeded in providing a reliable supply of high-quality classroom teachers for the nation’s public elementary schools.”⁹⁶ Eventually, some normal schools simply closed their doors and ceased to exist, others combined with colleges and universities to form normal departments of education and many transitioned into teachers colleges.

In order to gain a complete understanding of the transition made by normal schools into teachers colleges and departments of education on university campuses, it is important to recognize the social changes of the decades in which they operated. Characterized by growth, expansion, and social change, progress became the overarching theme of the first portion of the twentieth century. Industrial developments, population increases, professionalization, and the culture of aspiration, all grew out of what is now called “the progressive era.”⁹⁷ These economic and social developments which occurred during first three decades of the twentieth century compelled universities to amend their practices, policies, and structural organization. In order for normal school’s to gain any kind of status among higher education institutions, they too needed to change their institutional structure in order to be viewed by students and consumers as relevant institutions. State normal schools mirrored changes that universities and private colleges adopted in order to secure higher standing on the education hierarchy. These changes are an

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 231.

⁹⁷ David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration 1915-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 20. David O. Levine defines the “culture of aspiration” as American young people’s belief that college training prepared one for a good job and the collegiate experience assured one of important social connections which fostered a good life after the collegiate years.

example of how isomorphism, the idea that outside forces placed pressure on normal schools to change how they operated, effected institutions of higher learning.

The Middle Class and Professionalism

Due to industrial expansion and population growth, many Americans embarked on a mission to improve the quality of life.⁹⁸ This included the professionalization of many occupations. The fields of medicine, law, economics, business administration, social work, architecture, business, and education grew during this period. Many of these fields developed professional associations for their advancement. Some of these included The American Medical Association, The American Bar Association, American Historical Association, The American Economics Association, The American Political Science Association, and The American Sociological Society Association, among others.⁹⁹ Economic development also contributed to the growth of these fields, as more companies became dependent upon the professional training of technicians and management personnel.¹⁰⁰ According to David O. Levine, newly forged links between economic development and education increased enrollments on collegiate campuses, and stimulated scientific research in a wide range of engineering, technical, agricultural, business administration, and medicine.¹⁰¹ It was during this same period that young people began to look to higher education as “an avenue of economic and social mobility.” According to Burton J. Bledstein, author of *Culture of Professionalism*, between 1840 and 1915, the middle class culture of aspiration dominated American social thought and institutional developments, including

⁹⁸ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

⁹⁹ *The Search for Order 1877 - 1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

¹⁰⁰ Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration 1915-1940.*, p. 46.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

developments in higher education.¹⁰² In fact, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the number of professional schools, student enrollments, and standards for graduation rose quickly.¹⁰³ Levine continues this discussion by adding that between the two world wars, “college education became an essential part of the success strategy of those who sought prestige in the United States.”¹⁰⁴ The “culture of aspiration”, according to Levine, stimulated an “unprecedented demand for higher education” and contributed to the status, and symbol of economic and social mobility that a collegiate degree came to represent.¹⁰⁵ Robert H. Wiebe also mentions aspirations of professionalism in his discussion of the emerging middle class in his book *The Search for Order*.¹⁰⁶ Higher education during this time period emerged as “the seminal institution within the culture of professionalism”, and the school diploma served as a ticket to upward social mobility.¹⁰⁷ Middle-class Americans magnified symbols such as degrees, diplomas, and honorary awards, which emphasized professional authority in society.¹⁰⁸ For the middle-class American, higher education offered two advantages; a better career and social mobility. The continued growth of the middle-class coupled with the increased interest in higher education, led colleges to standardize minimum entry requirements, re-evaluate the curriculum it offered, the type of students it wished to attract, and determine its role in the local or national community.¹⁰⁹ According to Thelin, “the new three R’s of colleges became ratings, rankings, and reputation.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰² Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1976), p.53.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁰⁴ Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration 1915-1940.*, p. 40.; Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education.*, p. 213.

¹⁰⁵ Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration 1915-1940.*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920.*, p. 113

¹⁰⁷ Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education.*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁸ Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration 1915-1940.*

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education.*

¹¹⁰ Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education.*, p. 147.

The Business Model and Changes in Higher Education

Industry during this period grew staggering rates. Factories adopted new forms of mass production and scientific management. Standardization was the model for success, and not only did companies adopt Frederick W. Taylor's ideas on management, standardization, and reducing wasteful practices, but factories began paying according to rates of efficiency. The new efficiency model eventually trickled into higher education and schools in general. These business methods infiltrated many aspects of academic life, including the organizational structure of the administration and the professoriate. According to Lucas, "bureaucratic organization arose out of increased size, expanding student enrollments, and demands for new services."¹¹¹ Universities adopted a hierarchical arrangement of administration structure, as duties became more specialized and divided. Top down organization included the board of trustees and the president, the registrar, vice-president and associate vice presidents, chief business officer, deans, the admissions director, the secretaries and subordinate administrative assistants. The exercise of power varied through the graduated ranks as specific roles began to develop for each position.¹¹² Additionally, the modern American university brought professional schools into its structure, and populated them with faculty focused on scholarship and research. The graduated faculty system mimicked the new administration hierarchy, with professors, associate professors, part-time faculty, lecturers, and adjuncts. These professors focused on their own research, publications in national journals and memberships in disciplinary groups. Professors focused on becoming experts by contributing to the research and development of their specialization. In fact, many colleges and professional schools aspired to become research centers and promoted scholarship through the addition of graduate training programs and adequate facilities to assist in scholarly

¹¹¹ Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History*, p.199.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.199.; Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*.

investigation. Because of their new found devotion to scholarship, many professors regarded the obligation of teaching as an irritating distraction.¹¹³ This arrangement became the new template by which institutions of higher education were organized. The institutions that did not change to reflect these new models were threatened. According to isomorphism, if normal schools did not adopt this new form of organization they would not be recognized as legitimate institutions and eventually could cease to exist.

Professionalization and Institutions of Education

The culture of professionalism that permeated American society, also affected the academic profession in schools of education. Paul Mattingly's *The Classless Profession* explores the rise and development of education as a profession, and the debates that existed among leading educators on what constituted the appropriate training of education professionals. Mattingly tracks the shifting beliefs about what teaching as a profession meant, and how those beliefs instigated the need for institutional forms that could identify and create education professionals in the classroom. He follows the ambitious attempts and private endeavors of education leaders to create "institutions whose sole purpose was the special, professional preparation of teachers, and how academies and colleges broadened and enriched their programs with prospective teachers in mind."¹¹⁴ Mattingly articulates that normal schools became the principle vehicle in the professionalization of teacher education. He also focuses on how the American Institute of Instruction became an agency for "elevating the public understanding of education and all its varied facets." while also advancing educational literature and the

¹¹³ Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History*, p. 176.

¹¹⁴ Mattingly, *The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century*, p.89.

professional knowledge of teachers.¹¹⁵ During the 19th century, and due to the evangelic origins of teaching, education leaders viewed education as a means to resolving social problems, and the impetus behind education reform was the inculcation of moral character and instilling a habit of moral choice.¹¹⁶ As the century progressed and eventually came to a close, the advancement of scientific principles in education coupled with academic tradition conflicted with reformers' beliefs of pedagogical training solely in moral character. As university campuses added graduate schools of education and increasingly devoted more time to scientific research and study, debates arose regarding the role of schools of education at the university campus. Should normal school's focus exclusively on the pedagogical training of teachers? Or, would normal schools be better suited to alter their curriculum to include an education rooted in academic tradition and scientific inquiry? These questions grew more concerning for normal school leaders as more of their institutions transitioned to schools of education.

The addition of normal schools to the college campus allowed university professors to focus on more than simply the preparation of elementary teachers. Professors increasingly devoted more time and attention to the preparation of high school teachers, graduate school education, and the training of students for administrative roles. According to Clifford and Guthrie, prestigious schools of education reduced teacher education to a very limited role. These schools focused their professionalism on graduate students and those "leaving teaching" rather than students who eventually entered the classroom.¹¹⁷ Professionalization of education and the prestige of departments of education became linked not to teachers, but to scholars devoted to research and scientific inquiry. John R. Thelin explains that this transition occurred through signs of institutional status and prestige given to universities through hosting a scholarly journal

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.91.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹¹⁷ Clifford and Guthrie, *Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education* , p. 115.

with a distinguished scholar from their faculty serving as the editor.¹¹⁸ Gradations of rank and promotion became a new conception of academic professionalism, and according to Thelin, the “ranks assigned were tied to the institutions conferring tenure and the privileges of academic freedom to professors who had gained promotion and passed muster.”¹¹⁹ According to Clifford and Guthrie, within the first few years of the addition of schools of education on university campuses, the university department became the model by which other institutions of education designed their programs.¹²⁰ Institutions that did not change to fit the model of teacher education programs in place on university campuses were threatened.

All of these changes coupled with the serious questions critics posed in the late nineteenth century about the significant purpose of normal schools left these institutions with a questionable status among schools of higher learning. By deviating from the standards set by the leading academic institutions, normal schools’ legitimacy was threatened. Since their inception, they battled against perceptions of inferiority, and the recent changes in universities only further reduced the State Normal School’s lowly status. Mimetic isomorphic pressures forced state normal schools to adopt practices put in place at universities and other well-respected institutions of higher learning. Normal schools needed to change professional perceptions of the quality of their work in order to gain status and acceptance among education peers. State Normal schools attempted to alter perceptions through additions and subtractions to their curriculum, changes to department structure, increasing admission requirements, and eliminating the word “normal” from their institutional title. Because University departments of pedagogy trained education leaders for positions of status and authority rather than focusing on the training of elementary teachers, state normal schools fought for the right to train secondary teachers because of the

¹¹⁸ Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, pp. 128

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 128

¹²⁰ Clifford and Guthrie, *Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education*, p. 63.

academic status it afforded them. The ability to confer degrees and train teachers for secondary schools meant enhancing the status of their institution. By adopting standards set forth by leading colleges and universities, normal schools succumbed to isomorphic pressure and changed the way they operated. Normal schools of the twentieth century eventually mirrored departments of education and after several years of competing for students and legitimacy, either closed their doors, or transitioned into teachers colleges, full-fledged universities, or, became a normal department within the school of education on university campuses.

After the first decade of the twentieth century, approximately ten to twelve teachers colleges existed across the United States. By 1920, that number had more than doubled, with nearly fifty teacher's colleges existing across the country. State normal schools eliminated two-year teacher training programs and other short certificate-conferring programs within their curricula in order to transform themselves into four year, degree-granting institutions. By 1933, Lucas reported that state teachers colleges had risen to nearly 150 in number, furnishing close to sixty percent of all public school teachers.¹²¹ While some of the public normal schools were able to manage the transition into full-fledged teacher colleges or universities, others floundered, resulting in a rapid decrease in the number of functioning normal schools in the country. In 1890, the heyday of the normal school, approximately 135 institutions existed, enrolling 27,000 students. By 1920 that number had fallen to only sixty nine, and by 1933, there were no more than fifty public normal schools in existence.¹²²

Many state normal schools did successfully complete the transition into becoming teachers colleges. In some cases, this simply meant a change in name, while in other cases, it

¹²¹ Lucas, *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century.*, p. 55.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.54

meant a revamping of curricula, practices, and general organization.¹²³ As recorded by Harper, the transition process involved amending several aspects of the normal school. According to Harper, many normal schools offered programs only two years in length. Adopting the term “college” in their title meant normal schools needed to enrich their curricula by adding one to two years to the length of the coursework the school’s offered. In addition, normal schools needed to gain the legal right to grant degrees to those students who successfully completed a full four years of coursework. A successful transition also meant securing the necessary financial means and popular support from the state and from other institutions of higher learning. Harper also argued that in order for normal school’s to successfully transition into teachers colleges, they must, as institutions, prevent other colleges and universities from forcing normal schools out of the field of preparing high school and special teachers. As schools of learning, Harper reiterates, they must preserve their identity and distinctive traits as teachers colleges in order to survive.

Eventually, in 1908, the Department of Normal Schools of the National Education Association, in order to assist normal schools in the smooth transition to teachers colleges, drew up a statement of policy for all state normal schools. Through regulative isomorphic pressure state normal schools were compelled to change not only their title, but other aspects of the institution which made them less desirable as institutions of higher learning. The statement made by the department of normal school’s suggested that first, all state normal school’s drop the word “normal” from their title in order to rid these institutions of any stigmas associated with the word normal. Second, the department also suggested that these schools make high school graduation, or an equivalent education, a basis for admission to the standard normal coursework, just as other colleges and universities required high school graduation upon entrance to their

¹²³ Dunham, *Colleges of the Forgotten Americans*.

schools. They recommended that all state normal schools be responsible for the preparation of elementary and secondary teachers, that curricula in each program follow a similar trajectory at each institution, and that the curricula be broad enough in scope that it educates pupils in all phases of special preparation demanded by the public schools. Finally, the department recognized that state normal schools were not the only agent for the training of teachers, but strongly recommended these institutions establish well-organized departments of research in order to provide solutions to problems affecting education and school life. The state normal schools that persisted as teacher's colleges underwent these transformations that aligned them more closely with institutions which dominated the field of higher education. Those normal schools that did not adopt these changes closed their doors and simply ceased to exist.

The Case of the Iowa State Normal School

The Iowa State Normal School did successfully transition into a teacher's college; but, the transition did not occur without conflict and resistance from faculty, alumni, and other education leaders within the institution and outside of it. Though the change in title was the institutions most public form of change, it was only a small part of the adjustments the institution made. Other program modifications included curricular changes, the addition of secondary teacher training programs, the adoption of a graded system of faculty rank and other forms of department organization, and adopting a one-state board administrative system. Ultimately, the changes made by the institution at Cedar Falls were a result of a combination of coercive and mimetic isomorphic pressures. By adopting the institutional changes it did, the Iowa State

Normal School was successfully able to transition into a Teacher's College elevating its status as an institution of higher education.

Homer H. Seerley, who served as president of the institution from 1886 to 1928, was a key element to the success of the Iowa State Normal School. His leadership abilities helped to launch the state normal school into becoming a teacher's college. Not only did Seerley have confidence in his institution, but he firmly believed in teachers, education, and the normal idea. His leadership abilities, involvement in teacher organizations and conferences, and his belief in continuing education are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Homer Seerley and Managing Change in a Period of Institutional Transformation

From 1890 to 1915, the Iowa State Normal School went through many changes including curricular additions and developments, department restructuring, and a name change, to name a few. Shortly before this time period, in 1886 the school inaugurated its second president, Homer H. Seerley. By the end of his tenure as president, Seerley had become a well-respected leader and a strong advocate for continuing normal education, especially at his institution and other state normal schools and teachers colleges across the country.

President Seerley devoted his life to education. His career, first as a teacher, then as superintendent of public schools, and finally as president of the state normal school, spanned over six decades (his tenure as president of the Iowa State Normal School lasting from his inauguration in 1886 to his resignation in 1928; a period which spanned all the changes discussed in the previous chapter). His peers considered him a champion of teachers and a nationally recognized leader in the field of education. Throughout his career, he advocated for the betterment of educational institutions associated with the training of teachers. He also worked to incorporate agricultural education and country school teacher training courses into the curriculum of normal training colleges. In addition to running the Iowa State Normal School, Seerley spoke at many professional conferences regarding education. He prompted discussions concerning the need for normal schools to demonstrate their capability in training teachers of a superior quality.

Upon his acceptance of the presidency of the Iowa State Normal School, Homer H. Seerley faced many challenges. Though his institution had been open for a little more than a

decade, it lacked many resources, chief among them money, buildings and equipment, and a fully operational library. Despite many pleas to the government for much needed financial support, the Iowa State Normal School conducted its business with very limited financial resources. Additionally, though Seerley believed in the purpose of the state normal school, part of his role as president meant defending his institution against criticisms concerning the quality of education that normal offered, especially when compared to the State University of Iowa and the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Seerley felt that in order to elevate the status of his institution, he would need to ensure the successful adoption of institutional standards set by other leading post-secondary schools. Though he advocated for several changes at his normal school, he strongly believed in the normal idea and the value of an institution devoted specifically to the training of not only public school teachers, but leaders and administrators as well.

President Seerley devoted much of his scholarship to the advancement of normal schools and the normal idea. Through lectures and addresses given at local and national conferences, Seerley shared his research and personal thoughts on education with other educational professionals throughout Iowa and the Midwest. In an address given to the Iowa State Teachers Association in Des Moines in December of 1898, he discussed the destiny of public schools and the organizational development and management of these institutions. His speech, *The American School and the American People*, challenged school leaders to think bigger, expand curricula, and enhance their institutions to fit the needs of their communities. He acknowledged the growth of the high school and what that meant for normal schools and teacher education. By adopting curricula associated with the training of high school teachers, normal institutions could increase their clientele and gain access to more resources. According to Seerley, change was necessary in

order to promote the normal school idea. He dared leaders not to be afraid of change. President Seerley claimed that the American doctrine expansion “belonged as much to educational organizations and instructional practices as it did to commerce, manufacturers, and the government as the new century witnessed change in school organization, school management and school policy.”¹²⁴ He wanted school officials to especially acknowledge the important role normal schools played in the future of education, especially if they adopted programs for the purpose of training public school administrators and high school teachers. He wanted school leaders to admit that public demand for this type of education was growing, and normal schools were institutions which could supply this type of teacher training which would produce adequately trained secondary education teachers.¹²⁵

President Seerley viewed program offerings of normal schools as a key component to its academic standing. He felt that normals reserved the right to train teachers for secondary schools. He also shared his belief in the importance of building superior curriculums for high school teachers. At the meeting of the National Education Association of the United States in St. Paul Minnesota in 1914, President Seerley, along with other education leaders, discussed the opportunities for normal schools regarding the preparation of teachers for secondary schools.¹²⁶ He presented a lecture to members of the association in which he argued that the normal school had to provide courses of study in high school teacher training that when compared to other institutions, was superior in quality. He stressed that normal schools cultivated the best

¹²⁴ Homer H. Seerley, "The American School and the American People," *Journal of Proceedings of the State Teachers Association of Iowa* (1898), p. 402.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ "Special Report of the President on the Annual Meeting of the National Education Association " (Cedar Falls The University of Northern Iowa Archives 1914), p. 1-3.

atmosphere for the preparation of teachers devoted to high school teaching. After all, teacher training in all fields of study was the primary role of the normal school.¹²⁷

Seerley also addressed the social efficiency movement in many of his lectures presented to other education leaders. A champion of the social efficiency movement himself, he felt that smoothly running high schools and colleges were key to the success of public education. In more than one speech, Seerley challenged schools to meet the same efficiency standards which existed in the business community by implementing “better methods of instruction” and providing differentiated curriculum which could better prepare individuals for different roles in society. He said “it is apparent to anyone who can read the signs of the times and is capable of drawing conclusions therefrom, that the public, in every progressive community, is not satisfied with the degree of efficiency that the schools show in management, conditions, and definite results.”¹²⁸ Seerley believed schools, and most especially normal schools, needed to change in order to meet the standards and expectations of the public. For Seerley, change was a necessary element in the process of normal schools finding a place among leading education institutions.

Supporting the Teaching Profession and the Normal Idea

Because Seerley presided over a state normal school, these institutions became one of his chief concerns as evidenced by his many lectures on the topic. Throughout his career, he concentrated on fixing what he considered to be defects in the normal schools. The defects, he claimed, were responsible for the many criticisms brought against normal schools. At the National Education Association in Minneapolis on July 10, 1902, he discussed the normal school and its peculiar status; especially when compared to other higher education institutions across the

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Seerley, Homer H, "The American School and the American People," *Journal of Proceedings of the State Teacher's Association of Iowa* (1898): 402

country.¹²⁹ He touched on how the normal school movement had been met with much ridicule. This ridicule, he argued, was responsible for delayed progress and proper development of the normals.¹³⁰ According to Seerley, normals gained a poor academic reputation because they offered short and simple courses of study as a preparation for a career in education. Critics claimed the normal school curriculum disregarded the traditions and theories of the system of higher education.¹³¹ Additionally, according to critics, normal schools did not produce enough scholarship. He also felt that normal schools did not create an intellectual culture which satisfied the growing demand of the strongest, the best, and the most promising students who personally looked forward to education as a career. The critics claimed normal schools conducted business on cheap plans, had meager equipment, and hired a staff with limited scholarly ability and narrow experience in education.¹³²

Seerley met these accusations by declaring that normal schools “are, and of right ought to be, great public institutions, because they have such a great province and are rightly expected to perform the great public service and a great way.”¹³³ Seerley truly believed the purpose of the normal schools and in the service they provided their communities. He fought ardently to ensure their survival and acceptance in the education community. He valued the normal school idea so much, that in 1913, he chaired the Organization for Normal Schools. His duties in this position included delegating and heading a committee for normal schools which gathered data and

¹²⁹ "Defects in the Normal Schools That Are Responsible for the Opposition and Criticism Urged Sgainst Them in Many Parts of the United States," ed. The State Normal School of Cedar Falls (University of Northern Iowa Archives 1902).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

generated a report on the statistics of normal schools. The committee worked to defend the status quo of normal institutions.¹³⁴

Seerley was also passionate about teacher pay. Seerley took it upon himself to advocate for higher teacher salaries. He hoped by raising teacher pay, the normal school could obtain better trained teachers.¹³⁵ In several letters, faculty members requested an increase in pay to help with the cost of living. Seerley argued to the senate that the salaries of the teachers of the state normal schools were hardly commensurate to their work. Pay was so low, he claimed, it did not adequately support living expenses and general needs of the faculty.¹³⁶ Seerley believed better wages for teachers in general meant common schools could be able to secure more competent teachers.¹³⁷ In several statements made to affiliates of the normal board of trustees, and later to the state board of education, President Seerley urged members to consider raising teacher salaries as it could aid in attracting more confident and better prepared faculty members at the state normal school. Because salaries at the normal school were so low, procuring, encouraging, and keeping competent faculty remained difficult. Seerley wanted salaries commensurate with faculty experience, especially for women. In their consideration of matters related to teacher pay, Seerley urged the board to especially consider raising the salaries of women faculty to be more on par with that of the men's salaries.¹³⁸

When the Carnegie Foundation of the Advancement of Teachers announced its plan to give pensions to long-time teachers of colleges and universities, it was only natural for Homer

¹³⁴ "Preliminary Report of the Committee of Eleven on a Plan of Normal School Statistics," *National Education Association of the United States Journal of Proceedings and Addresses* Fiftieth Annual Meeting (1912).

¹³⁵ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Honorable J.B. Knoepfler*, 1900. Letter. From University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886 – 1928.

¹³⁶ "Report of the President for the Normal School," (Cedar Falls The University of Northern Iowa Archives 1900).

¹³⁷ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Superintendent Clarence Messer*, 1907. Letter. From University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹³⁸ "Report of the President " (Cedar Falls The State Normal School of Iowa, 1908).

Seerley to take the necessary steps which would afford those same benefits to teachers at the state normal school. By changing the name of the institution to the state teacher's college, Seerley hoped it could meet the requirements put in place by the Carnegie Foundation for pension plans. This institutional shift was only the beginning of a period marked by great change. During the early portion of the twentieth century, the Iowa State Normal School also experienced a transfer of governance, and departmental restructure. It also faced revolutionary state coordination plans which threatened the prosperity of the institution. These changes signified the struggle of the Iowa State Normal School to gain relevant status as a legitimate institution in higher education. Over the course of his presidency, Seerley became a champion of isomorphic change to guarantee the survival and future success of his institution.

This research emphasizes Seerley's involvement in matters related to institutional development and change; however, he was not the only person involved in promoting change for the school. Other constituents worked to ensure its survival among the other state-supported institutions of higher education in the state of Iowa. No doubt faculty and students played a significant role in the development of their school. The student newspaper, first *The Normal Eye* and then *The College Eye*, provided articles and stories through which student opinions were observed. The college paper also informed readers of the involvement of students and alumni in critical resolutions regarding the future of the school. Stories detailed actions taken by student groups to sway opinions and influence decisions concerning the institutions name, curriculum, and governing body, among other things.

While faculty most likely had strong opinions concerning the direction of the school, they were not reported in the faculty minutes. While a record did exist, it was not consistent, and did not reveal talking points in conversations, discussions, or opinions of the faculty regarding any

observations of pressures on the institution to change. Mostly, the faculty minutes concerned motions to admit student to certain programs, granting permission to students to graduate early, or approval of thesis topics. The faculty minutes record did not contain any reports on the transition stages. The only mention of a name change was the motion that was moved and then carried by the faculty. No documentation of discussions or voting record existed concerning the motion.

It was not the intent of this study to discount the importance of the other key players involved including students, faculty, alumni, trustees, or other constituents of institution in the various transitional processes of the school. Certainly the view point of these people was relevant in determining the future of the Iowa State Normal School. The fact that Homer H. Seerley is a focal point for observing institutional pressures is a result of the his well-preserved historical record. Additionally, Seerley maintained a large portion of his letters of correspondence during his time as president of the institution. His account of the key situations at play spanned over thousands of pages of personal correspondence, institution reports, and various other historical artifacts which the University of Northern Iowa preserved. By maintaining such comprehensive records coupled with the length of his presidency, Homer Seerley created a personal, historic, and broad account of the events affecting his institution during the time period he governed it. Thus, his records provided the best focal point for observing pressures on the institution and the types of isomorphic change that impacted the school.

In addition to participating in national education conferences, and speaking at various teacher organizations, Homer Seerley believed in the value of continuing his own education as well. He started his career earning a Bachelor of Philosophy in 1873, and then obtained his Bachelor of Didactics in 1875. During this time he also taught at a country school in the state of

Iowa. In 1876 he received his Master of Arts from the University of Iowa, and took a position as a principal of a high school. After his continued success as a principal, he was elected city superintendent. By 1898 he had enrolled back at the University of Iowa and finished his law degree (L.L.D.) by 1901.¹³⁹

By involving himself in education research and teacher associations, and by continuing his own education, Homer Seerley kept himself apprised of the current issues and challenges facing public school education. Additionally, his participation in the Organization for Normal Schools made him keenly aware of the problems facing state normal schools on a national scale. Seerley used the knowledge he gained from his involvement in the various education associations to assess his institution's status and welfare among the other leading education institutions in his state and across the country. Seerley had exceptional leadership ability in that he was able to think about and look to the future of normal school education while also monitoring the situation in his state and at his institution. He had an uncanny ability to identify mechanisms which secured the well-being of his school and implemented those mechanisms with positive results. Home Seerley was the linchpin to his school's success, especially during the first decade of the twentieth century, a time of great transition for the Iowa State Normal School.

One of the many changes Seerley implemented included curricular adoptions which provided stronger academic training and professional development for teachers at all levels. When Seerley began his tenure as president of the state normal school, only three options existed for students enrolling in courses to obtain their teaching certificate.¹⁴⁰ However, by the time

¹³⁹ Iowa State Normal School. "Annual Catalog." Edited by the State Normal School, Burlington: The Hawkeye Company Printer, 1900. p. 4

¹⁴⁰ Iowa State Normal School. "Annual Catalog." Edited by the State Normal School. Burlington: The Hawkeye Company Printer, 1886. p. 20-22.

Seerley resigned as president, the state teachers college adopted a kindergarten training program, endorsements in different fields such as history, civics, and science (among others), the expansion of various programs including agriculture education, industrial science, and music, and perhaps the most important, the addition of a bachelor's degree. All of these development and more are discussed in further detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Teacher Education in the State of Iowa and the Instructors who Taught It

As discussed in previous chapters, the status of the state normal school fell victim to skepticisms regarding their academic quality, and the Iowa State Normal School was no exception. Sharply aware of this problem, President Seerley actively sought ways in which to gradually improve the status quo of his school. From the time it opened its doors in 1877 to 1915, the Iowa State Normal School (and later Teacher's College) underwent many transitions, chief among them curricular and program development. Prior to his acceptance of the presidency, the Iowa State Normal School only enrolled a couple hundred students under the tutelage of less than ten faculty, and the courses available to finish the requirements for the teaching diploma were minimal and random at best.¹⁴¹ Seerley worked to develop his curriculum to provide students with a more structured academic plan for completing the requirements for certification. He also worked with faculty and staff to enhance already existing programs while also adding additional majors such as Kindergarten for various educational purposes. In order to ensure the adaption of successful changes, Seerley looked to universities and colleges whose programs distinguished them as contemporary, dominant institutions in their field. Over time, the programs offered at the Iowa State Normal School became remarkably similar to the education programs offered at the state university in Iowa City. Seerley enacted changes due to the mimetic pressures on his institution.

¹⁴¹ Iowa State Normal School. "Annual Catalog." Edited by the State Normal School. Burlington: The Hawkeye Compnay Printer, 1880. p. 4-7.

ISNS Curricula in the first Twenty Years

In 1887, ten years after its very first academic session, the Iowa State Normal School employed only nine faculty members, including president J.C. Gilcrest. It had fourteen academic units which consisted of didactics, psychology, language and literature, mathematics, penmanship, drawing and accounts, geography and history, methods, natural science, physical science, gymnastics, and vocal and instrumental music. Students selected from a smorgasbord of class offerings to complete the requirements for their teaching diploma.¹⁴² Because only nine faculty members were responsible for teaching all courses offered, each individual faculty member had an overwhelming and diversified course load. This potentially led to less devotion on the part of the teacher to each individual course which may have resulted in lower standards of academic performance by the students. In spite of problematic issues which may have arisen regarding teacher to student ratio and availability of faculty, enrollments at ISNS continued to grow. In 1887 the course catalog reported 435 students in attendance, up from 260 students in 1877. By 1894, the number of students enrolled exceeded one thousand, and six additional teachers joined the faculty.

The Iowa State Normal School did not have stringent enrollment requirements even by 1894. It required all students to be at least 16 years of age, and to declare their intent to teach in the state of Iowa upon completion of program requirements. Depending on their level of education upon entrance to the school, students either enrolled in the four-years' course, the three-years' course, the supplementary course, the professional course, or the special course.

¹⁴² Because of the random selection of classes listed in the course catalog, and due to the way in which the course catalog was organized, it wasn't clear on the precise requirements for graduation, nor was it clear on how many semesters students needed to be enrolled in order to obtain their diploma from the institution.

Students who enrolled in the four-year course attended the Iowa State Normal School for four years, and upon completion of the required studies, “were qualified for the higher positions of public school work” and received the degree of Master of Didactics. During the freshman year, the course required students to take entry level general education courses including classes in English composition and grammar, history, geography, penmanship, reading, and word analysis. During their second, third, and fourth years of schooling, they enrolled in additional general education courses such as rhetoric, English literature, algebra, geometry, chemistry, elocution, and botany.

The three-years’ course ensured preparation in all subjects required for state certificates. The catalog informed candidates that this course furnished the teacher with knowledge necessary to successfully teach in the public schools of the state. At the completion of the requirements for this course, students received their Bachelor of Didactics degree. Students enrolled in the three-year course were required to take the same type of general education classes as those students enrolled in the four-year course; however, they did not need to complete as many credit hours in general course studies. All students who enrolled in either the state diploma or bachelor’s course elected an emphasis of either Latin or English. Those students who elected an English emphasis completed more advanced work in English such as history of English, history of language, and English classics. Those students who elected a Latin emphasis replaced the required advanced English coursework with Latin coursework such as Cesar & Vergil, Cicero’s orations, and Cesar.

Within their first two years, the Iowa State Normal School required all students to take all three methods courses in education and foundational courses. The courses included methods in reading and language, methods in numbers and science, and methods in “other subjects.” The general aim of these courses was to lead students “in a practical application of educational

principals in teaching.”¹⁴³ Foundation courses included principles of education, school management and sanitation, and school laws and school practice. Before completion of the program, additional coursework required in education included history of education, psychology, and science of education. Both courses required students have six semesters of practice teaching and to complete a thesis.

Students seeking to be admitted to the Iowa State Normal School who had previously graduated from an accredited high school were admitted to “the supplementary course.” Students who entered this course received “the supplementary work” necessary to prepare them professionally for teaching and mostly enrolled in professional classes in education such as didactics and methods.¹⁴⁴ While these students completed some advanced general education courses, they spent most of their time in the methods and foundation courses in education. They completed the same practice teaching requirements as the four-year and three-year course students while also completing a thesis.¹⁴⁵

The professional course was a course offered to college graduates seeking teacher training after undergraduate education.¹⁴⁶ These students enrolled in foundation and psychology coursework. They studied didactics, normal institute work, village school work, country school work, and professional literature. Students enrolled in the special course received training in kindergarten teaching. They enrolled in vocal music courses, drawing, special methods coursework, school law, and were required to complete practice teaching.

¹⁴³ Iowa State Normal School, "Catalog and Circular," ed. State Normal School (Burlington: The Hawkeye Company Printer, 1899)., p. 44

¹⁴⁴ "Annual Catalog," ed. State Normal School (Cedar Falls: Gazette Book and Job Printing House 1894)., p. 20

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 19

¹⁴⁶ In 1894 The Iowa State Normal School Catalog reported that only two women were enrolled in the professional course of study.

While the four-year course, the three-year course, and the supplementary course had different requirements in terms of liberal arts education, there did not seem to be any methodology to the programs in terms of sequence of courses. They only required that students have a broad education base, and the education base seemed to echo courses offered in high school curricula.

As the school continued to grow over the course of the next fifteen years, student enrollments increased, and faculty and staff grew in number as well. The academic catalog of 1901 reported a total of 1,916 students in attendance, and employed over forty faculty and staff. Students could still enroll in the four-year course and obtain a Master of Didactics degree, the three-year course and earn their Bachelor of Didactics degree, or enroll in special courses. Both the three-year and four-year courses had separate degree plans available to students who entered with a high school diploma. Those students who entered the state normal school with a high school degree had one less year of required coursework because they were exempt from taking the general education courses required of those students who did not have a high school diploma. Special courses were available to students who enrolled at the state normal school to obtain teacher training in public school music, physical training, manual training, drawing, or domestic science. To acquire certificates in these fields, students took one year of course electives in their designated subject area, and a second year of coursework in the department of professional studies. They also completed credit hours in practice teaching prior to earning their state certificate.

In 1901, the state normal school also added additional majors for students to select from including English, Latin, mathematics, history and civics, and what it termed an “elective” major. In all of the different majors, within the first year of attending the state normal school,

students were required to complete credit hours in English, U.S. history, mathematics, and science. The school required more credit hours in course work specific to the elected major. For example, if a student entered into the state diploma course as an English major, the program required he complete more credit hours in English coursework than a mathematics major, who completed more credit hours in math courses.

During 1901, it also added a professional course of study for special primary teachers. Designed for students desiring professional preparation as primary teachers, this course was a two-years' course of study. It required instruction in professional subjects and in scholastic subjects deemed by the state normal school as essential in the training of primary school teachers. The catalog informed candidates in this program "it is not to be assumed that the course is an easy one because of the brief time allotted for such preparation, as the intention is to concentrate the time and the efforts of the students upon the work necessary demanded for fitness in primary instruction."¹⁴⁷ The requirements for entrance into this course of study were somewhat different from the requirements in other courses of study offered by the state normal school. Candidates wishing to enroll in this course of study had to have earned their country certificate averaging ninety percent in their courses. Persons who took high school or equivalent college coursework were considered for admission as well. Candidates also had to have completed one successful year of teaching in the school room, "properly certified by competent persons" such as school superintendents. Once students completed all of the course requirements, The Board of Trustees issued a school certificate stating the completion of the course work. The catalog noted that the school did not consider students who completed this program "graduates"

¹⁴⁷ Iowa State Normal School, "Catalog and Circular", ed. State Normal School (Burlington: The Hawkeye Company Printer, 1901). p. 46

of the school, "as only those granted degrees are so ranked."¹⁴⁸ The courses completed by students in this program included three semesters of methods coursework, psychology, school management, child study, history of education, and three semesters of practice teaching. The course also required students to complete credits in English, reading, geography, arithmetic, music, and math.¹⁴⁹

The professional department at the Iowa State Normal School offered the coursework specific to teacher training. As of 1901, the professional department split the coursework into three different categories: psychology and didactics, the organization and work of the school, and school government. The catalog listed Elementary Psychology as the first course under "the psychology and didactics" portion of the professional department. In this course, students learned about the nervous system and how they connected to mental life, mental imagery "as related to perception, memory, imagination, symbols and language", and habit and conduct.¹⁵⁰ In the course entitled "Theoretical Education", students learned about "different theories regarding management and methods." The course entitled "Practical Education" informed students on school management, fundamental principles of school organization, instruction, and discipline. It also discussed the legal rights and duties of teachers in Iowa. According to the catalog, in these courses, a standard text was used as a basis for class work supplemented by other required readings. The Organization and Work of the School informed students about "the nature and aims of the school, its support, and relation to the state and society." It included lectures and assigned readings on the location of a school house, heating, ventilation, and contagious diseases. Students also learned about how to organize and classify schools, and how to organize

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50

¹⁵⁰ Iowa State Normal School, "Annual Catalog," ed. Iowa State Normal School (Cedar Falls: Gazette Book and Job Printing House 1890), p. 87

curricula in schools.¹⁵¹ School Government dealt with ethical principles, personality of the teacher, organization and occupation of the school, and authority, rules, and punishment. According to the catalog, the state normal school required every student who obtained a degree to complete a thesis.¹⁵² Students prepared an “actual study in educational management or theory of instruction” to demonstrate that the student could investigate educational problems.

Education Coursework at The State University of Iowa through 1915

At The State University of Iowa, The Collegiate Department housed the program of pedagogy.¹⁵³ The Collegiate Department offered four general courses of study – one classical, two philosophical, and one general scientific.¹⁵⁴ The state university had very specific admission requirements for candidates seeking enrollment, including number of credits required for admission and expectations in work completed in grammar school. Each of the general courses of study had variations on the number of credits required in Latin, Greek, and electives, though all four expected candidates to have 9 credits of mathematics, 5 credits of English, and four credits of history.¹⁵⁵ Each course of study had a detailed list of expected completed classes prior to admittance to the course. Upon admittance, the state university required all students to take coursework in Greek, Latin, English, math, ancient history, and military drill in their first and second years. After the sophomore year, student schedules differed depending on their major, as each course required fifteen or more elective credit hours.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Iowa State Normal School, "Catalog and Circular." ed. Iowa State Normal School (Cedar Falls: Gazette Book and Job Printing House 1890) , p. 88

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 91

¹⁵³ The University of Iowa, "Annual Catalog ", ed. The University of Iowa (Iowa City The University of Iowa Press 1899).

¹⁵⁴ "Annual Catalog," ed. The University of Iowa (Iowa City The University of Iowa Press 1900),, p. 19

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p.35

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 35

If students elected to take classes in pedagogy, they selected from courses such as General Pedagogy, Philosophy of Education, Teaching and Governing, History of Education, Organization and Administration, School Systems, Child Study, Secondary Education, Seminary in the Theory and Practice of Teaching, and Seminary in Secondary Education. The state university required all candidates who desired to obtain a Bachelor of Didactics degree to take three full terms work in pedagogy.¹⁵⁷ The course catalog instructed students who intended to teach in public schools to select their undergraduate work with reference to the subject they desired to teach in the public high school.¹⁵⁸

The State University of Iowa also offered courses of study for graduates in pedagogy. The catalog informed students seeking advanced degrees “that no set course of study had been established to any advanced degree because each candidate pursued an independent line of study.”¹⁵⁹ The courses offered to students desiring to obtain a graduate degree in pedagogy included School Systems, Child Study, Public School Conditions, and Elementary Education in Germany. The catalog noted that students who enrolled in the two courses also open to undergraduates (Child Study and Public School Conditions) would be required to conduct a special study of one or more of the subjects included in the coursework in addition to the requirements expected of the undergraduate students.¹⁶⁰

In general, the courses of study available to students seeking to obtain their bachelor of didactics degree from the State University of Iowa remained unchanged until, in 1900, the Collegiate Department changed its name to The College of Liberal Arts. The courses of study offered by The College of Liberal Arts stayed the same (four general courses of study – one

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 95

Classical, two Philosophical, and one General Scientific); however, the school added the courses of Civil Engineering and Electrical Engineering. Credit hours required for all candidates seeking to enroll in the College of Liberal Arts also remained the same (9 credits of Mathematics, five credits of English, and four credits of History).

Under the new college of liberal arts the admission requirements portion of the course catalog included a new section entitled "Advanced Standing." In this portion of the catalog, the State University announced that students from approved colleges who brought proper credentials of work equal to the academic standards of the university were admitted to equal rank provided they entered no later than their senior year. It also informed candidates that graduated from the four years' course of The Iowa State Normal School would be admitted to "junior standing" without examination.¹⁶¹ The fact that the state university of Iowa only recognized the four-year degree as equivalent of two years of undergraduate work at their institution is informative of the value The State University of Iowa placed on the education received at The Iowa State Normal School. (This will be discussed in greater detail at a later point in the chapter). Under the College of Liberal Arts, the Department of Pedagogy listed elementary courses and advanced courses. General Pedagogy (three terms), Teaching and Governing, History of Education, Journal Club, and Seminary in Secondary Education comprised the list of elementary courses.

According to the catalog, General Pedagogy was designed primarily for students who had no experience in teaching. This course, taught in lecture format, supplemented materials in lectures by required readings and written and oral reports. Some of the topics covered by this introductory course included: functions of the mind, laws of mental development and general methods of teaching based on general forms of the mind's activity.¹⁶² This course also included

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 70

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p. 117

special methods for teaching certain subjects. Teaching and Governing, also a lecture based course, instructed students on the fundamental principles of methods of instruction. Journal Club was a weekly meeting designed for students to discuss current education literature.

Advanced coursework in Pedagogy included: Educational Psychology, Philosophy of Education, Child Study, Organization and Administration, School Systems in the United States, Foreign School Systems, and Seminar in the Theory and Practice of Teaching. The Philosophy of Education course delivered lectures on varieties of educational ideas at different times among different educational thinkers such as Plato, Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, Hall, Harris, Rein, and Dewey. The child study course included lectures and discussions on the history of the subject, a careful study of the literature, special methods employed, and the value of child study to teachers. Coursework in Organization and Administration devoted most of its time to understanding the problems of organization and administration as they confronted the school superintendent or principal and the general duties and powers of public school leaders. The Seminar in the Theory and Practice of Teaching was open only to advanced students in Pedagogy, and was a course which allowed students the opportunity for “special investigation of simple education problems.”¹⁶³

In 1902, the Pedagogy Department in the College of Liberal Arts became The Science and Art of Education. The department also added a course entitled Principles of Education which considered the meaning of education from the standpoint of psychology, neurology, biology, anthropology, and sociology. It was a foundations course for students beginning the education program at Iowa. The department also added a course entitled Methodology and Technique of

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.120

Instruction which considered the fundamental principles of methodology of teaching.¹⁶⁴ The final course added to the curriculum was called “The High School” which the catalog referred to as “a practical consideration of the problems of the high school” and included lectures on the place of the high school in an educational system, its relation to the community, and its relation to adolescence.

In 1903 the education department renamed itself again and was simply noted as “Education.” The curriculum in the department did not change, nor did the course requirements. In 1905, the department of education added “Herbartian Doctrines” to its list of available courses. This course was not available to undergraduates. All other coursework in the graduate program was similar to courses offered to undergraduates; however, graduate students had additional requirements in order to complete the course. The graduate program also added “Graduate Seminary” which was a course designed to assist graduate students in original research and thesis work for their advanced degree. In 1907 the education again added a new course to its list of offerings for undergraduates entitled “Contemporary Educational Literature.” This class replaced the “Journal Club” course from the previous years. However, the intent of the course remained the same – students met weekly to discuss current education literature.¹⁶⁵

By 1907, the Department of Education split from The College of Liberal Arts and formed its own school within The State University of Iowa devoted to training and research in education. According to the catalog, the School of Education based its curriculum on the assumption that

“a liberal education constituted the best preparation for the high school teacher and while students seeking to become trained as secondary teachers still enrolled in courses in their major field of study in the college of liberal arts, extended preparation devoted

¹⁶⁴ "Annual Catalog ", ed. The University of Iowa (Iowa City The University of Iowa Press 1902)., p. 134

¹⁶⁵ "Annual Catalog ", ed. The University of Iowa (Iowa City The University of Iowa Press 1907)., p. 130

specifically to the science of education is held in the school of education”¹⁶⁶.

The minimum preparation for teachers at the state university included six semester hours of psychology, and fourteen semester hours in the school of education. Additionally, all requirements for the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees required sixteen semester hours of attendance. The curriculum offered by the new School of Education remained the same as it had been in 1906, apart from the added class mentioned previously.

In 1909, the state university’s school of education added a section in the catalog entitled “Scope and Ames behind the Philosophy of Teacher Training.”¹⁶⁷ According to this excerpt, The State University believed a close connection existed between the school of education and the graduate college. According to the catalog, a large portion of the students who entered the university’s graduate college expected to be teachers at some point. Therefore, the school of education offered advanced, specialized courses of instruction of which students who desired to obtain a Master of Arts in Education or Master of Science in Education, and Doctor of Philosophy in Education, could enroll. By providing education to graduate students, and conferring doctoral degrees to those who complete the requirements, showed that the state university placed importance on scholarship and valued the prestige it supplied the program.

Changes at Iowa State Normal School

In 1903, three years after The State University of Iowa announced in its course catalog of 1900 that it recognized graduates of the state normal school’s four-year degree as having “junior standing” in their undergraduate programs, The Iowa State Normal School added a Bachelor of Arts in Education. According to the catalog, this diploma was the highest scholastic honor

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 130

¹⁶⁷ "Annual Catalog," ed. The University of Iowa (Iowa City The University of Iowa Press 1909).

conferred by the Board of Trustees “corresponding in excellence and extent scholarship to similar degrees granted by colleges and universities” and had “a definite amount of technical instruction and training in the science and practice of teaching.”¹⁶⁸ According to the catalog, students who graduated from The Iowa State Normal School with their Bachelor or Master of Didactics degree could be admitted as candidates for the Bachelor of Arts. If students entered with their Master of Didactics they completed an additional two years of work, and those entering with their Bachelor of didactics completed an additional three years of work instead of completing the regular four-year program plan.¹⁶⁹ In addition to offering the Bachelor of Arts degree, The State Normal School still offered a Master of Didactics (with a regular course of four years or the three year plan for high school graduates, and the professional course of one year), a Bachelor of Didactics (with a regular course of three years or the high school graduate course of two years), the Primary Teacher’s Certificate. Special courses continued to be available for students seeking training to become teachers of public school music, physical training, manual training, drawing, or domestic science. To acquire certificates in these fields, students took one year of course electives in their designated subject area, and a second year of coursework in the department of professional studies.

Candidates applying to the Bachelor of Arts course at the state normal school had more stringent admission requirements than students who enrolled in other courses at the school.¹⁷⁰ These candidates had to prove “credible ability in the use of the English language and spelling, legible penmanship, readiness and correct speaking and composition.” According to the catalog,

¹⁶⁸ Iowa State Normal School, "Bulletin," ed. State Normal School (Cedar Falls: The HawkEye Company Printer, 1903), p. 27

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 27

¹⁷⁰ Admission requirements for all other coursework stipulated that students be at least 16 years of age and declare their intent to teach in public schools in the state of Iowa upon completion of the specified requirements for each course.

students met the condition of admission by passing an entrance examination. The school required that any student who did not pass the examination or showed deficiencies in any area, take additional classes within the first year. Other specified prerequisites for entrance to the Bachelor of Arts program included: English grammar, arithmetic (including the metric system), and general geography. These students also had to present credentials from secondary school certifying fifteen years of work selected from the following lines of study: English and Literature, rhetoric, algebra, plain and solid geometry, trigonometry, physics, chemistry, zoology, botany and physiography, Latin lessons (including Cesar, Cicero and Virgil), history and civics, and foreign languages.¹⁷¹ By adding the degree of Bachelor of Arts to the available programs at the institution, Seerley demonstrated his desire for the school to be viewed by other institution of higher learning (The State University of Iowa among them) as a valuable teacher training school. Additionally, by adding a Bachelor of Arts to the available degree options, the state normal school hoped to attract a larger number of potential students. By offering the same degree that The State University of Iowa and The College of Agriculture and Mechanic arts offered, the normal school hoped to impress future candidates, as well as the other higher status institutions.

Faculty at Iowa State Normal School and The State University of Iowa

By 1907, the faculty had grown to include just under seventy-five members with varying levels of professional experience and educational background. The catalog listed the faculty according to the programs in which they taught beginning with professional instruction in

¹⁷¹ Iowa State Normal School, "Bulletin," ed. State Normal School (Cedar Falls: The HawkEye Company Printer, 1903)

education, language and literature, mathematics, science, history and political science, drawing, penmanship and bookkeeping, physical training, manual training, and additional appointments. Faculty members listed as “professors” had been employed with the institution as full-time teachers for a period exceeding two years. Those faculty members listed as “Instructors” had full-time appointments but had only been working for the school for one to two years. Those teachers listed as “Assistants” were only employed with the school as part time faculty. At this time, no single professor in any of the departments acted as the “department chair.” All professors employed full time in each department had equal authority in decisions concerning department matters, even those teachers listed as “instructors” (they simply carried a title which distinguished them as “new” to the department).

The faculty employed by The Iowa State Normal School had varying levels of education and came from a variety of different institutions. Approximately twenty-seven percent of the faculty listed as either professors or instructors received some sort of training at the Iowa State Normal School, either a Master of Didactics or a Bachelor of Didactics, prior to their employment with the institution. Many of those professors trained at the normal school completed their Bachelor of Arts through The State University of Iowa. An additional twenty percent of the faculty received their training at other four-year colleges and universities in the state of Iowa. For example, Chauncy P. Calgrove, professor of Psychology and Didactics, received his Master of Arts from Upper Iowa. In fact, all of the professors who instructed classes in Professional Instruction in Education received their degree from a higher education institution in Iowa including Iowa Wesleyan, Cornell College, Simpson College, and Iowa College.¹⁷² An

¹⁷² Homer Seerley received his training at the State University of Iowa (he obtained his LL.D), George W. Samson received his Master of Science degree from Simpson College, G.W. Walters received his Master of Science from Iowa Wesleyan, Edith C. Buck obtained her Master of Arts degree from Iowa College, and George S. Dick obtained his Bachelor of Philosophy from Cornell College.

additional seven members of the faculty in departments other than Professional Instruction in Education received their degree from institutions in Iowa. Only three of the seventy four faculty members (including the president) obtained their terminal degree in their field of study. Seerley had his LL.d. degree from Iowa, Merchant obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Berlin in Latin, and Meyerholz earned his Ph.D. in Government (the catalog did not distinguish which institution conferred his degree).

Recall that the Department of Education at The State University of Iowa resided within the College of Liberal Arts until 1907, when it became its own college on the university's campus. Even after it became its own college, students enrolled to become high school teachers still took credit hours required in their major field of study (such as History, Math, Physics, etc.) in the College of Liberal Arts. In the College of Liberal Arts (and including later The College of Education) the state university, similar to the state normal school, employed faculty members of varying backgrounds. However, unlike The Iowa State Normal School, none of the full-time faculty received training at the state normal school, and all full-time faculty employed by the university had obtained at least their master's degree, if not their terminal degree. Also unlike The State Normal School, full-time faculty members employed by the university had titles which distinguished them by rank. The titles (in order of highest authority to lowest) given to teachers included professor, assistant professor, lecturer, instructor, assistant instructor, fellow, scholar, and assistant.¹⁷³

Many of the professors employed by The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at The State University of Iowa received their graduate education from some of the most prestigious universities across the country. Among colleges represented were Yale, University of Wisconsin,

¹⁷³ Fellows, scholars, and assistants were generally graduate level students employed by the university obtaining teaching experience through the positions they held.

Harvard, University of Michigan, Dartmouth, University of Nebraska, University of Pennsylvania, Cornell, Johns Hopkins University, Vanderbilt, and Columbia. Many of these colleges and universities were the leading institutions in their field.

By the academic year 1909-1910 the institution at Cedar Falls adopted significant changes recorded by the annual catalog. First, the institution's name successfully changed from the Iowa State Normal School to The Iowa State Teacher's College (a transformation which is discussed in greater detail in a later chapter). President Seerley reported that faculty instigated the name change movement. He also reported the primary purpose for the name change was so faculty could receive retirement benefits from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The fact that the name change movement came on the heels of the state university opening its own College of Education on its campus, may have indicated that President Seerley had other reasons for supporting the adoption of a new title for his school which removed the word "normal" and included the word "college." Over the course of his tenure as president, Seerley consistently advocated for change that raised the status of his school. After observing the changes adopted at the Iowa City campus, Seerley probably felt that in order for his institution to remain competitive, he needed to adopt changes that reflected the status quo of the newly erected College of Education at the state university.

Prior to changing the institution's name, starting in 1907 the state normal school began the process of implementing the same graded system of professor rank used the by State University of Iowa and other colleges. Before 1907, however, titles given to faculty merely distinguished the amount of time the school employed them. As a consequence, all of the professors shared equal rank, which created tension and conflict among faculty members in different departments. In 1909, the course catalog acknowledged the adoption of similar titles

used at The State University of Iowa to classify professors of different ranks and to establish heads of departments in the state normal school. The course catalog noted these changes its listing of faculty by department, recognizing department chairs, and reporting the new titles delegated to each member of the entire faculty of the school. The adoption of this graded system of faculty rank is another example of how mimetic pressures affected change at the state normal school.

Establishing department leadership and rank ordering faculty was a process that occurred over the course of many months. While some faculty members resisted the change, others welcomed it and believed it enabled the staff and the department to progress more smoothly. These changes, along with faculty responses, are discussed in further detail in chapter four.

Chapter 4

Mimicking University Trends in the Establishment of Department Leadership

The graded system of professorial rank wasn't adopted by colleges and universities until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to John R. Thelin, this new conception, referring to professor rank, was "essential to the creation of the university professoriate."¹⁷⁴ Positions of rank included instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. Most importantly, promotion and faculty rank became tied to institutions conferring tenure.¹⁷⁵ These titles became conventional during this period, and universities which adopted the system were tied more closely to academic professionalism. Due to mimetic isomorphic pressures, those institutions desiring to appear more legitimate and improve their status among other professional institutions of higher learning had to adopt this form of ranking faculty.

Before 1907, faculty at The Iowa State Normal School did not have titles establishing rank or department leadership. Rather, the title of professor, assistant, or instructor distinguished how long the particular teacher worked for the school and whether or not the institution employed the teacher part-time or full-time. If an employee only worked part time, the title given to him was "assistant." The school referred to full time faculty employed for one to two years as "instructor." Those faculty members who worked full time and had been employed with the school for longer than a period of two years were called "professor."¹⁷⁶ Additionally, no

¹⁷⁴ Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education.*, p. 128

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128

individual acted as department chair or in a similar capacity. In some cases, three or four persons shared responsibility for making decisions regarding which teachers taught specific courses and the general direction of the department. Due to the fact that no professor in any department had authority to make final decisions, discussions over curriculum and other aspects of the department often led to faculty infighting and problematic situations. Furthermore, if faculty problems remained unresolved, teachers took their grievances directly to the office of the president. As situations across campus became more tense, the president lost more time dealing with faculty problems rather than attending to his administrative duties. The issue concerning department leadership was a serious, practical problem which required immediate attention. In order to resolve this particular issue, faculty and the president looked to other institutions for examples of how to delegate power and a position of authority within the departments across campus.

Faculty Problems across Departments

In May of 1907 Ira Condit, who worked as a professor of the math department for the past nine years, wrote a letter to President Seerley describing his frustration with the current organization of the faculty at the state normal school. In his department, three professors acted in the same capacity as head of the math program, and attempted to lead the faculty in matters pertaining to math education. Additionally, each year, the faculty consistently fought over who would be teaching certain courses. In his letter, Condit described how faculty infighting over coursework hindered the progress of the department. Without anyone in a leadership position with the authority and power to make decisions, problems within the department continued to be unresolved. Condit requested that the school restructure the math department and delegate one

faculty member as the sole leader. Condit described how disagreements between professors were so bad, that curricular matters could not be discussed without arguments arising. He explained that he felt the current system was “fundamentally wrong and militated against the exercise and development of a broad scholarship and a faculty” and most importantly, it did not serve the best interests of the students. He compared running a department with multiple leaders to administering to the special interests of the school “with three presidents with equal power and equal jurisdiction. Nothing would be resolved.”¹⁷⁷ The lack of department leadership was a serious, practical problem and needed to be solved in order for the math program to move forward.

In his letter to the president, Condit suggested a method for organizing department professors which could potentially eliminate faculty fighting over who had the power to make decisions. He referred to his friends “qualified and experienced professors at The State University of Iowa” who previously explained to him how the state university adopted a graded system of faculty rank with specific definitions of the duties associated with each title given to all of the professors. He expressed that it was the opinion of these professors that faculty in university departments which were organized around one “department head” were far more successful in terms of department progress. Additionally, having someone with the power to make executive decisions during meetings in which faculty cannot agree would help ensure the success of the department and most certainly reduce heated disagreements.¹⁷⁸ Ira’s university friends felt their departments were highly successful and efficient compared to other departments in other school’s that did not adopt this type of faculty organization.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Condit, Ira S. *Ira S. Condit to Homer H. Seerley*, 1907. Letter. From University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

As Condit was a member of the faculty no doubt involved in conflicts himself, he grew concerned that his letter to the president may appear to other teachers as self-serving or a way by which he himself could obtain a higher position of authority within his department. Professor Condit explained to the president that his suggestions concerning the reorganization of faculty were not motivated by a desire to profit at the expense of others. Rather, he simply wanted to share what he learned through his friends and their experience with different structuring mechanisms. Condit articulated that for the school to progress successfully, the problem of the lack of department leadership, or in his case, too many faculty who assumed leadership roles, needed to be solved. Condit believed that a more specific, graded system of faculty rank could ensure better organization and superior mathematical training for students, while also promoting better educational progress for the math program. He concluded that “the teaching of teachers was a serious business” and the departments of the normal school should be organized to foster the most successful environment possible. He argued that this could not be done with the situation and circumstances that currently existed. He suggested the state normal school not hesitate in bringing this matter in front of the Board of Trustees so the school could take measures to resolve the practical problem of department leadership.

Condit was not the only professor to relay his dissatisfaction with the current system of organization and with the lack of department leadership. Much like the math department, discord among faculty the elocution and English programs existed due to their inability to make decisions. Ms. Margaret Oliver, teacher in the elocution program, also wrote to President Seerley about the “lack of harmony” in her department. She attributed the dysfunction to the fact that the program did not have a professor with any kind of executive decision making power, or with any kind authority. The situation in the department of elocution caused fights between teachers

among other frustrations. Tension between faculty in her department was not uncommon, and this tension created an environment not conducive to student learning. Professors constantly argued as to the proper direction of the department and without a department head, fights between teachers continued. Soon after Oliver's letter, additional faculty members in the school of elocution wrote to President Seerley requesting solutions to the frustrating situation in their department.

The Department of English experienced discord due to the lack of faculty organization and leadership. Much like in the math department, more than one professor attempted to govern the English program. The lack of delegated leadership caused friction between many faculty members. Teachers attributed the problems to disagreements on the direction of the department and matters concerning curriculum and the addition of new courses. After several failed attempts by Seerley to orchestrate peace among the teachers, he concluded that any adjustment in professional rank required the attention of Board of Trustees for action.¹⁸⁰

The combination of the department problems across campus led Seerley to request the Board of Trustees' members to seriously consider adopting some sort of system for identifying members of the faculty who could act as leaders in the different departments. Seerley believed that reorganization was necessary not only for the departments to progress satisfactorily, but also to ensure the future success of the school.¹⁸¹ Condit's letter, along with the other letters written to Seerley, relayed the fact that faculty members were aware that other institutions had adopted structures which generated more harmony among the other faculty in the department. Finding a resolution to this problem led Seerley to look to other institutions for examples of how to better

¹⁸⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Miss Margaret Cliver; Department of Elocution*. 1908. From University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹⁸¹ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Member of the Faculty*. 1907. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

orchestrate within departments, and how to establish leadership roles among faculty. This situation naturally led the Iowa State Normal School to adopt a system of faculty organization similar to that of other institutions.

On June 28, 1907, during the early stages of reorganization, faculty members in the Department of Mathematics held a special meeting in order to decide how to restructure their program. They determined that mathematics courses should be divided into three general areas of study consisting of the Department of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic. They requested that The Board of Trustees grant certain professors complete control over these subjects by designating leadership roles to certain professors. The faculty assigned Professor Wright to the geometry program and granted him complete authority over the courses taught. Teachers granted the same authority to Professor Condit in algebra, and Professor Dick in arithmetic.¹⁸² Though the Math Department received full authority from the Board of Trustees to carry out their plan for establishing professors as leaders of programs, titles for these positions such as “head of the department” were not used. This distinction came later in 1908, as matters of reorganization progressed.¹⁸³ During this particular phase of department restructuring, teachers simply distinguished which particular professors had sole authority in department decisions.

A Plan to Restructure Departments and Adopt a System of Faculty Rank

In November of 1908, President Seerley wrote to Honorable John F. Riggs, Superintendent of Public Instruction and member of The Board of Trustees, requesting that the third day of their quarterly meeting be devoted to discussing future policies regarding department reorganization and adopting a graded system of faculty rank. A similar system, he wrote, was

¹⁸² Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Hon. B. F. Gordon*, 1907. Letter. From The University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

recently adopted by the state university which helped orchestrate department leadership and organization. During this meeting, Seerley proposed to have “head professors” who would be granted more official authority than was previously conferred upon any single professor in the departments. Seerley suggested a full and immediate investigation regarding a successful way to adopt and implement his plan. He urged board members to decide the appropriate steps to successful management of department reorganization and the establishment of faculty rank. Seerley also suggested the Board of Trustees allow faculty members the chance to share their opinions regarding who in their department should be delegated as “department head.”¹⁸⁴ He added that the proposed plan necessitated the adoption of a schedule of salaries to be applied to new professor ranks and that a maximum and minimum salary for each position needed to be established. Seerley argued that by adopting this type of system, departments across campus and business at the normal school to be conducted in a more systematic way. These arrangements, according to Seerley, promoted more efficiency in department work.¹⁸⁵

After its meeting in December, The Board of Trustees officially decided to adopt a graded system of faculty rank which established department heads in each program. These newly created positions of executive authority increased productivity of the office of the president and departments in general. The board also hoped that by ranking faculty members, departmental discord would be diminished. The execution of this type of reorganization involved consolidation and division of some departments. Due to the fact that this type of department overhaul affected a large number of teachers in the faculty, the board invited faculty members to individually submit proposals of suggested changes for the departments in which they belonged. While it is possible that several professors submitted suggestions or preferences to the board, the

¹⁸⁴ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Hon. J.F. Riggs*, 1908. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

office of the president only retained a few letters from faculty members. The proposals relayed concern to President Seerley about fairness in the establishment of rank and the potential difficulties associated with adjusting to the changes. Some teachers also informed Seerley that they had no desire to reorganization, and preferred that their departments remain unchanged.¹⁸⁶

As the adoption of the new system progressed, Homer Seerley urged The Board of Trustees to consider faculty member's concerns during the adjustment period. In order to ease faculty into the transition, Seerley requested implementing a more gradual change in command by adopting reorganization policies in only a few departments at a time. While Seerley recognized that the ultimate goal of the restructure plan was to secure better efficiency in department work, he was also aware of the fact that by adopting a graded system of faculty rank similar to The State University of Iowa, he was demonstrating his school's progress thereby elevating its status. Seerley needed this plan to be successful to ensure the progress of his institution. He proposed a specific, detail-oriented plan for assigning faculty rank. He suggested assigning the rank of "professor" to those members of the faculty deserving of the title. Under this particular system, the term "head" would be used for the professors who maintained authority in their department. He also requested that a hiring policy be carefully adopted in order to ensure better qualified teachers were selected to teach at the institutions. If the board agreed to assign rank to members to the faculty, Seerley suggested they be defined as follows:

“1. Head Professor: have general control and management of the Department. Expected to consult with all the teachers of the Department, consider their requests and suggestions and conduct the business with fairness and discretion. He is to be responsible for the organization and the conduct of affairs in a broad sense.

2. Professor: in charge of parts of a Department under the supervision of the head professor if one exists. He is supposed to

¹⁸⁶ McDuffie. *McDuffie to Homer H. Seerley*, 1907. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

do classwork of the superior order and to not need much supervision. He shall have authority over any assistant that does work in his division. He shall be a voter in faculty meetings. In Department meetings he shall receive consideration from the head Prof. and so far as giving a trial to what he deems best as regards to the work committed to him but is obliged to conform to the general plan instituted by the head Professor.

3. Assistant Professor: subordinate to the professor but assumed to be able to teach the work assigned without more than general supervision. They vote in Department meetings but not in faculty meetings.

4. Instructor: subordinate to the Prof. and required to work under direct supervision. They have worked in the Department long enough to be able to conduct the work in harmony without much direction except what may be given an instruction or consultation or in Department meetings.

5. Assistant: this teacher is not assumed to get along without much supervision and direction and to be in training for the rank of instructor after a year or more experience."¹⁸⁷

Beginning in December of 1908, and continuing through 1909, The Board of Trustees and the Office of the President sent letters to several departments notifying them to adopted changes in management of their particular programs. The first notice went to the Department of Physics and informed faculty that the new Department of Physics was created December 9, 1908 and the new organization model adopted by the department would go into effect January 1, 1909.¹⁸⁸ The Board named Lewis Berman as head of the department and assigned the rank of professor to S.F. Hersey. They also named E.K. Chapman primary instructor of the department. The notice to the department also included a definition of the duties associated with each professor rank.

¹⁸⁷ Homer H. Seerley, "Special Report of the President: The Problem Involved in the Organization and Management of the Faculty of the Iowa State Normal School " (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Normal School, 1908).

¹⁸⁸ Seerley, Homer H. *Notice of Change in Organizational Management*, 1908. Notice. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1908.

“It is understood that all executive work of the new Department is located in the head Prof. and that all teachers associated with them will be assigned as to the work and directed as to plan by him. This includes the classification of students, supervision of work in the Department, determining the course of study to be given from term to term and what teacher shall conduct said classes is also the making of quarterly and annual reports as may be required by the president for the information for the Board of Trustees. It is also assumed that there will be regular Department meetings at which time the plans and methods to be used will be developed by the head of the Department, so the harmony, superior work, and continued improvement in the Department maybe secured. The head Prof. is held responsible for the management and the development of the Department in all particulars and must see that everything is conducted in a scholarly and scientific manner so that students are given the kind and quantity of instruction and training that should be required of the teachers college.”¹⁸⁹

The Board sent out two additional notices with the same information to the Department of Training in Teaching, and the Department of Professional Instruction. In these two departments, The Board of Trustees also delegated a specific title to each teacher associated with the department. They also informed faculty of their expected responsibilities as defined by each specific rank. In each notice that the board mailed, members reminded faculty that the director was the “chief executive” of the department. The board now required that all matters needing the attention of the president’s office be submitted by the director of the department. The new director now had authority to assign executive powers of supervision to faculty, and also to “unite matters in harmonious relations.” The board required each director to file quarterly reports regarding the business, ideas, plans, discipline, and management of the work conducted in each department.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Notice of Change in Department Organization and Management*, 1908. Notice. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

After trustees notified President Seerley that they determined the adoption of the new system in the three departments was successful, Seerley sent Honorable I. J. McDuffie a proposal requesting that other departments across campus adopt the new system of faculty rank. He suggested the departments of music, mathematics, and English, adopt new titles for their instructors along with the duties specified by each title. He also proposed these changes be applied to the departments of chemistry, Latin and Greek, German and French, and commercial education. Honorable McDuffie approved Seerley's proposal, and in 1909 professors associated with these departments had new titles and faculty rank. Much like the physics department, these professors also received notices from the board explaining changes and expectations associated with reorganization.¹⁹¹ The same year, the board sent every faculty member an additional notice informing them of their new title and salary.

Professor J. B. Knoepfler,

At the board meeting, April 29, you are made acting head of the Department of German and French, at a salary of \$1900 for the year commencing September 1, 1909, and a salary of \$350 for the summer term of 1910. Please advise me of your acceptance.¹⁹²

Miss Frances Dickey,

At the board meeting April 29, you were given the rank of an assistant professor in the Department of Public School Music, with the leave of absence for the school year beginning September 1, 1909, without salary. Your salary for the year commencing September 1, 1910, to be \$1100. You were elected to a position in the summer term of 1910 with a salary of \$210 for the term. Please advise me of your acceptance. You are also placed on the permanent list of teachers.¹⁹³

Miss Jessie Hurst,

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

¹⁹² Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Professor J.B. Knoepfler*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers, 1886-1928*.

¹⁹³ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Miss Frances Dickey*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers, 1886-1928*.

At the board meeting April 29, you were elected to a position of the summer term faculty, to teach physical training as an assistant to Ms. McNally, for the salary of \$160 for the term. Please advise me if you accept this position.¹⁹⁴

Mr. Robert Fullerton,

At the board meeting April 29, you were placed on the permanent list of teachers, with the title professor of voice, in the Department of Public School Music.¹⁹⁵

Professor M. F. Arey,

At the board meeting April 29, you were made acting head of the Department of Natural Science, and a professor of zoology, geology, mineralogy, and structural botany, at a salary of \$1900 for the school year, commencing September 1, 1909, and \$350 for the summer term of 1910. Please advise me of your acceptance of this position.¹⁹⁶

Reactions of the Faculty

Though many of the professors were relieved and quite content with the changes adopted by the school, some faculty members became increasingly frustrated with title given to them after their years of service to the institution. Some felt the rank assigned to them did not reflect their work at the institution. These teachers sent letters to President Seerley protesting their assigned rank while also expressing their frustration with the situation. Some even threatened to submit letters of resignation. In other cases, professors were reluctant to relinquish their decision-making power to the newly elected department head. As a result, President Seerley spent a significant amount of time corresponding with faculty in order to defuse tensions that

¹⁹⁴ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Miss Jessie Hurst*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹⁹⁵ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Mr. Robert Fullerton*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹⁹⁶ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Professor M.F. Arey*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

arouse during the adjustment period. Some examples of his correspondence with various faculty across campus:

There was never any inclination that your work was not satisfactory to the authorities or that your interest in building up the Department was not to be commended. The only thing to be considered now is that of regarding officially the other persons responsibilities and authority and not infringing upon their rights and duties. Your resignation is not wanted and it would be a great injustice to you at the present juncture to allow it. I have great respect for your ambition, for your willingness to do more than would be required, and for your faithfulness to your Department, and hence I hope you will see fit to accept this adjustment and continue to the end of the year as you had planned. This will give you a better closing for your career at this college.¹⁹⁷

Miss Mabel B. McNally,

Being on the permanent list of faculty and excepting such from the Board of Trustees, makes it very desirable for you to comply with your contract. Because you feel that injustice has been done to you, does not relieve you of the official obligation that you accepted when elected to your present position. Is not my right to insist upon any specific action being carried out. You are subordinate to Prof. Seymour and to the president under the general regulations, and after the appointment of the Dean of women with authority in regard to the six students a year ago, you properly became subordinate by trustee action so far as these kinds of matters were concerned, as the Dean of women became responsible to the board in these matters.¹⁹⁸

In some cases, problems arose because the newly elected Department chairs exercised too much authority and abused the power granted to them by The Board of Education. These chairs proceeded to make decisions regarding course assignments, curriculum, and the direction of their

¹⁹⁷ Letter to Mr. Seerley Concerning Faculty Work, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

¹⁹⁸ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Miss Mabel B. McNally: Assistant Director of Physical Training*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

department without consulting the opinions of other faculty. President Seerley cautioned department heads to be careful in exercising their authority, especially regarding the distribution of faculty duties. He also advised them to make certain that as a department chair, they were fair in their treatment of each teacher in their program.

Professor Seymour,

In organizing the Department work for the winter term, please be careful to do the fair and prudent thing in every case. The key is to be very careful not to arbitrarily abuse your authority. They are practically your own naming an endorsement. It is absolutely necessary for you to maintain peace, harmony, and cooperation in the Department, or else your administration fails. I write this note because it is evident that you have not been as careful in the wise administration of the affairs that might have been, as your Associates are practically coming to the conclusion to tender their resignations the Board of Education. Such a decision would practically mean that your resignation would in all probability be required.

It is also necessary for you to secure the cooperation and a cheerful way of the students beyond what has existed during the past two years of your service and public instruction where popularity and acceptability are essential. I have cordially given you my support in all respects since you came here and I therefore giving you this official warning. You have the qualifications and character in the training that ought to make you successful to a high degree. Unless your administration can be improved in your recognition of the feelings and rights of others, you will not be able to continue college work beyond this year.¹⁹⁹

The Department of Physical Training struggled the most in its adjustment to the new organization system. Tensions between teachers increased and the department began to deteriorate. Some of the problems in the department drove a few of the faculty to threaten to leave the school or even tender their resignations. The State Board of Education eventually asked for an investigation of The Physical Training Department with reference to certain difficulties

¹⁹⁹ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Professor Seymore*, 1909. Notice. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

that existed during the adjustment period. In February of 1910, two years after the college implemented the department changes, The trustees discovered in its investigation of the department that students, alumni, and members of the faculty outside of the physical training program, spoke of it "regretfully and hopelessly." They threatened that unless a decided change was made it would be forced to close the department entirely. The main source of the problem, the board discovered, were the relationships between the current director, Professor Simmons, and the rest of the instructors in the department. In a letter addressed to the professor, investigation committee members warned Simmons that he either resolve his differences with the head of the department, Professor Seymour or they would be forced "to take drastic measures." They urged that harmony between teachers must be restored to the department in order for it to function properly and benefit normal's students. They explained that Professor Simmons needed to recognize the authority of the department head as Seymour's authority was required in every particular matter, and that any other exhibition of official conduct could be interpreted by the management of the committee as insubordination. The committee informed these professors that all contentions of any kind that militate against the best work of the teachers college were not considered proper conduct on the part of any teacher.²⁰⁰ Despite attempts to reconcile differences, the physical training director Simmons resigned, which eventually resolved much of the conflict within the Department.

Other problems existed across campus among members of the faculty in music education. Teachers in the school of music took issue with relinquishing their official authority to the newly elected department head. This negatively affected the relationships between the faculty members of the department. Despite accusations of the chair's inability to lead the department, The State

²⁰⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Professor C.B. Simmons: Physical Training Director*, 1910. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

Board of Education conducted an investigation of the problems involved. They hoped to encourage complete cooperation among the teachers and the work done in music.²⁰¹ The state board mailed notices to several faculty ordering that the work of these teachers “continue as originally organized.”²⁰² After the investigation committee completed its report, the board of education adopted general regulations concerning the cooperation of faculty in the administration of the program of music. The board reminded each faculty member of the newly elected department chair for the year 1910-1911, as well as listing the duties included in this position.

“The head of the department of public school music, voice training, Piano forte instruction, orchestra, and band instruction, shall manage their respective department executively as has been done in the past subject to the regulations of the plans that have been adopted by the professors in a general meeting, said regulation having been approved by the general faculty and by the board, according to the character of the questions involved. The enacting director whose duties shall include presiding at the business meeting of said departments, bringing the attention of the faculty and board such recommendations as the professors of said departments may adopt, and making a report to the president from the department such decisions and opinions that the United teachers conclude to be essential in the improvement and development of said departments .”²⁰³

The state board required the music department to have a joint business meeting to establish a plan to ensure the successful adoption of the new rules.²⁰⁴ After the instructors in the department of music adjourned their meeting, they claimed to have a more comprehensive understanding of

²⁰¹ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Robert Fullerton*, 1911. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁰² Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Miss Anna Gertrude*, 1911. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁰³ "Special Report of the President: General Regulation Adopted by the State Board of Education Regarding the Government Cooperation and Administration of the Music Department of the Iowa State Teachers College," (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Teachers college 1910).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

the regulations and by laws in place in the school of music. After a few months of implementation, problems in the department of music subsided and business ran more smoothly.

Though department restructuring and the adoption of the system of ranking professors created a few conflicts in certain departments; overall, teachers at Iowa State Normal School adjusted to the changes. Eventually, all departments delegated a faculty member to act as department chair. The heads of departments worked together with subordinate faculty of varying rank to conduct the business of training teachers. In general, after the adoption of the graded system and after reorganizing some of the departments, business at the normal school functioned better with greater efficiency than existed prior to the change.

The challenges faculty members faced over who ultimately was in charge of each department was a practical problem which required immediate attention. In order to solve the problem in the quickest way possible with some assurance that any changes made would be successful, Seerley referred to other schools to see what systems worked. This ultimately led the Iowa state Normal School to adopt an organizational structure similar to other institutions. The outcome led to the institution at Cedar Falls looking more like other institutions of higher education than it had in previous years.

While the Iowa State Normal School dealt with the challenges associated with faculty and department organization, and as it continued to develop its curriculum to better meet the needs of the students who enrolled, the state education leaders considered the efficiency of the three state schools maintaining three separate governing bodies. 1904 was the first year in which these same leaders first questioned whether or not they should continue to allow the separate administrative boards to continue to govern the state schools on an individual basis. Their questions lead to accusations that the state was producing education waste by duplicating

coursework at the state schools. Over the course of the next few years, the state began the process of consolidating the three governing bodies into one unified state board of education. The complexities involved in this movement are discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

Chapter 5

Adopting a One-Board System: The Iowa State Board of Education

In the state of Iowa, in early 1904, state officials accused the system of higher education of producing education "waste" by duplicating courses at the various state supported institutions of higher education. Proponents of a more efficient education system argued that by allowing the state schools to continue to progress under separate governing bodies, the duplication problem could increase, resulting in the wasteful use of state appropriations. In an attempt to eliminate this type of wasteful spending, proponents argued for unification of the management and control of the three state schools; The Iowa State Normal School, The State University of Iowa, and The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Though Senator Garst was first to introduce a bill to the state senate in March 1904 for the transfer of governance to a state board system, the state did not adopt a policy at this time. Rather, the senate passed a resolution for a joint committee for the purpose of investigating the state's system of management and affairs of the three state schools. Appropriation requests also created heated rivalries between the schools over which institution was more deserving of the money. Quite frankly, committee members reported growing increasingly annoyed with the state schools and dealing with the arguments between them over which institution deserved more funding. The continued requests for increased appropriations coupled with concerns over duplication, resulted in The State Board of Control ordering a full, formal investigation of (The committee elected Senator Whipple as chairman, and later became known as "The Whipple Committee."

The Whipple Committee spent the later part of the year conducting a thorough investigation of the business conducted at state schools. Committee members visited each

institution inspecting the facilities, student body, grounds, and other aspects of the schools. They held meetings with each of The Board of Trustees and discussed financial matters with other school officials and leaders. Following their grueling investigative work, the members generated a report disclosing their findings. Shortly after the committee submitted their report to the governor, *The Des Moines Register* published the proceedings. The conclusions reached by the committee regarding the work conducted at Cedar Falls as reported by *the Des Moines Register* were no doubt negatively critical. The committee determined from its investigation that the state did not “get value received from the appropriations made to each institutions.” In other words, the committee felt the state spent unnecessary amounts of money on duplicated education work, especially regarding courses in engineering in Ames and in Iowa City. The duplication of courses cost tax payers unnecessary money. While the rivalry for coursework appeared to be mostly between the state college and the agricultural college, the unfavorable way in which The Whipple Committee portrayed work conducted at Cedar Falls did not go unnoticed. Trustee I.J. McDuffie wrote to Seerley “I am greatly surprised at the ignorance, stupidity, and unfairness displayed in the report. The committee does not seem to understand that the common schools have adopted courses of study and methods of instruction which make it necessary for the normal school to instruct pupils in all the subjects which the committee say have been taught in the normal school in violation of the law.”²⁰⁵ While the portrayal of the work done at the normal school no doubt frustrated President Seerley, he knew he had to present his opinion in a way that could not endanger the future of his institution. Seerley merely responded to McDuffie’s frustrations by writing “it is the business of the normal school to conduct itself in a professional,

²⁰⁵ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to I.J. McDuffie*, 1906. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928. I.J.

ethical manner. We will approach this matter with the utmost care. By providing a list of facts and laws establishing this school, we will prevail in maintaining our purpose.”²⁰⁶

Despite the fact that all three state institutions opposed the resolution to create a one-board governing system, and even though they hotly contested it, the investigation of The Whipple Committee eventually led to passage of an act requiring all of the boards of the three state schools to relinquish their governing powers to one, unified, state board of education. The governor appointed nine members to the state board, and its business commenced in April of 1909.²⁰⁷

Concerns over Financial Matters

Numerous requests for additional appropriations each biennial period by all three of the state schools created many doubts regarding their ability to adequately manage their business and financial affairs. The normal school's requests for appropriations frequently exceeded the past year's amounts by a large sum, which caused raised eyebrows among legislative committee members and other state officials. In a statement submitted to the thirty-second general assembly on the business of the state normal school, President Seerley reported that the expected surplus available in the mill-tax to cover expenses for the school year no longer existed.²⁰⁸ Additionally, after a detailed, itemized listing of the appropriations given to the state normal school at Cedar Falls, including money granted for additional buildings and equipment, the president reported he anticipated a shortage of funds for the school year.²⁰⁹ In the same year, deficits existed in the contingent and teachers funds, in the amount of \$2000. Before the end of the year, Seerley

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Clarence Ray Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, vol. 2 (New York: Ulan Press 1914).

²⁰⁸ Homer H. Seerley, "Report of the President on Official Business " (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Normal School 1906).

²⁰⁹ "Report on Appropriations Granted by the General Assembly of Iowa," (Des Moines: Iowa State Normal School, 1903).

anticipated the debts of the school would reach nearly \$5000. In order to increase the contingent fund and ensure the adequate payment of salaries to his employees, Seerley requested additional appropriations in the amount of \$3750, in order to finish the school year.²¹⁰ In a letter to Honorable McDuffie, Seerley also reported on the inability of his school to pay outstanding bills and to settle certain accounts. McDuffie criticized Seerley for his improper management of funds. Seerley defended his actions by explaining that he appropriately allocated the money received from state appropriations but that unexpected expenses of the school caused the deficit.²¹¹

In light of these facts, several criticisms arouse regarding the conduct of the business office and the financial management of the institution. As a result, The State Board of Control ordered a full, formal investigation concerning matters of business which were “not fully explained by records, bookkeeping, or reports generated by the normal school.”²¹² The continued submission of incomplete budget reports eventually forced the government to hire a committee whose sole purpose was to investigate the financial matters at state normal school. Once the resolution was adopted and the committee appointed, state normal school leaders grew increasingly nervous of the impending investigation. The investigation prompted discussion concerning the readiness of the institution for a formal investigation, and also aroused concern of the physical appearance of the school. In a letter to President Seerley, Henry Sabin, former President of the Board of Directors of the Normal School and advocate for progress for the state normal school in Cedar Falls, wrote "Go ahead and get your buildings in just as good as shape as possible. What I mean is, get things so fixed that a penurious, money saving, economical board

²¹⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Report of the President to the Normal School Board of Control*, 1904. Report. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² "Report of the President to the Normal School and the State Board of Control," (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Normal School, 1904).

could not put your enterprise back to the beginning."²¹³ While The Whipple Committee's investigation created angst among leaders and officials of the state schools, editors of the *Des Moines Register* favored the state's position on improving efficiency in higher education. Regarding the proposed unified board, the newspaper reported their enthusiasm behind reducing duplicated coursework at the two schools.

The Investigation of the Whipple Committee

State official's concerns about the financial management and duplication of coursework at the three state higher education institutions lead to the appointment of a committee responsible for investigating business affairs at each institution. In 1904, the governor appointed a joint committee, called The Whipple Committee, to conduct a complete financial investigation of all three state institutions. It scrutinized the ways in which the three state institutions conduct their business, especially concerning financial matters.²¹⁴ The committee required that the secretary of each of the state-supported institutions generate a report of state appropriations, endowment funds, tuition and fees, donations, along with any other funds made available to the institution. The Whipple Committee required that the report indicate how the institution allocated expenses toward instruction, administration, and maintenance costs. It also requested the report include an account of general expenses of the institution. The finance secretary at each school also needed to include a section on the number of professors, instructors, fellows and tutors, and the number of students enrolled in each program during the biennial period.²¹⁵

²¹³ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Henry Sabin*, 1904. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²¹⁴ *Report from Educational Institutions*, Thirtieth General Assembly of the State of Iowa (April 13, 1904).

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Once The Iowa State Normal School received word of the forthcoming investigation by The Whipple Committee, Seerley grew increasingly concerned about the way in which his business office conducted matters concerning finances at his institutions. The president held a meeting to ensure the finance secretary used the proper methods of bookkeeping. Upon discovering that the state normal school's methods were not similar to methods used by other institutions, Seerley looked to The State University of Iowa as an example of how to properly conduct and organize matters of business. In a letter written to Judge Robinson, member of the board of control, Seerley requested information pertaining to the method of bookkeeping used by the state university. Through his correspondence, Seerley obtained financial forms along with guidance on how to use them for his school's financial management purposes. By implementing the state university's methods for conducting business, Seerley hoped that the business aspect of his institution could function better and allow his school to stay afloat.²¹⁶ However, the new changes in financial management adopted by the normal school resulted in late submission of the first financial report to the investigation committee. This was not the first impression Seerley was hoping to give the committee concerning how the state normal school conducted its business.²¹⁷ It is important to note that in addition to submitting the financial statement, Seerley also submitted a statement regarding the function and purpose of his school. Seerley anticipated one of the major concerns under investigation by The Whipple Committee pertained to the alleged duplication of coursework by the three state schools. Seerley felt he needed to address these issues and preemptively work to alleviate any concerns of duplication. In the report submitted to the committee, Seerley pointed out that "while there may be a certain amount of uncertainty

²¹⁶ Report on Educational Institutions, 1904. *Thirtieth General Assembly of the State of Iowa*, Report. Chapter 104. Des Moines. Senate Files. HF. 457, p. 104. From the State of Iowa Historical Society Archives, *The State of Iowa Senate Papers*.

²¹⁷ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley Report to the Board of Trustees*, 1905. Report. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

pertaining to the endeavors rightly assigned to the State University or the Agricultural College, there is, as a matter of fact, no uncertainty regarding the true province of the normal school since the statutes are explicit in defining it as a school for the training of teachers for the public schools."²¹⁸ Furthermore, Seerley suggested that "since the people of the state expressed satisfaction with the school and since the function of the normal school had statutory definition, the problem of ambiguity of the functions lay with the institutions at Iowa City and at Ames."²¹⁹

Nevertheless, The Whipple Committee was less than impressed with the first round of information it received concerning the state normal school. The financial statement submitted by the school revealed large amounts of disorganization and unbalanced accounts. Seerley defended the situation by explaining that the reports were only approximately correct "because they did not make an exhibit of the business transacted by the stewards department when it was in existence."²²⁰ He also claimed the mistakes in bookkeeping were a result of the fact that the records for first decade of business transactions were unaccounted for due to missing paperwork.²²¹ The evidence before the investigation committee revealed poor management of the school's finances. The Whipple Committee accused the normal school of wasting money, especially in their employment of trustees whose sole efforts were spent securing exceedingly large appropriations from the general assemblies. The normal board refuted the committee's accusations by stating it had always complied with legislative procedures, and had always supplied a detailed statement of the conditions of the work and needs of the school to the appropriations committee. It also argued that the income of the institution was small compared to

²¹⁸ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley Report on Educational Institutions*, 1904. Report. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ *The Whipple Committee's Report on Educational Institutions*, 1905. Report. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²²¹ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley's Report to the Board of Trustees*, 1905. Report. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

the appropriations granted to the other two institutions in the state. Furthermore, board members reminded the committee that nothing was done without the approval or endorsement of the general assembly. They concluded their arguments by stating that no needless expenditures were made by the institution, and all business conducted contributed to making the school worthy of commendation and patronage. They stated “it is hardly fair to criticize the normal school for these things given our financial constraints; it rather deserves commendation and approval.”

In addition to divulging matters of finance, the initial report sent to The Whipple Committee also contained information and explanations concerning responsibilities of the general management of the school, the function of president, and the normal board of trustees and governing the school. It also detailed dissatisfaction with the present system. Seerley also added an opinion section on the potential difficulties associated with the adoption of a one board system for all three state schools. Seerley argued that though some discontent existed among the members of the general assembly regarding the current governing system, no system could be devised that was perfect or free from any problems. Seerley also reported his dissatisfaction with this states allocation of appropriations. He claimed that the normal school’s large budgetary requests were a direct result of the state’s neglect to adequately fund and support the meaningful quality of work conducted at Cedar Falls. The normal school merely requested better support for work completed at the institution. He argued that his institution served an important purpose to the people of the state and the quality of the normal school’s services required better funding. In order to provide students with an education of a superior quality, one that compared with the education of other states, the normal school simply needed more money.²²² Seerley also claimed that increased enrollment rates caused normal trustees to request greater appropriations. Because

²²² *The Whipple Committee’s Report on Educational Institutions*, 1905. Report. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

the school at Cedar Falls served a greater number of students, the institution simply required more money to operate. In spite of unfavorable comparisons with the other more stable, fully developed state institutions of Iowa, Seerley reported that increasing numbers of students actively sought an education in Cedar Falls. According to Seerley, enrollment rates, and nothing else, accounted for increased efforts to secure more appropriations from the general assembly.²²³

In its criticisms of the way in which the normal school conducted its business, The Whipple Committee also chastised the institution because it duplicated courses offered at the other two state schools. In response to the committee, Seerley claimed that by statute, the normal school must be allowed the freedom to adapt their work to the needs of the people of the state. He explained that “freedom must remain an actuality in order for schools to be distinguished for their services.” He continued to defend the normal school’s special purpose to the state, cautioning that any change in the governing board may affect the educational progress of the normal school and teacher education in the State of Iowa. He defended the normal school’s case by reminding committee members:

“There is, and actuality, no uncertainty of the respective provinces of the normal school since the situations of education at this institution are explicit, defining it as a school for the training of teachers for public schools. This limitation has been continually regarded by the trustees, and students are received at this institution on formally declaring their intentions to be teachers and their course of studies are arranged and dedicated with this single-purpose in mind. It is necessary for the normal school to maintain a variety of courses for the preparation of teachers because there is a proper differentiation to be made between primary, secondary, and special teachers, and the requirements for such professions cannot be based on scholarship alone but based on the requirements these teachers need.”²²⁴

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

Homer Seerley claimed that if the committee observed that his schools duplicated coursework offered at the other two state schools, it had only occurred because the respective functions of The State University of Iowa and The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts are not fully designated by the statutes that govern them.²²⁵

The Whipple Committee's investigation uncovered poor financial management by the state normal school, and in general, found many flaws with the governing structure in place for the state's higher education institutions. The committee concluded that the official business organization methods used by each institution were ultimately ineffective. The committee also claimed that an overlap in courses offered at the state schools resulted in an inefficient and costly system of higher education in the state of Iowa. It determined that by creating one management board whose responsibility included undertaking the governance all of the state supported, higher education institutions, the state could avoid costly, unnecessary spending.

Seerley consistently defended the school's status among the other higher education institutions. He urged committee members to consider that a new system of governance may eliminate progress already made by the normal school. The normal school "should be allowed to carry out its mission without objection or hindrances, permitting the present trustees to complete the plant as now planned and to develop the school as has been done so as to not delay successful progress." Seerley cautioned the committee that advocating a change in governance may negatively impact the success of his institution. He feared that the normal school may not be as successful under a new system of governance. He explained that in his experience, "a school must be in the hands of its real friends who are interested in its special kind of work, rather than the hands of business managers who regard the finance question as the main problem."²²⁶

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Homer H. Seerley, "Special Report of the President " (Cedar Falls Iowa State Normal School, 1909).

Seerley became more apprehensive of the state's desire to adopt a one-board system because he felt this was the state's first step toward possibly consolidating overlapping coursework between institutions in the state of Iowa. He felt this move was a forewarning of the synchronization of programs offered by each school. In a letter written to a trustee of the state normal school shortly after his report to the joint committee, Seerley revealed his concerns about the organizing measure. He felt that even though the joint committee's goal was to treat each institution fairly, he couldn't help but worry about the future of the normal school. He grew nervous about the committee's opinion of the relevance in the state maintaining a teacher training school. Despite his fears, he knew that in order for the normal school to remain in good standing with the joint committee, he must be careful in his opposition; especially if the state adopted a one board governing system. In order for the normal school to remain afloat, he must maintain good relationships with the members of the committee who determined the institution's future.²²⁷ Eventually a bill came before the senate proposing the state adopt a one-board governing system. The bill recommended electing a state board consisting of fifteen members.²²⁸

Objections to the State One Board System Proposal

Students, faculty, staff, and alumni all objected to the legislative committee's proposal to adopt a State Board of Education. In an article written in the student newspaper *The Normal Eye*, editors informed readers about the measure. According to the article, the measure contained three different items which affected the normal school: “ (1) the creation of a Board of Education for the state, (2) the creation of a County unit for the management of country schools and the placing of the work in a County Board of Education and, (3) the adoption of a more liberal and

²²⁷ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to I.J. McDuffie*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²²⁸ Seerley, "Special Report of the President ."

flexible system for the support of the schools.”²²⁹ *The Normal Eyte* later published opinions of the student body. In general, students felt if a single governing body was allowed to administer to the needs of the three schools, their institution would be last to receive consideration for anything.²³⁰ The student body felt certain that any change in the system as it currently stood would negatively impact the success of their school. They feared, if the state adopted this proposal, it meant more struggles in the future for the state normal school to stay afloat.

Seerley grew increasingly concerned that a new state board may escalate complications between the three schools. Seerley felt relations between the schools were already quite turbulent. Seerley said that the system “as it now currently stood” of maintaining separate boards for the three institutions, was more capable of administrating the needs of each of the individual schools. He felt the committee needed to seriously consider the differences of opinion which could arise with a newly elected board. New members, he argued, “wouldn’t know hardly anything about the conditions and needs of each institution.”²³¹ In a letter to Board of Trustees member Honorable Riggs, Seerley wrote: “I believe in allowing educational institutions a chance for differentiation and for reasonable difference of opinion so that improvement and development may be possible in the growth and strength of Iowa's education system.” In referring to the new board plan, he said, “It would be easy for us to make too many limitations which would not improve conditions.”²³²

²²⁹ The Normal Eyte Staff, "Official," *The Normal Eyte*, Wednesday, January 27 1909.

²³⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to A.N. Pattengail*, 1906. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²³¹ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to I.U. McDuffie*, 1906. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928..

²³² Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Hon. J.F. Riggs*, 1907. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

Despite the fact that the proposal regarding a new state board moved forward, Seerley continued to voice his opposition to the plan. In a letter he wrote to Senator DeWolf, of Des Moines Iowa, Seerley acknowledged that although it was inappropriate to tell the general assembly how to organize their institutions, he further reiterated his opinion that “there was no need for reorganization of the college boards.” Seerley felt the solution to elect a state board was a direct result of negative perceptions of work conducted at the normal school. Seerley feared the election of the state board was a way in which the state could eliminate programs offered at his institutions. Seerley tried to diffuse rumors about the normal school regarding the standard of courses, the admission of students, and the duplication of courses taught elsewhere, by informing senators that these facts simply weren’t true regarding the education available in Cedar Falls .²³³ Seerley insisted that the normal school was not duplicating the courses of The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts nor was it duplicating courses in Iowa city. He said “the normal school did not endeavor to compete with them in any particular matter, including coursework.” Some of the rumors even alleged that after completing degree requirements at the normal school in Cedar Falls, students were not granted admittance to the colleges in Ames or in Iowa City. He informed members that this simply wasn’t the case, as many students graduated with degrees from both institutions after completing coursework in the state normal school. Students had also been admitted to other colleges as graduate students following completion of their programs at normal.²³⁴ He reiterated “I can assure you without any hesitation that every allegation that was

²³³ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Senator*, 1906. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

made in the original report of the educational commission was not founded concerning transfer of our degrees.”²³⁵

As the Whipple Bill gained support from legislatures, relationships between the three educational institutions worsened. In a letter written to Honorable Schaeffer, of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Seerley commented “as things currently stand regarding the strong legislation concerning the state board, it is not possible for the presidents of the three educational institutions to secure worse relationships between each other.” Each president grew more concerned about the well-being of their own school. In meetings at the state capital, Homer Seerley grew increasingly frustrated with what little attention the governor of Iowa gave to the normal school in comparison with the time he devoted to the grievance status’ of other two institutions.²³⁶ Legislative sessions grew more heated as the passage of the bill became more likely.²³⁷ Students acknowledged in their college paper that “the legislative committee has had a very strenuous session at Des Moines the past week in conference with the educational commission.”²³⁸ They also discussed soured relations between the three schools and The Whipple Committee.

In a final attempt to prevent the adaption of a state board, The Normal Board of Control generated a report detailing the specific purpose and function of the normal school which they presented to Iowa’s legislative committee. The report reminded senators that the act establishing a normal school required them by law to undertake one specific kind of educational work: the

²³⁵ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Senator Sherman W. DeWolf*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²³⁶ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Senator Sherman W. DeWolf*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²³⁷ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Honorable H.C. Schaeffer*, 1906. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²³⁸ Staff, "Official."

training of teachers for the common schools. The normal board declared that the success of the institution had been so great that any interference by an outside governing board could have detrimental consequences to the continued growth of the school. The board attempted to dispel accusations of course overlap by arguing other institutions endeavoring to train teachers for public schools overstepped their bounds. The report stated that the normal school was “a leading institution of its class the United States, and that its usefulness and prosperity had been recognized by people of the state of Iowa.”²³⁹ Therefore, the legislature must not adopt any changes impacting the prosperity of this great school. The board’s position held that the normal school prepared students into professionally certified, well-educated teachers. According to the board,

“the normal school course of study is strictly in conformity with the law organizing the school and with the standards that are approved by the best authorities of the United States as necessary for the proper education of teachers. The high grade school of any kind is obliged to offer opportunities for studying the several arts and sciences that constitute modern civilization. Students in this school who are preparing to be teachers must always pursue their work from the standpoint of one who is to teach.”²⁴⁰

Board members made no apology for the school’s successes, its prosperity, or its popularity. They stated that though other educational leaders claim the school is no good for the young people of the state, that its management is too liberal in its conception of education as an agency in civilization, The Iowa State Normal School was indeed a good school with a great purpose. They declared the school provided the people of the state greater opportunities, greater privileges, and more superior instruction than other states provided their future teachers.²⁴¹ They concluded by deeming a separate board more beneficial to the progress of the institution as it

²³⁹ The Normal Board of Control, "The Report of the Normal Board of Control on Business Conducted at the Iowa State Normal School," (Cedar Falls 1908).

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

would be impossible for members of a single board to know the personnel of the faculty and to appreciate anything in reference to their work.

Many faculty, including the president and normal board trustees, feared the effects of the regulative isomorphic pressures placed on the institution. If the regulative pressures forced the normal school to adopt a change in governance, they feared it would not be for the betterment of the institution, but contribute to its demise. Though many officials came forward to oppose The Whipple Bill, they could not prevent the state from adopting reform measures that could potentially improve the function of their higher education system.

The New Board Elected

The Iowa State Legislature eventually passed an act to create a State Board of Education for The State University of Iowa, The College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, and The Iowa State Normal School. This act, chapter 170, Senate file 198, entitled “The State Board of Education”, required that the three institutions be governed by a single state board of education consisting of nine members in which not more than five of the members be of the same political party. The act also stipulated that no more than three alumni of the above institutions and one alumnus from each institution were allowed to be members of the board at one time. The act, published on March 31, 1909, consisted of twenty-one sections explaining the powers and duties of the organization, the appointment of the members of the board, the abolishment of the current Board of Regents and Board of Trustees, and the appointment of a finance committee. Other sections included a detailed protocol of meetings, qualifications of the board members, business affairs conducted by the board, appropriations for the financing of the board, compensation expenses, lists of itemized statements of expenditures and the making of biennial reports to be

submitted to the office of the governor.²⁴² Shortly thereafter, the governor appointed a board consisting of 5 republicans and 4 democrats. The members appointed by Governor B. F. Carroll included James H. Trewin, Roger Leavitt, E. P. Schoentagen (President of the Board), P. K. Holbrook, C.R. Brenton, D.D. Murphy, A. B. Funk, George D. Baker, and T.D. Foster. Though he actively protested the adoption of the state board, Seerley expressed satisfaction with the members who were appointed. He felt that these particular men understood and appreciated the magnitude of the work done at each institution. Seerley conveyed his personal satisfaction in Honorable Clark's appointment by saying "I believe that coming to the quarterly board meeting from time your service begins will contribute largely to the development and progress of the education in Iowa."²⁴³ The students of the normal school however, did not hesitate to express their displeasure in the members appointed for The State Board of Education. An article written in the student newspaper listed the names of the new board members, described their background, followed by a statement which read "these members are more associated with farming and have interests outside of their duties related more to the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts than anywhere else." The students felt this would result in unfair treatment of their school compared with the college in Ames.²⁴⁴

After the act took effect in March of 1909, the faculty of the normal school grew increasingly apprehensive of the state board's governing power. They feared the board could make drastic changes which could negatively impact their school. Seerley empathized with the faculty, as he, himself admitted feeling unsettled about the new system of government. However,

²⁴² "State Board of Education," in *Chapter 170* (Des Moines, Iowa: State of Iowa, 1909).

²⁴³ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Hon. George W. Clark*, 1907. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁴⁴ The Normal Eye Staff, "New Board Chosen: Board of Education Provided by Whipple Bill Selected," *The Normal Eye*, Wednesday, April 14 1909, vol. 19, no. 25.

he expressed confidence that, for the most part, business as usual would resume under the newly adopted State Board of Education. President Seerley assured teachers that though the system of administration had changed, programs and course offerings at the state normal school would not be negatively impacted. He believed that the new governing board would be fair in their treatment of the normal school and the institution would be allowed to progress successfully under the State Board of Education's authority.

Business of the New Board Commences

After their election, the duties of board members immediately commenced. The board held its first meeting in the state house in Des Moines on Tuesday, April 20, 1909. The college newspaper reported that beginning July 1, 1909, three members of the board of nine were to visit each of the three schools and devote considerable time in becoming familiar with the details of the administration of the schools. During the meeting, the board discussed potential candidates to appoint to the finance committee. Once selected, the finance committee members were responsible for assuming charge of the detailed management of financial affairs at the three schools.²⁴⁵

As time passed, elected officials on the state board and on the finance committee commenced with the duties assigned to them by the state. The normal school continued to adjust to the changes brought by the new governing system. In a letter written to the President of the State Normal School in Emporia, Kansas, President Seerley openly discussed his feelings toward the new State Board of Education. Seerley admitted it bothered him that though the men elected

²⁴⁵ "Education Board Meets: To Take Charge of the State Institution July 1," *The Normal Eye* 1909, vol. 19, no. 25, p. 420.

to the board were very prominent political leaders in the state, they had no experience in education leadership except as members of the state board of education. He explained that under the statutes, the men had entire control of everything pertaining to the institutions. They were divided into three committees: the faculty committee, the building committee, and the business committee. Additionally, the board elected a finance committee whose duty included managing all business affairs of the state schools. The board also appointed an auditor that periodically investigated the bookkeeping claims and made reports to the finance committee. Seerley admitted despite his apprehensions regarding the power the board held concerning the normal school, he believed the state appointed a nonpartisan board unattached to any particular institution and that the conduct of the gentlemen appointed had been very fair and reasonable in all respects. To his surprise, he felt the normal school received nothing but fair treatment from the board and believed their objective remained to “improve, in every way possible, the work of the institution, and to enlarge its function to the fullest extent that a teacher school has a right to expect.”²⁴⁶ President Seerley noted however that the new board did not have the “friendly attitude” toward the institution that the old board did. He felt even though the newly elected board had a more comprehensive view of what education ought be in general, it seemed to allow the agricultural college and the state teachers college have their special functions prominently developed and while curtailing some functions at the University.²⁴⁷ The board’s action represented to Seerley, a possible shift in attitude toward the State Normal School.

²⁴⁶ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to President Joseph E. Hill at Emporia, Kansas, 1911*. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers, 1886-1928*.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

A National Trend

The accusation that higher education institutions were producing wasteful duplication of coursework was common across the country at this time. Institutions in the state of Kansas had similar charges brought against them, as the agricultural college and State University were accused of duplicating coursework in engineering. Legislators and the governor of the state grew more concerned of wasteful spending on duplicated courses between the state university and the Agricultural College. In his book *The University of Kansas: A History*, Clifford S. Griffin details the history of the governing bodies of the state institutions. Griffin tells the story of developments and initiatives to combine the three state schools' governing bodies into one unified board. As in Iowa, the state had allowed the agricultural college in Manhattan, the state normal school at Emporia, and the state university of Lawrence operate under separate governing bodies. According to Griffin, as the schools continued to grow and add programs to their perspective course offerings, state leaders grew concerned about duplication, waste, and needlessly higher taxes for the people of the state in order to pay for the schools. In 1905, Governor Edward W. Hoch in a message to the legislature said "that the management of all state institutions needed a complete overhauling." Two years later, according to Griffin, the governor called for a single Board of Regents for the three state schools.²⁴⁸ As in the state of Iowa, the suggestion of overhauling the governing system concerned each of the institution's leaders. Consolidating the governing bodies potentially threatened the prosperity of their perspective institutions. For this reason, institutional leaders grew increasingly apprehensive of the legislation regarding a Board of Regents taking place in Kansas.

As the situation unfolded in the state of Kansas, the strongest rivalry over coursework occurred between the University and the Agricultural College over courses in engineering, just

²⁴⁸ Clifford S. Griffin, *The University of Kansas: A History* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1974)., p. 331

like in the state of Iowa. According to Griffin, thanks to separate administrations, the Lawrence campus and the Manhattan campus offered similar coursework in engineering resulting in wasteful education spending. Concerns over duplication only encouraged senators and other reformers to pass a bill requiring the governing bodies of the institutions to transfer their governing powers to a singular governing unit. Before legislation was passed, the university grew increasingly uneasy, as it felt the coursework offered in engineering could potentially be threatened. Before exploring fully the questions of duplication, Chancellor Strong of the university accused the Manhattan school of offering coursework in engineering which contradicted its historical purposes. The advanced courses offered, according to Strong, were a result of the misunderstanding of what the definition of a "mechanic arts" school entailed.²⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the difficulties which arose out of the duplication question needed to be resolved. According to Griffin, Chancellor Strong favored the unification of the administrations of the two schools under a single Board of Regents and a single chancellor while leaving the parts of the consolidated institution in Lawrence and Manhattan.²⁵⁰

In 1909, the state of Kansas passed legislation prohibiting the university from offering coursework in agriculture, horticulture, and related subjects. The duplication bill also prevented the Agricultural College from offering courses in the professional work of engineering.²⁵¹ Meanwhile, the idea of a board of regents gained support as a growing number of Kansans felt that a single, salaried board of control should govern all the state's institutions of higher education.²⁵² By 1913, Governor Hodges signed the Keene Bill and to the new board of

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 337

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 339

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 341

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 342

administration went all the powers possessed by the regents. On July 1, the separate boards of regents ceased to exist.

The situation in Kansas played out in a strikingly similar fashion as it did in the state of Iowa. The debate in Iowa and in Kansas over a singular governing body for the state's higher education institutions was reflective of a national trend of implementing a more efficient governing body for the state's higher education institutions. The accusations that state schools were producing educational waste were perhaps a political response to isomorphic tendencies in higher education across the United States. Legislatures used the duplication argument as an avenue through which change could be impelled.

As the state worked to consolidate the governing bodies of the agricultural college, the state university, and the state normal school, and as these boards made the transition to the Iowa State Board of Education, Seerley became focused not on matters of the state, but on matters pertaining to his institution and faculty. The creation of the Carnegie Foundation of Advancement of Teaching generated an endowment for the purpose of funding pension plans for retired faculty.²⁵³ However, due to the fact that normal schools were not included in the list of eligible schools to apply to receive the endowment benefits, Seerley felt he needed to campaign for approval for his institution to be eligible for retirement benefits.²⁵⁴ Seerley believed that his faculty was also deserving of retirement benefits provided by the endowment, especially those faculty who dedicated their profession to the training of teachers. Due to this fact, he became an integral part of the movement to change the institution's name to "teacher's college" so that his

²⁵³ Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. "Foundation History." Accessed July 27, 2013. <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/about-us/foundation-history>

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

school could be eligible, under the conditions set forth by the Carnegie Foundation, to receive the endowment benefits.

Chapter 6

Aiming for Elevated Status: Becoming the Iowa State Teacher's College

As the years progressed, the criticisms originally brought against the normal schools continued to plague the Iowa State Normal School well into the twentieth century. As evidenced by the process of adopting the State Board of Education, questions still persisted about whether or not the state normal school served any purpose significantly different from the education experiences provided by the State University or the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Additionally, rumors continued to spread about quality of education students received in Cedar Falls. The question concerning President Seerley the most pertained to how to change people's perceptions regarding the legitimacy of his institution. Could changing the school's title ultimately rid the institution of the negative perception that followed it? Seerley attributed his interest in changing the school's name from "The Iowa State Normal School" to "The Iowa State Teacher's College" to the fact that the word "normal" prohibited faculty members from qualifying to receive retirement packages. However, the decision of the Carnegie Foundation not to include institutions that designated themselves as State Normal Schools indicated to Seerley the sign of the times; that state normal schools were falling fast in terms of their status as institutions of higher education.²⁵⁵ In order to gain more resources to function better and ensure the survival of his school, Seerley advocated for change. Mimetic isomorphic pressures compelled him to adopt standards set by other more prominent institutions in the field of higher education.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

Obtaining Eligibility for Teacher Pensions

In 1905 Andrew Carnegie gave \$10,000,000 to create an endowment fund for the purpose of providing pensions for retired faculty members. He started the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, an organization devoted to research on education and educational institutions in the United States. In 1906, the 27th president of the United States, William H. Taft, approved government funding of the program. Two years later, the foundation received an additional endowment from the government for the purpose of extending the retirement funds to tax-supported, higher education institutions for professors across the country. The Carnegie endowment stipulated that only faculty members who taught in private colleges, universities, and technical schools were eligible for teacher pensions, excluding from retirement benefits faculty members from state normal schools.²⁵⁶ According to the stipulations of the Carnegie Endowment “collegiate status” was a requirement to participate, and because state normal schools and other teacher training institutions did not have “collegiate status”, their faculty members were excluded from retirement benefits. The Carnegie endowment became a powerful force of standardization, as those schools which did not qualify for the benefits desired to adopt changes in order to receive benefits for their dedicated faculty.²⁵⁷

In the state of Iowa, the rules governing the pension plans permitted The State University of Iowa and Iowa College of Agriculture of Mechanic Arts to apply to the Carnegie fund in order to obtain retirement benefits for eligible professors in their institutions; however, the state normal school did not meet the requirements, and therefore was not permitted to apply to the foundation. Eventually, the chairmen of the normal board, John F. Riggs, petitioned the foundation to fund

²⁵⁶ “The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching” in *The Carnegie Trusts and Institutions* ed. Carnegie Corporation of New York et. al. (New York: The Carnegie Corporation, 2007) p. 44 – 48.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

pension plans for normal school faculty; however, the foundation decided not to. The foundation reiterated to Riggs that in order for schools to be eligible to receive funding for pension plans, the foundation required institutions to have collegiate status.

The fact that the Carnegie Endowment refused to allow the state normal school benefit aggravated school officials, faculty, and other constituents of the institution. The student newspaper, *The Normal Eye*, reported on February 3,

“Since the launching of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, trustees of the various educational institutions throughout the United States have made application for benefits from the Carnegie fund. That the trustees of the Iowa State Normal School may be placed in a good position to apply for such retiring fund, which provided in the Carnegie movement, for old teachers, it has been deemed advisable to follow the steps taken by schools at Ypsilanti, Albany, St. Louis, Chicago and New York.”²⁵⁸

In a conference held by the normal board, Professor Begeman (instructor of physics in the science program) made a motion to have the school’s name changed from “Iowa State Normal School” to “Iowa State Teachers College.” According to the faculty log the motion carried unanimously.²⁵⁹ The president’s report, submitted to the board in June of 1908, announced “on April 27, 1908, moved by Begeman, that it be the consensus of the opinion of this faculty that the name of the school should be changed by The Board of Trustees to the Iowa State Teachers College and that such steps should be taken by the board to bring about such action as is legally necessary.”²⁶⁰ The senior class of 1908 also submitted a request to the board that

²⁵⁸ Students, "Normal's Name Changed: Henceforth to Be Known as, "Iowa State Teachers' College", Name Consistent with School's Work " *The Normal Eye* 1909, p.2.

²⁵⁹ Unknown, "Normal Board Minutes" (paper presented at the Normal Board Meeting, Cedar Falls, 1908)., "Minutes of the Faculty" (paper presented at the Faculty Committee Meeting, Iowa State Normal School, 1908).

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

“inasmuch as the Iowa State Normal School is now, and has been for some years, carrying courses of college grade, and in as much as it is the interest of the student body, faculty members, and especially the senior class of 1908, we the senior class and joint assembly do hereby base a resolution to the effect that the name of the Iowa State Normal School be changed to the Iowa State Normal College.”²⁶¹

The June report encouraged members of the Board of Trustees seriously considered the name change for the benefit of the school.²⁶² In a letter to Superintendent Else, President Seerley wrote “I have your recent favor relative to the change of name of the normal school. This has grown out of two reasons: there is nothing in the statute that has ever given us a definite name. The school and the state simply chose to refer to us as 'The Normal School at Cedar falls'²⁶³.” Seerley explained to Else that The Carnegie Foundation only provided retirement privileges to institutions with collegiate status and obtaining eligibility for these benefits was the main reasons the faculty desired to remove the word “normal” from the title of the school. Seerley articulated in his letter that he believed his institution already had collegiate status, it just wasn't reflected by the title. Superintendent Else agreed with the president. Seerley relayed to Else that The Carnegie Foundation’s refusal to recognize the normal school as an institution equal in stature to the University, concerned him. For Seerley, the name change was a necessary step in elevating the status of the school.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Homer H. Seerley, "Statement of the Board of Trustees Regarding the Change in Name of the Institution," (Cedar Fall: Iowa State Normal School 1908).

²⁶³ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Superintendent F. W. Else*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

Petitioning for a New Title and Gaining Support

Beginning in January of 1909, Seerley began lobbying members of Iowa's legislature to change the name of the institution. He first wrote a letter to Senator Smith of Des Moines. He explained how The Carnegie Foundation declined to consider faculty members of the normal school in its retirement benefits package. President Seerley requested "if the general assembly is willing to place our trustees in a good position to apply for retirement funds for our old teachers it would help matters much by calling this educational institution in said resolution, the teachers college."²⁶⁵ Seerley admitted to Senator Smith that he felt the use of the word "normal" in the title of Iowa's teacher training school tarnished its reputation. According to Seerley, many other "inferior teacher institutions" used the word in their title as well, further diminishing the reputation of the word "normal."²⁶⁶ This same title had been given to week-long county teacher assemblies as well as other minor conferences that "did not deserve to dignify themselves as educational institutions."²⁶⁷ So many minor meetings associated with education, use the word "normal" that the definition no longer possessed academic relevance. Because of this fact, members of The Carnegie Board did not recognize the school at Cedar Falls as a quality institution devoted to the training of teachers. The school newspaper reported "owing to the fact that various inferior schools have adopted as their title, 'normal schools', it has become apparent that a more dignified and suitable name shall be adopted by the schools in the class of The Iowa State Normal School. The state normal school is equal to the best, and in the changing of the name, the general assembly would greatly benefit the school, most people think, in making

²⁶⁵ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Senator James A. Smith*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

application to the Carnegie board."²⁶⁸ He remarked in his letter to Senator Smith that other schools across the country began to dignify their better developed teacher schools with a more suitable name. The president mentioned to legislative committee members that Ypsilanti, Albany, St. Louis, Chicago, and New York had secured name changes for their normal schools. Seerley assured the senator that adopting a new title for the school "would not change the function and purpose of the institution."²⁶⁹ More importantly, the name change could allow aging faculty members who served the institution faithfully for several decades to be compensated during their retirement. He explained to Senator Smith that Iowa's school "is equal to the best", and the general assembly could improve the reputation of the college by agreeing to the proposed name change.

Senator Smith relayed Seerley's message to Iowa's legislature. Seerley began contacting other educational leaders to petition the Senate. Honorable Leavitt, member of the Board of Trustees of The State Normal School, contacted Senator Smith to secure the name "The Teachers College of Iowa".²⁷⁰ Leavitt told Senator Smith that he too felt the title change would earn the school in Cedar Falls more respect from other colleges thereby elevating their status as an institution of higher learning.²⁷¹ Other leaders at the forefront of the name change movement included Honorable Harwood and Honorable Feeley (Speaker of the House of Representatives, of the state house of Des Moines). Seerley requested these leaders to speak to other members of the legislature in order to secure support for the name "Teachers College."²⁷²

²⁶⁸ Students, "Normal's Name Changed: Henceforth to Be Known as, "Iowa State Teachers' College", Name Consistent with School's Work ", p. 2.

²⁶⁹ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Senator James A. Smith*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁷⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Honorable G.W. Clark State House in Des Moines*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Honorable Chase W. Lyon, Attorney General Office in Des Moines*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

In a letter written to Honorable Lyon, of the attorney general's office in Des Moines, Seerley requested that those associated with the normal school “give it a lift by calling it a State Teachers College, as such an endorsement would dignify the school and go to prove that we have good standing in Iowa.”²⁷³ He reiterated in his letter to Lyon the “embarrassment of the word ‘normal’” in the title of the college. The adoption of the by other “insignificant and often times one week summer courses for teachers” reduced the status of the word, and therefore, the status of the state normal school. Seerley implied that education and political leaders across the country placed little value in institutions upon which the word “normal” appeared. This devaluation occurred despite the level of work and the degrees conferred by any institution referring to itself as a “normal” institution.²⁷⁴ After contacting several members of the legislature, Seerley expressed in several letters written to professors and faculty members that he expected the measure to pass. Members of Iowa’s legislature sympathized with the plight of faculty who devoted their careers at the normal school yet did not qualify under the Carnegie Foundation Act for teacher pensions.

Students and faculty across the state not directly involved with the measure to change the school’s name questioned President Seerley’s motives behind the request. Rumors existed that adopting a new title involved more than simply changing the school’s name. Alumni, former faculty, current students, members of the community, and other education officials felt that the movement to change the school’s name also meant amending the original stated purpose of the institution by altering the programs and coursework offered at normal. On more than one occasion and to more than one group of individuals, Seerley conveyed that no intention existed to change the function of the school, nor to change the courses offered. He proclaimed “there

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

were no endeavors to change the direction of the college only to change the name."²⁷⁵ Nevertheless, several people wrote to Seerley relaying their dissatisfaction and concern with name change movement. They disclosed rumors that the motion originated with the office of the president and felt that Seerley overstepped his authority as leader of the institution. Seerley responded to many accusations and attempted to diffuse the situation by explaining the origins of the name change and how it could benefit the institution.

To Mrs. J. W. Robinson,

I know what Sen. Francis says concerning my ambition as president of the normal school. I can assure you that he is entirely mistaken. I am not the originator of the change of name. That came from the senior class of 1908, from alumni, who had discussed the matter quickly, and finally, through the faculty in the Board of Trustees. I am merely supporting the matter because it seems wise to grant our teachers the opportunity to have a space in the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, if other professors in the state are to be given such consideration. I know that I am charged with the ambition in order to bring the normal school to a standard that is doubtful and unprecedented. I wish to assure you that I would state the truth, and that this is not the matter of my own seeking nor is it the cause of my own personal wish for this place, or power of recognition of any sort whatsoever.²⁷⁶

To Hon. G. D. Thompson,

The change of name did not originate with me and I have not been advocating the matter, except to give the alumni information of what has been going on. I think that the change would be a good thing for the reputation of the school where it is not well known. The impression in the legislature that it is the ambition to take the school entirely away from the original plan of the state. I want to assure you, personally, that such is not the case. We are giving no higher degrees nor diploma than the first Board of Trustees originally adopted. I would be glad to have you make that fact. To those who may be interested or who may think that it is my

²⁷⁵ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to F.C. Smith*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁷⁶ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Professor C.W. Smith*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

ambition to take the school away from its original province, I only wish to correct the impression that this is not an endeavor of mine. I have been satisfied to keep the present name, believing that over the course of time it be established as an institution of superior order.²⁷⁷

To Mr. W. J. Book,

I understand that Sen. Francis deems this proposed change of name of the normal school my personal endeavor to take the school away from its original province. I write to you again simply to state that this idea did not originate with me and did not receive my personal support, but was advocated by the alumni and by the senior class of 1908, was finally adopted by the faculty and the trustees. I see no objection to this matter, as the school will not be remodeled nor will elementary teachers be given less attention than at present. I assure you that any other person who may communicate with you in reference to the matter had he not hear anything from me, as I never had any constructive legislation before the legislature in my 23 years of public service for the state.²⁷⁸

To Superintendent L. D. Curtis,

please understand that it is not my ambition to make this change of name to the state normal school. It originated with the senior class and the alumni and it came from them to the faculty and then to the Board of Trustees. It has been deemed wise to have this change made. Though it has been mentioned that it is my ambition to entirely change the scope of the school such is not true, as it never occurred to me to seek such a change and I'm indifferent myself whether it is done, but as it is being done in several of the states, I would see no reason why I would not grant the state normal school faculty equivalent recognition, particularly as it is our purpose to stay as we were in the past.²⁷⁹

In order for the resolution to pass successfully, Senator Sherman DeWolfe contacted Homer Seerley requesting letters from normal school members indicating their approval of the

²⁷⁷ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Margaret Baker*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁷⁸ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Senator Sherman W. DeWolf*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁷⁹ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Superintendent L.D. Curtis*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

name change. He used these letters as documentation to assist him in passing the legislation. Homer Seerley asked the board of trustees and several members of the alumni association to contact Senator DeWolfe and declare their support of the name change. In his correspondence with Senator DeWolfe went to great efforts to convey that the movement to change the name of the normal school was not a “President’s movement”, but a movement that originated entirely through the alumni of the student body and by the faculty.²⁸⁰

Dissent from The State University of Iowa

The state university objected to the specific use of the words “teachers college” in the title change while also declaring the omission of the word normal as an improper distinction of the type of institution at Cedar Falls. Claude Jarnagain, special correspondent for *The Daily Record Paper*, posted in an article on Friday, February 13, “it won't be ‘Iowa State Normal School’ anymore but the ‘Iowa State Normal College’ if the legislature accepts the report of the committee on educational institutions from the Senate as decided upon at a red-hot session yesterday afternoon.”²⁸¹ State University men objected to the use of the word “teachers college” as that was the title they planned to give their new College of Pedagogy at The State University of Iowa. The university only felt it necessary to rename the normal school “State Normal College.” Seerley acted quickly in responding to the state university’s counter-proposal in a new title for the school. In several letters sent to members of the legislative committee, Seerley clarified the importance of omitting the word “normal” from the title of the institution. The sole purpose of the name change was to eliminate the association of the school with the word normal

²⁸⁰. *ibid.*

²⁸¹Claude Jarnagain, "The Iowa State Normal College," *The Daily Record* 1909. Seerley.

and expunge negative connotations associated with the meaning of the word. Seerley explained to Honorable Fuslaysoon,

“our clear objection to the word normal as used in the place would be to confuse us with a meaningless institute, of which these are a number in the North central states, and cause us unnecessary negative press. We would like the legislature to take the steps to change the name in accordance with the request of the Board of Trustees, as the matter was all thoroughly canvassed at the time. We wish to avoid the word normal chiefly because we will have more certainty on our part secure attention from the Carnegie foundation management under the name teachers college.”²⁸²

In another letter to Hon. McDuffie, he said that he would prefer to call the school “The State Teachers College” because it would be well understood by everybody that the institution at Cedar Falls conducted quality academic work.²⁸³

The students of the state normal school in late February of 1909, reported that the state legislature agreed to a title change, but debated if the school’ should contain the word “normal” or “teachers” college. The student’s felt the Senate’s objections in discarding the word “normal” from the title of their college was a rather queer move. According to the students “the discussion of the question exhibited a lot of ignorance on the part of the senators and it showed conclusively that a number of them ought to post up a little as to the work the institution is doing and the feel that occupies.”²⁸⁴ Students of the normal school claimed the true intent behind the university’s declination was to secure the name “teachers college” for its own use in titling the education department. They student body felt that it was “due to the fact that the success of the normal has stimulated a lot of narrow jealousy on the part of the state university contingent and this creeps

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Honorable J. B. Harah*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁸⁴ Students, "Normal or Teachers College: Expression of Views Upon the Subject, Recently before the State Assembly," *The Normal Eye* 1909, vol. 29, no. 20, p. 1.

out on various and sundry occasions. Just occasionally, it gets into the legislature.”²⁸⁵ On February 24, the editorial staff of the student body published an article describing the desire of the students to have the name of their institution changed. They felt that for several years there was a growing conviction among people acquainted with the work of the school that the name did not adequately represent the type of work conducted at the school. According to editors of the newspaper “It was not because the term ‘normal school’ is inexpressive or originally unworthy as an appellation, but rather because of late years through its associations and other states than ours, it has become too highly expressive of things not characteristic of this institution.”²⁸⁶ In the article the students implied that the name normal had become synonymous with inferior work. They continued by claiming that many of the teacher training facilities claiming to be normal schools fell short of the scholastic advantages offered at institutions like The Iowa State Normal School. Students perceived the biggest annoyance to be that valuable resources for training teachers were scattered across these miniscule academies when those resources could be put into more prestigious schools like their school in Cedar Falls.²⁸⁷ The students concluded by arguing that “the state normal school in Iowa has become in all respects worthy of the state whose name it bears and is now known far and wide for the peculiar efficiency and success of its educational work.”²⁸⁸ Alumni, students, and friends of the institution all hoped the state of Iowa would recognize their work as deserving of a title worthy of merit.²⁸⁹ Most likely, changing the institution’s name from “The Iowa State Normal School” to the “Iowa State Normal College” may have satisfied the requirements in obtaining the endowment from the

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ "Normal's Name Changed: Henceforth to Be Known as, "Iowa State Teachers' College", Name Consistent with School's Work ", vol. 29, no. 17, p.2.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ "Normal or Teachers College: Expression of Views Upon the Subject, Recently before the State Assembly.", vol. 29, no. 20, p. 1

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Despite this fact, constituents of the school continued to debate the complete removal of the word normal. The fact that Seerley and other members associated with the school rejected the word normal indicated that perhaps there were deeper issues under the surface of the faculty pension fund question. Even though Seerley repeatedly argued his motivation in seeking a new title for the school was merely due to retirement funds, the fact that he sought to drop the word normal was a clear indication of his desire to distinguish his institution from others that were arguably beneath it in the institutional pecking order.

Some Senate members opposed the request of the normal school to change its name. Senator Whipple accused the normal school of maintaining entrance requirements too high for those students who had mastered rudimentary branches of education but were anxious to train as teachers. Senator Whipple argued “that just because the school refuses admission and sets high standards for entrance requirements does not make the institution a college.”²⁹⁰ Senator Whipple did not agree that the business conducted at normal was worthy of title change. Seerley responded by pointing out that courses existed at the school which accommodated students of *all* educational backgrounds, from a two year advanced course to a full five-year course. He also explained that the training school afforded excellent preparatory training under the skilled direction of some of the best educators in the state. On of March 4, 1909, Seerley received confirmation from Senator DeWolfe, informing him that the newly proposed title of the school had been approved by the Senate and he expected the House to pass it as well.

Finally, on Tuesday, April 6, 1909, The Iowa legislature approved an act “to amend section 2675 of the code relating to the normal school at Cedar falls:

²⁹⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Seerley to Unknown*, 1909. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Arcives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

Be It Enacted By The General Assembly Of The State Of Iowa:
 Section 1. **State teachers college.** That section 2675 of the code is hereby amended by striking out the, after the word schools in line 3 thereof, and by inserting in lieu thereof the following: shall be officially designated then known as the Iowa state teachers college."²⁹¹

Once the school received word that the Bill passed, an article appeared in the student newspaper entitled "State Normals Name Finally Changed Altogether: Original Proposition Passed Senate." Unfortunately for the state normal school, the name change did not have the desired effects. Seerley hoped that by removing the word normal from the title of his school, he could also remove doubts associated with the academic caliber of the coursework offered at the school. However, as debates regarding higher education in the state of Iowa progressed, circumstances revealed the true opinions of state officials regarding plans for the institution at Cedar Falls.

Shortly after obtaining official approval to change the institution's name, the state board of education published a report suggesting the state support a coordination plan to eliminate duplicated coursework at the state schools. The conclusion of the report suggested the state teacher's college be converted to a two-year institution. From the moment the governor appointed the members of the board, they conducted an intense investigation of matters pertaining to coursework, especially course overlap, at each of the state schools.²⁹² At the conclusion of the investigation, the board published its report which included recommendations on how to solve the duplication problem. The state schools rallied together in the hopes of preventing the board's suggested changes from being set into motion. The coordination movement and the confusion it created are discussed in further detail in the following chapter.

²⁹¹ "Changing Name of State Normal School to State Teachers College," in *S.F. 99* (Des Moines: Iowa State Legislature, 1909).

²⁹² The Iowa State Board of Education, "Report of the State Board and Plan to Coordinate," (Cedar Falls: The University of Northern Iowa 1912).

Chapter 7

The State Board of Education Plans for Iowa's Future: Coordinating Programs at the Three State Institutions

After business commenced at the now Iowa State Teacher's College, Seerley continued to guard against rumors associated with the academic caliber and general function and purpose of the institution. Seerley explained to The State Board and other education leaders that since the creation of the College, it had been a special school, unique in its nature, devoted to teacher training from kindergarten to the highest high school grades, and were "particularly strong in all these kinds of education."²⁹³ From the beginning, Seerley argued, the Teacher's College endeavored to keep pace with educational progress and elaborated its courses of study to fully comply with the province the state legally designated in 1876. Seerley conveyed that the Teacher's College had a notable reputation in the State of Iowa as well as surrounding states. The certificates awarded and the degrees conferred at the state teacher's college were invaluable the state's public school population. According to Seerley, the school had at least seven distinct departments organized for the purpose of teacher certification. The school also maintained a training department devoted exclusively to professional work in education and actual training in teaching. Seerley asserted the courses offered in his school "differed greatly from any courses offered at other schools."²⁹⁴ These were only a few of the reasons he offered as to "why many of the characteristics that exist here have been so decidedly emphasized and advocated as the

²⁹³ Seerley, Homer H. *Special Report of the President to the New State Board of Education*, 1909. Report. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁹⁴ Seerley, Homer H. *Seerley to Member of the Board of Education*, 1906. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

recognition of such needs and American civilization should always be insisted upon by colleges that make it a special business to train teachers for public service.”²⁹⁵

Despite Seerley’s attempts in justifying the special nature of his school, his greatest fears were realized when the state board of education announced its plan to eliminate entire programs and other various course offerings at The Iowa State Teacher’s College. The board of education sought to remove the degree-granting ability from the college, and send students seeking a four-year degree in teacher training to The State University of Iowa. Board members wanted the institution at Cedar Falls to become a two year school. If the state succeeded in its consolidation attempts, through regulative isomorphic pressure the scope of the state teacher’s college could change entirely.

Combining Curricula of the Three State Schools

The legislative committee appointed a State Board of Education for two reasons. First, it wanted to reduce appropriation request by all three state colleges and organize educational spending at each institution. Second, the state wanted a way in which to eliminate wasteful educational spending caused by overlapping course work at the schools. The Finance Committee, as appointed by The State Board, conducted research on each state school. Members collected data on financial spending, programs and coursework offered by the schools, student enrollment rates, graduation rates, and degrees conferred. It concluded that the state of Iowa had two options. The first: it could decide to support each institution as a school devoted to different kinds of training with distinct functions. The second option included spending less money by combining them into one university with one educational purpose. According to the report, the

²⁹⁵ "Report to the State Board of Education Concerning the History and Province of the State Teachers College " (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Teachers College, 1910).

board felt the primary problem with combining the schools into one university derived from the fact that each institution was “bound by traditions and institutional pride” and would do anything necessary to keep the programs, departments, and courses they offered.²⁹⁶ Despite conflicts which may arise, the board claimed that in order for the state to progress educationally, it was time to consider consolidating the three state schools in order to solve this problem. The finance committee’s report asked the state to consider what constituted the most efficient system of higher education in Iowa, and offered recommendations in an effort to eliminate educational waste.²⁹⁷

The Proposal of the Finance Committee

Since 1909, the state board became intimately acquainted with each of the three state schools. It researched each school’s business practices, department affairs, courses offered, attendance records, faculty information, finances, and other matters of institutional development. On July 16, 1912, The State Board of Education generated a report on a coordination plan designated to combine specific departments of The State University of Iowa and The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. The coordination plan also suggested making the teachers college of Iowa a two-year institution instead of a four-year institution. It is suggested that those students seeking a four-year teaching degree could complete it at The state university's College of Education. At an executive session, state board members adopted a resolution which instructed the finance committee to report on the feasibility of carrying out the coordination plan. They focused on a strategy which combined coursework in the engineering program at Ames and the domestic technology program in Iowa City. In a prepared memorandum the committee

²⁹⁶ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Professor Jas E. Mitchell*, 1910. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

presented financial and sentimental facts in connection with the coordination of the schools. In compliance with the foregoing resolution the finance committee prepared the following report which was read and presented to the board by Mr. Boyd, chairman of the committee.²⁹⁸

The finance committee considered the work done regarding the coordination project as the most important work the state asked the board to complete. The finance committee specifically implied that when the state board was created, it asked members of the finance committee to reconstruct departments in particular fields in the three state educational institutions. Members claimed they conducted this work in order to perfect Iowa's system of higher education. The committee suggested there be no further delay in making clear the position of the state board. It asked that if the state agreed to the coordination plan, that it should be announced by the state and adopted as soon as possible.²⁹⁹

Members of the board agreed that the biggest problem involved in the coordination plan was the refusal of the separate institutions to combine. The finance committee stated that these institutions "are invariably jealous of their prerogatives and cherish their traditions as something sacred."³⁰⁰ The committee expected that these schools would not willingly relinquish any courses to the other institutions. The finance committee anticipated great problems from officers and faculties of the three colleges. The committee felt faculty members were too close to their traditions to view the course overlap issue as a financial burden to the state. For this reason, the state could not depend on the school's reaching a solution without an intervening party. The fact of the matter was that the state allowed the schools to develop separately with little regard for programs of the other schools. As a consequence, the college's developed programs of study

²⁹⁸ The Iowa State Board of Education, "Report of the State Board and Plan to Coordinate," (Cedar Falls: The University of Northern Iowa 1912).

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

which overlapped causing wasteful spending by the state.³⁰¹ The biggest question for The Finance Committee and The State Board of Education was whether or not the state should continue supporting all three colleges simply to maintain the traditions of each of the separate institutions. The two committees felt the wisest, most efficient solution would be to consolidate the three institutions at one place. The initial loss in the abandonment of one program at the expense of enlarging the other may seem high at first; but, it would be far more economical and efficient for the state long-term. However, members decided that consolidating three institutions into one large school posed significant legal complications. Because all three institutions developed extensively as separate schools, they recommended allowing the three institutions to remain separate. They composed a solution which reduced duplications of coursework to a justifiable minimum; yet, still reserved the educational needs of the state in the most efficient manner. Though it was impossible to estimate how much money their plan would save the state, members believed to long-term savings outweighed the immediate cost of consolidation. By combining programs, cost could be reduced, and programs could receive appropriate financial support from the state.

The financial committee carefully prepared a memorandum detailing a tentative plan of coordination. The recommendations in the coordination plan were submitted in four steps. The first step proposed that all work in engineering be centered at the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, and that the college of applied science at the university be discontinued. The second step suggested that all courses in professional education and in liberal arts offered at The Iowa State Teachers College, which extend beyond the sophomore year, be discontinued and that similar courses at the university be further developed. The third step recommended that the general science course and the department of home economics existing at the college of

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

agriculture and mechanic arts be discontinued, and that a department of home economics be opened at the university. Finally, The Finance Committee suggested that the changes go into effect in September of 1913; and, recommended that the general assembly establish additional normal schools.

The finance committee agreed that: “the undersigned were satisfied that, taking all things into consideration, this plan offer the best possible solution of this coordination problem. Further study did not materially alter our opinion.” W. R. Boyd and Thomas Lambert, members of The Finance Committee, signed the committee report. One committee member, D. A. Emery, did not agree with the plan to remove all liberal arts courses from the state teachers college. Emery argued that the law establishing the state teachers college (which at the time of the plan was still in force by the state) stated that the teachers college “shall be for the special instruction and training of teachers for the common schools.” Because the state refused in a large majority of its high schools to employ teachers without college degrees, and because there was no question that the high school was a part of the common school system in the state, the state teachers college was clearly within its rights and its duty under the law to keep up with the growth and advancement of the common schools. Therefore, Emery felt it was appropriate for the teachers college to offer high school training programs and provide a full college course.³⁰² He also debated that because the legislature approved the name change from the state normal school to the teachers college they approved the action of the institution to grant collegiate degrees. Emery did not believe The State Board of Education had the authority to change the condition of the teachers college which had already been previously established by the state. Emery argued: “that we have at Cedar Falls a normal school that is not excelled by any in this country. It has been

³⁰² Ibid

presided over for twenty-five years by a man of exceptional ability as an executive and as a teacher.”³⁰³

Because no member of the committee was an educational expert, it submitted the plan to several prominent educators asking them to examine it and determine if it seemed justifiable. The committee consulted Kendrick C. Babcock, expert in higher education in the National Educational Bureau at Washington, Henry S. Pritchett, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Andrew S. Draper, Commissioner of Education for the state of New York, Jacob G. Shurmann, President of The University of Missouri, and Charles R. Van Hise, President of The University of Wisconsin.

A. Rose Hill, responded to Mr. Boyd first. Hill announced after reading the report and examining the course catalog of the three state institutions, that he completely agreed with the report from beginning to end. He offered his opinion on matters pertaining to The State Teachers College of Iowa. He believed that the state was not wasting money by educating students in general courses during their freshman and sophomore years. However, he agreed that it was, in fact, a waste of money to continue to educate only a few students of Junior and senior standing. He felt those students could receive the same education of greater academic value at the university in Iowa City with no additional expense.³⁰⁴

Henry S. Pritchett, the second of the experts to respond, answered “without misgiving”, that an attempt to continue the development of the engineering program at the university, “would neither be feasible nor wise.” He believed the university's department of physics and chemistry retained strong records of academic progress and achievement, and its science program was a better fit for undertaking a college of engineering. However, he suggested that because The

³⁰³ State Board of Education, "Minutes of the State Board of Education of Iowa" (paper presented at the State Board of Education, Des Moines, 1912)., 210.

³⁰⁴ Ibid

College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts had a developed and advanced engineering department it did not make financial sense to move this program to the state university. He felt Ames should retain the college of engineering. In his opinion, The state agricultural college should remain specifically devoted to the training of students in agricultural sciences, and should focus more on the students who wished to become practical farmers. He also felt that the normal school's sole purpose was the training of elementary teachers for common schools and that the normal school in Iowa should, in Pritchett's judgment, "devote itself to this work abandon the granting of college degrees and offerings in the liberal arts field."³⁰⁵ Pritchett concluded that the coordination plan of the state of Iowa was admirable, because it related the higher institutions to the state system as a whole.

Kendrick C. Babcock acknowledged that the problem existing in Iowa was a problem that existed in many other states. To his curiosity and surprise, the states allowed these conditions and continued to tolerate extravagant rivalries of state-supported institutions. He suggested that Iowa's proposed solution to the problem was "timely, equitable, judicious, practicable, and efficient."³⁰⁶ He declared the tentative coordination plan proposed by the memorandum would "go far towards meeting such reasonable demands, and would secure a wise adjustment for the different state agencies for higher education in Iowa, and would constitute a real contribution to a movement for higher educational efficiency, with deep significance for other states."³⁰⁷

A. S. Draper was in opposition of the coordination plan and thought it to be "extremely experimental if not sensational to undertake to coordinate under one management three educational institutions of essentially different purposes, plans, and grade." He concluded by

³⁰⁵ Education, "Minutes of the State Board of Education of Iowa.", p. 211

³⁰⁶ Iowa State Board of Education, "Minutes of the Meeting of July 1912," (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Iowa State Board of Education, 1912).

³⁰⁷ Education, "Minutes of the State Board of Education of Iowa.", p. 212-213.

saying he had “no confident opinion on the matter” especially considering the potential outcomes.

After considering the inherent difficulties of the situation, Charles Van Hise wrote that he thought consolidating overlapping courses was wise. He specifically addressed the issue of placing the college of education within the state university. He agreed this was an excellent solution to the problem. He claimed that the task of successfully preparing teachers for a higher class of schools was too large for the institution at Cedar Falls. The state university could offer a resolution in this regard. He stated “a College of Education as a thing apart from a College of Liberal Arts is unthinkable. The only possible way by which the normal school at Cedar Falls could satisfactorily give the work of a college education would be for it to become also a college of liberal arts. This duplicates the very central work of the University.”³⁰⁸

In Mr. Russell’s judgment, the training of elementary teachers should be the sole responsibility of the normal schools, and that the training of secondary school teachers and administrators should be superimposed upon a sound collegiate foundation. He expressed that:

“it is useless to talk of professional training for persons who do not have a good academic training. In fact, the ordinary college course is insufficient. High school teachers need specialized information, in precisely the way that lawyers, engineers, or farmers need specialized information. The ordinary arts course does not give that kind of training. Hence, the criticism of those who advanced normal school training as a corrective, and those who would remedy defects by a postgraduate course in academic studies. Both are right and both are wrong. What is wanted is a general education as broad and liberal as circumstances will permit; next, specialization along lines which the teacher will follow; been trained to develop technical skill in school teaching.”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

He agreed that the cheapest way for any state to train its secondary teachers and administrators was to train them in the state university. His chief criticism regarding teacher training at the university was that its courses were more oriented toward academic studies and opposed all professional interests. However, Russell argued that he believed the school of education should be a part of every state University; and, it should offer instruction and specialized academic courses as well as theoretical and practical courses in secondary education and school management. He also felt it should have access to a real school or a school system for the same reasons that a clinic and hospital are needed in connection with the medical school.³¹⁰

Statement of the Problems Specific to The Teachers College

In the summary of the research submitted by the finance committee, members accused the state of Iowa as misinterpreting the purpose and function of a normal school. They argued

“by very general consent, substantiated by wide practice in the United States, the following definition of the state normal school is accepted: state normal school is a professional school of secondary grade established, maintained and administered by the state for the purpose of training teachers. It should be superimposed upon the high school and should require two years of academic and professional work in about equal proportion, its main purpose being to develop scholarly habits, professional knowledge, mental attitude and touching power in the teachers of the elementary schools.”³¹¹

Their study reported that the normal school as a professional school should be different from a department of education on a college or university campus. It stated “the normal school is not a high school or college” and that it was distinctly a professional school. The problem in the state of Iowa, according to the study, was that the teacher’s college was duplicating similar work

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Iowa State Board of Education, *State Board of Education Meeting Minutes*, July, 1910. Meeting Minutes. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The State Board of Education Minutes*, p. 413 -437

done at the university, and was not within its rights to offer four-year degrees. According to the finance committee's interpretation of what it meant to be a normal school, the right to confer degrees belonged only to an institution with university status. The committee felt that the training of specialized and secondary school teachers belonged to a college or university and not to a professional school. In order to remedy this problem, the committee offered two solutions. First, they could develop a strong and thorough college of liberal arts at the teachers college in connection with professional courses in education; or, the state could choose to centralize all of the training of secondary teachers and school administrators at the state university in Iowa City.

The Council of Departments of the Iowa State Teachers College

In September of 1912, Seerley held a preliminary meeting with department chairs in order to discuss the creation of a new committee called The Council of Departments of the Iowa State Teachers College. Seerley suggested this committee be comprised of department heads and be completely confidential. This committee provided faculty an opportunity to fundamentally discuss matters related to the future of education, there college, and Iowa legislation. Seerley believed the council was an avenue through which faculty could privately discuss their opinions regarding the merits of the new coordination laws proposed by The Board of Education without concern of public criticisms.

The Council of Departments could also become an advisory body to which Seerley could submit questions of policy development for constructive consideration. Ultimately, this counsel could be a confidential way for faculty members and the president to make decisions beneficial to the governing body of the teachers college. As the coordination situation unfolded during the

next couple of months, Seerley grew even more concerned about the future status of his institution.

Public Reactions to the Board's Proposal

The proposal originally submitted by the finance committee advised the state board to supply to the people of Iowa specific, detailed explanations of any actions taken. To gain public support of the movement, the finance committee felt the board needed to release public statements justifying the need for coordination. Once the public discovered the intentions of the state board, newspapers across Iowa published the board's actions along with the public's response toward the coordination of the three schools. *The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette* on Wednesday, October 9, 1912, was the first local paper that reported on the presentation of the finance committee's findings. The editors said that the action of the board was perhaps “the most far-reaching ever taken by any similar governing body in this country.”³¹² In the column, reporters described what board members felt the sole purpose behind the state appointing them as a governing body of the three higher education institutions. The article referred to the legislative act from 1909 which created a single governing board for the state schools. In the section depicting the “hard problem” in Iowa's system of education, the Gazette reported the board's belief that

“the intent of the general assembly creating this board was exceedingly plain. Duplications as between the several institutions were to be reduced to a justifiable minimum. The task thus imposed was not without great difficulty. Reconstruction in anything is no easy task. Education institutions are invariably jealous of their prerogatives and cherish their traditions as something sacred. It was not to be expected that any institution would willingly give up anything it possessed. Even though was

³¹² Unknown, "State Educational Board Takes Important Action Regarding the Iowa Colleges," *The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette* 1912, p. 1.

very clear to an unprejudiced observer that it would be for the benefit of the state as a whole to make such sacrifice.”³¹³

The paper reported that no faculty members from any of the schools were consulted regarding the coordination plan. The state board felt that professionals with any close ties to the individual schools were too invested in the institutions to view the questions of efficiency in an unbiased and impartial way. They noted that because the educational institutions were allowed to develop separately, with little regard for each other, they inadvertently duplicated some programs of study. The question the board now faced was if these conditions, “especially extravagant and productive of weakness” should be allowed to continue for sentimental, unselfish reasons.

The Article, entitled *State Educational Board Takes Important Action Regarding Iowa Colleges*, went on to say that the board felt it was too late for these institutions to be consolidated into one great body. The Finance Committee “upon careful investigation” concluded that a coordination plan involving all three state institutions should take place. The obligation of the state was to meet the educational needs of the people in the most efficient and effective manner. The article conveyed that the State Board of Education felt it wasteful for the state of Iowa to continue to maintain two colleges of engineering covering practically the same field. They also felt maintaining two colleges of liberal arts, one in Cedar Falls and the other in Iowa City, cost needlessly cost the state additional money. They clarified further “the state teachers college would better serve the educational needs of the state by concentrating its energies on the training of teachers for the elementary schools.” The Board explained that the faculties in professional training and education were thoroughly established at the university. Finally, The Board regarded the supply of properly trained teachers for rural and elementary schools the most potent

³¹³ Ibid.

educational need in Iowa and felt the state teacher's college should be more focused on meeting this demand.³¹⁴ The article confirmed that the only educational expert consulted by the board that did not agree with the finance committee's plan was Dr. Draper.³¹⁵

Alumni of the state teachers college hotly rejected the findings of the finance committee and their coordination plan. President Seerley recommended that protests of the faculty, staff, alumni, and students be forwarded to The State Board of Education. He urged that they submit their opinions to local and statewide newspapers. The goal for the alumni was to sway public opinion, and pressure members of the legislatures to refrain from implementing the changes recommended by the state board report. In response to a letter of inquiry from Ms. Florence Strecker Goodykontz regarding the developments, Seerley commented that "the faculty here is very sorry this difficulty has arisen and the women of the college can do a great deal toward emphasizing the importance of their school."³¹⁶

Seerley contested what to him was one of the biggest accusations made by The State Board of Education. They assumed the teachers college was "a college of liberal arts training." Seerley continuously asserted whatever subjects taught at the school were handled primarily as a preparation for a teaching career. He proclaimed further, that the law of 1876 establishing the institution called for the creation of an institution for the instruction of teachers for common schools. He told Beam he regretted to see the college suffer condemnation and repudiation especially considering the unanimous cooperation of recent years pertaining to the support of the institution. He commented that The State Teachers College of Iowa was the only institution of its

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Mrs. Florence Strecker Goodykontz*, 1912. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

kind in the whole United States, and its uniqueness was the very reason that Iowa should wish to retain it as an example to other states.³¹⁷

In a special report of the president to The State Board of Education, the title of which was *The Teachers College Is Not a College Of Liberal Arts*, Seerley disputed assumptions among education leaders regarding the function of the teachers college. Seerley emphatically declared “The State Teachers College was not and never should become a college of liberal arts.” Its curriculum did not contain courses of study for any training other than training for students intending to become teachers. He continued to explain that every branch of study taught at the teacher’s school was developed from the standpoint of what a teacher needed to consider when preparing to give instruction. Every lesson taught by professors was conducted in a technical manner. For Seerley, the liberal arts education was a preparatory education, not a technical education. The education undertaken at the teacher’s college, where every student enrolled had previously declared their intent in becoming a teacher, was essentially different than training for any other occupation. Seerley explained that while other states attempted to make the professional education of teachers similar in relation to the liberal arts training of lawyers, physicians, and clergyman, this was not the case in Iowa. These attempts, according to Seerley, had only been partially successful. He always promoted The Iowa State Teachers College as an institution “unique in its undertakings, discipline, moral excellence, and in its endeavors to give superb, academic training to future teachers for Iowa’s schools.”³¹⁸

The Iowa State Teachers College student newspaper, *The College Eye*, reported on Thursday, October 17, 1912, on “the sweeping action” proposed by The State Board of Education. The article, entitled *Sweeping Action*, informed students of the specific changes

³¹⁷ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Honorable J.C. Bean*, 1912. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

³¹⁸ "Report of the President " (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Teachers College 1912).

regarding the three colleges. The action aroused the indignation of all three institutions. The article reported that the coordination plan passed with only one dissenting vote. In a press statement given by the board representatives, the president explained reasons why the board had taken such action. He regarded the coordination plan as “the most important and far-reaching duty with which the board was charged.”³¹⁹

The student body of the teachers college responded by holding a mass meeting to voice their objections to actions taken by the state board. The college paper recounted that over one thousand students, together with the Cedar Falls band, gathered on Monday night, October 15, at the College Hill Park. Several heated speeches given by both men and women showed the attitude of the students towards the board's action. The crowd of people marched from the Park, down Main Street, and into the heart of the business section of the town. The paper reported it was the greatest demonstration of loyalty ever shown in the Cedar Fall's history. According to the newspaper article, though appeals to the state board were useless in changing board member's opinions, the power of the public's response now sweeping over the state had the ability to impact the enforcement of the plan.³²⁰

The action of Iowa's State Board of Education was not only publicized in Iowa newspapers, but columns appeared in other state newspapers including the *New York Times*. An article published by an unknown author entitled “Changes for Iowa, College of Applied Science to be Removed to Ames” appeared in a special to the *New York Times* on October 19, 1912.³²¹ The article summarized the action taken by the board focusing primarily on the removal of the engineering college from The State University at Iowa City. Though no personal opinions were

³¹⁹ Students, "Sweeping Action Taken by the State Board of Education: Engineering, Domestic Science, and Liberal Arts Affected: Indignation of All Three Institutions Aroused," *The College Eye* 1912, vol. 2, no. 7, p.1.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *Ibid.*

printed, the fact that editors of the New York Times mentioned the situation in Iowa showed the importance of the coordination plan to others. It also proved that the situation of overlapping coursework may have been a problem which concerned other leading education officials from various states.

As the situation progressed, President Seerley was careful to avoid making any statements to members of the press that could not be verified. However, on several occasions he voiced his opinion concerning the future of the institution and the state's plans for consolidation. For Seerley, "it did not seem possible for the state teachers college to be an institution of higher merit if the action was completed."³²² The teachers college needed to address the distortion of facts by educational experts including the college's legal status, the use of the term common schools, and the future plans of the teachers college. President Seerley clarified, with as much detail as possible, the misrepresentations of the regarding these facts. A circular published by the college entitled *The Situation at the Iowa State Teachers College at Cedar Falls*, defined the legal status of the state teachers college. It relayed to readers what the statutes of organization said about the distinct purpose of the college. According to the article, the act, Senate file 171, read "an act to establish and maintain a school for the instruction and training of teachers of common schools, be it enacted by the general assembly of the state of Iowa: Section 1: that a school for the special instruction and training of teachers for common schools of the state is hereby established at Cedar falls Black Hawk County, Iowa." The circular used definitions printed in Iowa's senate files to refute allegations brought against them about their rights as a Teachers College. In the Senate file, it stated that the state of Iowa "shall provide for the education of all, the use of the system of common schools and such schools shall be organized and kept in each school district at least three months in each year." The state's constitution

³²² Ibid.

defined common schools to mean “the public school system of education.” Therefore, as argued in the circular, under the definition provided by the state of Iowa, was universal, The State College was clearly within its legal rights to prepare *all* kinds of teachers for the public schools, including high school teachers. When the state officially changed the title of the normal school to a teachers college, they gave statutory justification for the teachers college to be an educational institution of college grade for the preparation of students to be teachers.³²³ The circular also addressed the college's ability to confer diplomas. Since 1877, the catalog of the state teachers college noted that a diploma (either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Didactics) would be granted to each student after completion of all required courses.³²⁴

Toward the end of October, as contention surrounding the coordination plan waged on, President Seerley shared in a letter to a fellow normal school president, that the candidates for Iowa's governorship opposed the program of The State Board of Education. The candidates believed that the board had overstepped its authority. The student newspaper published a statement by Leavitt regarding his dissenting opinion placed before the state board at Cedar Falls. Leavitt, who was a resident member of the state Board of Education, was absent when action was taken by the board to remove the last two years of coursework that the teachers college offered. In his statement, Leavitt argued that had the presidents of each institution been included in the decision-making process, valuable information could have been obtained from the president's combined expertise in higher education, agricultural science, medicine, and the

³²³ State of Iowa, "An Act to Ammend Section 2675 of the Code Relating to the Normal School at Cedar Falls ", ed. 33rd General Assembly (Des Moines 1909).. 33rd General Assembly: Senate File 99: An act to amend section 2675 of the code relating to the normal school at Cedar Falls: “be it enacted by the general assembly of the state of Iowa; section 1, state teacher college, that section 2675 of the code is hereby amended by striking out, after the word schools on line three thereof, and by inserting in lieu thereof the following: shall be officially designated and known as the Iowa State Teachers College." This act was approved on April 6, 1909.

³²⁴ Unknown, "The Situation at the Iowa State Teachers College at Cedar Falls," (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Teachers College, 1912).

training of teachers. However, Leavitt pointed out that these men were only addressed once committee members made the decision. They did not seek approval from the presidents, they merely informed them of the changes to their institutions. Leavitt alleged that the board made little to no effort to obtain accurate information of the conditions at Cedar Falls. He mentioned his frustration with the fact that instead of submitting this plan to Iowa experts more familiar with the conditions in the state, the board sent it out to “so-called experts.” He questioned why the state of Iowa should consider opinions rendered from leading educators in Wisconsin as relevant to the state. He continued:

“Gentlemen, you have made a serious mistake. Your whole scheme is based upon the proposition that the teachers college course is a duplicate to the Iowa liberal arts department of the state University. That is a mistaken premise. The difference between an ordinary liberal arts course and the college course of the Iowa State Teachers College is that the college course of the teachers college is made up of such arts and sciences as have to do with the special work of preparing persons to become effective teachers. The teachers colleges a professional school, preparing teachers for rural school, for grade, and high schools.”³²⁵

Mr. Leavitt contested the logic behind moving the professional training school in Cedar Falls to The state university in Iowa City. The state supported the school and spent a lot of money building it. Why destroy it to build another one of equal or lesser quality at the state university? Leavitt pleaded: “Do not destroy the school, the pride of thousands of Iowa citizens. If you take away the Junior and senior year work you prevent many from entering freshman and sophomore years. It will drive away our men, causing the potential loss of our glee club, are debating an oratory, and are athletics. The glory of the school will depart.”³²⁶

³²⁵ Students, "Mr. Leavitts' Dissenting Opinion: Placed before the State Board of the Exact Situation at Cedar Falls," *The College Eye* 1912 vol. 2, no. 9, p.1.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

In an article distributed in the same week, the staff of the student newspaper reported on the board of education as it related to the teachers college. The article acknowledged that the student body and alumni of the teachers college heard with “indignation and regret” the recent action of The State Board of Education, which would deprive students of their Junior and Senior years, and take from the right and privilege of the college to confer the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Education. The students protested the action claiming it lowered them from the dignity of a college to the rank of a second grade normal school. They argued that the action of the board made the course of study at the college lower than it was in its first year of organization. They felt that while other states had been gradually raising the status of their normal schools to equate the status of their institution, the Board of Education forced their college to fall behind other teacher training schools while also preventing it from gaining status among other institutions of higher education. The students asked their community to speak to their representative at the coming session of the legislature, and to let the matter be decided once and for all. They defended their position by stating

“The state of Iowa through the charter granted to this institution gave us the right and privilege to train teachers for the common schools. As has been shown elsewhere on this issue, the term common school is synonymous with public school, and this includes teachers of all grades, rural, elementary and high school. Who's authority is the greater, that of the Board of Education or of the state of Iowa? The children of the state are being weighed in balance. Which is the heavier, your own flesh and blood or a few paltry dollars? When it has once been decided what authority is paramount in the state, we shall give to that authority our allegiance and respect.”³²⁷

The Des Moines Capital published the public statement made by The State Teachers Association regarding the decision of the board. According to the article, members of the

³²⁷ "The Board of Education and the Teachers College," *The College Eye* 1912, p.6.

resolution committee of the State Teachers Association did not offer an opinion on the action of the state board nor revealed that the committee was opposed to such an action. The State Teachers Association articulated in the article that, in order to protect the association from any public denigration, it felt the wisest course of action for them to take was to ignore the proposed changes and let the legislators settle the dispute. According to spokesperson professor F. C. Sega, “to mixup in this fight over the state colleges would be bad policy and the general sentiment is against any such action. The proposed changes are being extensively discussed. However, the alumni of all the various state schools are indulging in heated arguments over the action of the state board, and The State Teachers Association does not want to get involved in the fight.”³²⁸

Students from The State University Protest

Editors of *The Daily Iowan* (and students attending The State University) first published the news of the State Board’s decision on Thursday, October 10th, 1912. That very evening, students of the engineering department held a meeting to discuss the action taken by the board. According to the editor, “every engineer” was present during the meeting, and students appointed a committee whose responsibility included publicly denouncing the board’s action and broadcasting the stand taken by the engineers of The State University. The student committee planned and held a campus wide meeting in the auditorium to inform university constituents of the problems pertaining to the coordination plan o the state board of education. The committee entitled the get together “No Cooking School for Us.”³²⁹ Representatives of each of the schools spoke to a crowd of over 1200 students relaying their stance concerning the state’s plan to

³²⁸ Unknown, "Teachers Unwilling to Act on Changes in State Colleges: Resolutions Committee Unanimously Opposed to Reporting Resolution, State Association to Remain Silent, Leaders Are of the Opinion Tha Tthe Best Thing for Teachers to Do Is Leave Question to the Legislature," *The Des Moines Capital* 1912.

³²⁹ "Engineers to Stick Slogan of Big Meet," *The Daily Iowan* 1912.

remove the school of engineering. Chairmen and President of the School of Engineering, B.F. Boer, announced over the cheers and jeers of the student body, “there is not a single engineer at Iowa who will ever attend Ames,” to which the crowd responded with an uproar of cheering. Boer declared further that the move by the state board to send the school of engineering to the Agricultural College was destroying the integrity of the University as the college of engineering was a necessity to Iowa. He called for the student body, alumni, and friends to support the engineers.³³⁰

The Committee asked the public to communicate directly with them concerning their opinions about the state’s action. *The Daily Iowan* reported that the letters received by the engineer’s committee and by the Ben Boer showed the school’s determination to “stand pat” and refuse to allow the state to proceed further with its action. In hopes of arousing public opinion against the move, Boer, together with prominent members of the community, printed and mailed several copies of the Board’s resolution to broadcast throughout the state the detrimental effects of the board’s decision.³³¹

On October 15th, editors of *The Daily Iowan* published an article citing the viewpoint of the engineers and reasons why they felt The State Board of education should reconsider their solution. Though the engineer’s committee believed the board had done what it thought was best for the state, the committee did not believe the members of the board fully understood the effects their solution, if carried out, could have on the state university and on the engineering profession in the state of Iowa. The committee also articulated it did not believe the board fully understood “just what was required of the engineering profession.” At the mass meeting held on the university’s campus, the committee gave its reasons why the college of engineering, and other

³³⁰ "Meeting Is Held by Engineers," *The Daily Iowan* 1912, vol. 12, no. 21, p.1.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

engineering programs, should be concentrated at the state university of Iowa. The committee's resolution embodied the following points:

“Fewer duplications would result by concentrating the engineering work at Iowa than at Ames. The profession of engineering is requiring more cultural training and the university is far more equipped to provide students coursework in cultural subjects. The state university also has hydro-electric equipment such as owned by very few engineering schools in the country. Should the work be moved to Ames, this apparatus would be lost to the students of engineering at Iowa.”³³²

The column ended by announcing the committee's belief that the university could win the fight not through negative fights with the board, but through “good sound logic and proof.” The committee concluded by inviting the public to submit their opinions regarding their proposal and the state's resolution to be published in *The Daily Iowan*. The committee felt that by involving more of the public's argument, whether antagonistic or favorable, “the stronger we can make our position.”³³³

For the duration of the month of October, *The Daily Iowan* devoted a column to publishing notes and letters received by the editors of the newspaper and by the engineer's committee concerning the public's opinion of the coordination movement. On October 16th, editors wrote that W.O. Finkbine, “one of the university's foremost alumni” had announced his willingness to head the fight to retain the engineering school at the state university. Together with the alumni board of the institution, Finkbine planned to orchestrate a meeting with university alumni to take up the question of fighting the board's action. According to the article,

³³² "Education Board Is Still Unmoved," *The Daily Iowan* 1912, vol. 12, no. 23, p.1.

³³³ Ernest Fogelberg, "View Point of the Engineers," *The Daily Iowan*, 1912. vol. 12, no. 12, p.1

the editors had reason to believe that the majority of alumni favored immediate retaliation in order to retain the engineering school.³³⁴

Later in the month of October, *The Daily Iowan* reported on Leavitt's request to the state board to reconsider the action taken. The article reported that Leavitt declared the board did not make the proper investigation of the school criticizing the members for not consulting Seerley, Parsons, and Bowman, leaders of the three state schools. He also attacked the views of the education experts and the testimony quoted by the state claiming that the men consulted were unfamiliar with Iowa education and the conditions in Iowa. Additionally, the article reported that Leavitt filed a written protest with the board focusing on the injustice he said would be done to not only the state teachers college, but also the other two state institutions if the board's motion would be allowed to carry. Though Leavitt was more closely associated with the work conducted at the teachers college, the state university students reported feeling gratified at the stand that Leavitt took against the state's action. Editors of the paper wrote

“we feel that the state board of education has struck a vital part of the state university of Iowa. We feel the action taken by the state board undermines the principles laid down by the framers of our constitution when they provided for a state university. We believe that it is unjust to remove the college of applied science to Ames. As yet the state board have not issued a statement regarding their action and until they do we must cautiously lay our plans for the fight which is to come.”³³⁵

At this point in time, the overwhelming response from alumni continued to increase. More letters arrived containing the opinions and aggravations associated with the removal of the engineering program from the school. In a letter written to the editors of the college newspaper, alum P.F. Ray, currently residing in Detroit, Michigan, voiced his opinion stating:

³³⁴ "W.O. Finkbine May Lead Fight," *The Dailey Iowan*, 1912. Vol. 12, no. 24, p.1.

³³⁵ "Leavitt Asks for Reconsideration," *The Daily Iowan* 1912. Vol. 12. p. 1.

“if there is a move on foot to discontinue the engineering college at the university, I wish to submit a protest immediately, and to exert my influence to the utmost to prevent any such unwise move. To detach the state school of engineering from the state university would be to make it a trade school, and all men of standing in the profession know that successful school cannot be deprived of educational advantages offered in the other departments of a university. Engineering education in Iowa has always been handicapped by the division of appropriation between two schools, and in consequence Iowa has not stood well in rank with other states in this respect. The present move would still further tend to lower the character of engineering education in Iowa. Here’s hoping that you may succeed in arousing such a protest as cannot be disregarded.”³³⁶

In the campaign to retain the college of applied science at the university, alumni in various cities across the state formed committees to protest the movement. Additionally, Editors of *The Daily Iowan* published many other letters from alumni emanating the same sentiment – that the university was far more qualified than the College of Agriculture and Mechanic arts to educate students in the applied sciences. Furthermore, the culture required to become a successful engineer was far better in Iowa City than in Ames.

I was dumbfounded when I learned of the news never dreaming that the state board would have the nerve to attempt such a move. I graduated from both departments and I can assure you that I, at least, consider that the benefits derived were immense. If I had taken my engineering course at Ames, I am sure that I never would have received other than the very scantiest kind of liberal education and I would be everlastingly sorry and would consider myself robbed of an inestimable privilege.”³³⁷

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ "A.L. Andrews Supports University," *The Daily Iowan* 1912, p. 1.

Andrews Chemical Works, manufacturers of oxalic acid and allied products in Davenport, Iowa, wrote to editors of the student newspaper announcing its opposition of the boards plan for the state university to hand over its applied science courses to Ames. According to the letter, the president of the company, A.L. Andrews, published and dispersed pamphlets on the coordination subject which lead directly to his forced retirement. Nevertheless, he expressed in his letter his commitment to the university in his continued fight to publicly denounce the actions taken by the board. Andrews felt that maintaining a college of engineering at the university was vital to the future prosperity of the institution.³³⁸

The students, alumni, and other faculty continued to submit letters stating their stance concerning “the big question” to the editors of *The Daily Iowan* per their request. Each day, the editors printed two to three letters in the paper, most of which stated reasons behind the opposition of the plan to remove the school of engineering from Iowa City. On Friday, October 25, editors published a letter submitted by an anonymous student who presented a viewpoint in support of the state board’s decision. The letter contained reasons why the action seemed a logical way for the state to reduce spending in various areas. The student presented the argument that the Agricultural College first established the school in 1862 while the university only began its college of engineering in 1905. Historically, the college in Ames had more of a claim on teaching engineering coursework, and had established a strong program 43 years prior to the university. Additionally, the student argued, the college in Ames was far more equipped with tools, buildings, and various other equipment required for the best education in engineering. According to the letter, the value of the equipment alone was worth far more than the value of the equipment used in the school at the university. If the state desired to save money and reduce

³³⁸ Ibid.

the duplication of coursework, it was only logical to remove the college of engineering from the university, and continue to expand the school at the Agricultural College.³³⁹

The article aroused much public comment on the matter. Letters flooded the mailboxes of the editorial staff. Phones rang with enraged callers objecting to the opinion printed on Friday. The following Monday, October 27th 1912, editors printed a response article and included in it their favorite letter answering the opinion of the article printed earlier. "It is beyond our conception that any student of this university can harbor such feeling and opinions as were brought forth in Friday's Iowan. There is one point evident – that the student is vastly ignorant of all outlying circumstances or he is given over to personal prejudice."³⁴⁰

Throughout the month, expression of student opinion to the resistance of dismembering the university steadily increased. Other mass meetings took place to raise money to continue to carry on the statewide campaign to keep the college of applied science. Student and alumni committees aimed to preserve the college of applied science and maintain "the greatness" of their university.³⁴¹

Reactions from Ames

Students and alumni in Ames held a mass meeting in which students organized a central committee. Comprised of representatives from all of the schools of the agricultural college, the "Student Central Committee" eventually raised money to carry on a definite campaign to prevent the state enacting the plan proposed by the state board of education. At the first meeting held in Ames, students contributed nearly \$2000 to carry out the protest. The student central committee also intended to organize alumni over the state and to enlist their support in fighting the

³³⁹ "Another View of the Big Question," *The Daily Iowan* 1912.

³⁴⁰ "Response to Student Letter," *The Daily Iowan* 1912.

³⁴¹ "Students Organize Central Committee," *The Daily Iowan*, 1912, vol.12, no. 35, p.1 .

proposition when it came to the legislature. The student committee initiated by the “Aggies” of the agricultural college inspired students at the state university to also organize a student committee for the purpose of raising money to protest the actions of the state board.³⁴²

A former professor of the Agricultural college, Professor Holden, who for years “headed the extension courses in Ames” said such a sweeping action should be put before the people and favored the extension of all colleges as well as the engineering college. Professor Holden believed that the people would furnish the money for the colleges at both schools. Holden was decidedly against the action of the board and gave several reasons for his position on what the college referred to as “the big question.” “I think engineering should be continued at Iowa City and domestic science at Ames, and for that matter, I think some branches in agriculture should be taught in all three of the state schools, with Ames giving the big agricultural course. We need to teach agriculture in our public schools and therefore should have some of it in every institution that is preparing teachers of any kind.”³⁴³

Other professors voiced the same sentiment. They believed such a great change should not be done without first obtaining the opinion of the people of the state. Many professors felt that the people of Iowa were not against the duplication of coursework in the schools. Additionally, if the people of the state were allowed to vote on such an action, the teachers in Ames felt they would not only vote to continue the work being done at each institution, but would also advocate for enlarging the work at each institution.³⁴⁴

In the *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, on Friday, November 8, 1912, the students in Ames published a short article describing how they believed the proposed changes would be

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ “Holden Does Not Approve Changes,” *The Daily Iowan*, 1912, vol. 12, no. 29, p.1.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

highly detrimental to the welfare of their institution. They urged the board to reconsider their plan as they strongly felt the board was making a mistake.

In the same article reporters announced that students launched a movement to oust to the state board. According to the article, alumni at Ames' college, the state university, and the teachers college, launched a movement to remove control from The State Board of Education. They planned a vigorous campaign before the next legislature for the purpose of repealing the statute which created the unit board, and to return the system that was previously in place.³⁴⁵

The Teachers College Continues the Battle

During the month of November, Seerley continued to approach members of The State Board and education officials of the state with caution and respect, but pleaded for the business of the Iowa State Teachers College to go unchanged. In a letter written to Honorable James H. Trewin, member and president of The State Board of Education, he discussed information concerning the institution's status. He articulated that though he did not think there was any intention on the part of the board to cheapen the education at Cedar falls, he felt the plan proposed by the board would discourage future enrollments and negatively impact the progress of the school.³⁴⁶ Seerley explained that people already questioned the status of the college, and to remove the last two years of education from the program would create even more doubt regarding the institutions status.

In another letter to Trewin, Seerley outlined his intentions to comply with the request of the state board to create a two-year education plan. However, Seerley discussed the special

³⁴⁵ "Teachers Unwilling to Act on Changes in State Colleges: Resolutions Committee Unanimously Opposed to Reporting Resolution, State Association to Remain Silent, Leaders Are of the Opinion Tha Tthe Best Thing for Teachers to Do Is Leave Question to the Legislature."

³⁴⁶ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Honorable James H. Trewin of Cedar Rapids*, 1912. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

difficulties involved in creating such a plan, as consolidating the curriculum from four years down to two years was not a simple task. Seerley questioned if the decision of the board meant that the high school department of the training school might be discontinued. Seerley pleaded that the college needed this division for some of the special two-year courses in training students. He also argued the college needed the preparatory school for many pupils meeting secondary work, and requested that these departments not be disturbed. He also suggested that a Department for the management of country school teachers be added. Such a Department could give special prestige to the school. In collusion of his letter, Seerley reminded Trewin of his research regarding the preparation of country school teachers, and the importance of the role the teachers college could play in improving the quality of teachers in rural schools.³⁴⁷ Shortly after writing this letter, President Seerley submitted to The Board of Education his proposed two-year course plan. The curriculum detailed requirements for graduation of an eighteen unit course, the course offerings by the college's departments, the reduction of courses in the professional instruction department, as well as the estimated reduction in cost after the cuts have been made. Seerley also estimated reduction of faculty teaching time allowed by the two-year junior college curriculum, noting the discontinuance of the seven classes in the English department men saving 35 term hours during the regular school year. He also made reduction estimates regarding the other departments of the college.³⁴⁸

In late November, yet another report was published informing readers of the misleading views in The State Board of Education concerning The State Teachers College. The sections contained in the circular were entitled: "1. The Iowa State Normal School was Established in the Early 70s to Train Teachers for the Common School, 2. It Has Even Gone To The Extent of

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ "Special Report of the President Concerning Courses of Study of College Grade Authorized to Be Announced for September of 1913," (University of Northern Iowa Archives Iowa State Teachers College, 1912).

Offering Graduate Work, 3. The Duplication By The Teachers College Leads to Extravagance and to a Lowering of The Quality of Work, 4. The University is the Natural Place for a Teachers College, 5. It Costs and Salaries Alone, To Maintain The College of Liberal Arts at The University, 6. The Truth of The Matter was Most Happily Expressed by President Van Hise, 7. It Was Wrong, Moreover Because in The Developing into a College The Normal School Could Not But Neglect The Real Work for Which it was Established, 8. Teacher Training for Public Schools, 9. The Finance Committee Sarcastically Says That The State Teachers College Feels That It Has Been Deprived of a God-Given Privilege and Being Forced Back Into The Field Which It Was Originally Intended to Occupy, 10. The Board of Education Determined Not To Act Hastily In This Matter. After discussing at length the nature of each of these issues, the circular announced “the plan proposed by the board invades the real personality of each institution, takes away from its fundamental and individual characteristics, and thus deprives it of its real independence.” The circular argued for the right of the college to train high school teachers by insisting:

“it is not enough that high school teachers should be taught reasonably upon a collegiate level. They need to be as thoroughly and efficiently trained as primary teachers if they are to do the kind of work so seriously needed. This fact is ignored in most colleges that profess to prepare teachers. The University professor who has given no attention to secondary education is not an adequate advisor. Knowledge of the subject is by no means sufficient preparation for the teaching that is satisfactory in high school. The bad teaching in the high schools of today is largely due to the entire lack in actual and adequate training of such teachers.”³⁴⁹

In an effort to defend the academic standing at the Iowa State Teachers College, another circular was published. The information contained in the circular defended the school against

³⁴⁹ "Misleading Views in the State Board of Education Report Concerning the State Teachers College," (Cedar Falls: The Iowa State Teachers College, 1912), p. 30-45.

accusations that the state teachers college did not require students to complete academically challenging work in any of the courses. The circular argued that the courses taught at the teachers college were with different methods of instruction as the material in each course was devoted specifically to the training of teachers in common schools. It conveyed that the college did offer work in psychology, school management, history of education, and that it offered courses of study for four years beyond high school training. It also specified the courses beyond the two-year course were devoted to practice teaching, observation, and critical lessons required to become an adequate teacher.³⁵⁰

As the battle continued, in late November, The Board of Education published counter remarks in defense of its plan proposed in October. In an article in *The Des Moines Capital*, the Iowa State Board of Education defended its recent order changing the courses of study at Iowa City, Ames, and Cedar Falls. Its members felt they had done their best to accomplish the mission, and that their decision was backed by leading educators of the country with whom they had consulted. Further, they believed that the course outlined would generate savings for the state while maintaining adequate levels of higher education. They argued the current system as it stood could not produce efficiency in the state's higher education system.³⁵¹ The board also reiterated in their statement that the leading educators they consulted approved the plan and agreed that it would work for Iowa's schools. Board members also highlighted the results of the report submitted by The Whipple Committee several years ago, which criticized Cedar Falls for branching out into higher education courses that replicated courses at Iowa City.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ Unknown, "Standards of Normal Schools: Iowa State Teachers College," (Cedar Falls: Iowa State Teachers College, 1912).

³⁵¹ "State Education Boards Report a Defensive Changes " *The Des Moines Capital* 1912.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

As the movement gained momentum, professors from other states began mailing President Seerley for explanations regarding the situation in Iowa. Letters came from Massachusetts, California, Pennsylvania, Montana, as well as many other states. The president responded to many of the letters received regarding the issues in Iowa by addressing the fact that there has been comprehensive debate in many articles which had been published in the newspapers covering all sides of the question. He always believed the state would be better served if The State Board of Education was prevented from carrying out the coordination plan. The interest in the resolution of the Iowa question proved that the debate in Iowa concerning the future of the teachers college had national implications.

The State Schools Continue to Protest the Resolution

As legislators continued to deliberate the resolution, faculty members sent letters to President Seerley regarding the addition of summer courses, and how to proceed until September 1, 1913, the date of which the proposed plan would take effect. President Seerley told his faculty that until the colleges were informed of the results of the legislature's decision, it was impossible to plan future course work. The president felt it necessary to limit summer school course offerings to essential courses as the controversies of the state required that he be conservative in allocating funds. He reiterated the college would decline to add any summer courses to prevent the need to hire additional teachers for the summer term. In a letter to Dr. Chase Meyerholz, he commented that the situation in the legislature was not improving, and that according to editorial writings in newspapers, the situation was still evoked unsettled feelings among faculty, students, and alumni, associated with the institutions.³⁵³

³⁵³Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Dr. Lightner Witmer of Philadelphia*, 1913. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

As the fight continued to progress, tensions between the colleges and the State Board of Education became more heated. Trewin, president of the state board, decided to hire a committee responsible for defending actions taken by the board. *The Evening Gazette*, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Monday, January 6, 1913 published a statement written by the defense committee in response to a pamphlet that was published by the schools affected entitled *The Board Is The Educational Problem*. According to the *Evening Gazette*, students widely distributed pamphlet across the state. The Defense Committee informed readers that the Board of Education had the power to implement the consolidation plan. The *Evening Gazette* also discussed the bulletin recently issued by the University of Iowa Law School students professing the illegalities of the state board. The law students promised to have the act creating The State Board of Education appealed. The defense committee argued “when considering a legal opinion it is always essential to consider the facts and the correct statement of the question in order to arrive at a proper conclusion, therefore, the opinions of Lehman, author of the bulletin, are nothing more than legal opinions not supported by the statements of fact.”³⁵⁴ The article continued at great length, citing specific legal cases, as precedent, defending the actions of the State Board of Education, and arguing that the board were well within their rights to propose a coordination plan and submitted it the legislature.

Also in early January, Cedar Rapids played host to the various oratory societies of the three state institutions for the annual oratory contest between students. It came as no surprise to the reporters of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, that the topics for the oratory debate were the coordination plan, the Board of Education, and the report distributed by the finance committee. Students from each of the separate institutions argued in defense of their school, claiming that

³⁵⁴ Unknown, "State Board Defends Plan of Coordination: Exhaustive Reply to Various Critics: Asserts Board Did Not Exceed It's Rights in Making Changes, Follow the Desires of the Promoters of the Central Control Idea, School Will Not Be Crippled!," *The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette* 1912.

their situation was far more devastating to their institution than to the other two schools. However, all oratory debaters were in agreement that the consolidation plan was detrimental to the higher education system of Iowa. W. R. Boyd, chairman of The Finance Committee, spoke at the end of the oratory debate, proclaiming that the departments of the said institutions were starved merely to promote the institutional ambition that existed throughout the system. He also argued that the action of the board would in time result in friendly relations between the students of all three colleges, and each of the three institutions would attain higher standards of excellence. Boyd explained that the state board was not playing cheap politics and that if the board had cared to play politics it would have waited until the adjournment of the 35th general assembly to propose its plan. Boyd concluded by reading letters from prominent educators who praised the action of the board.³⁵⁵

The State's Decision

As the decision date approached, the student newspaper of the teachers college reported that the state board refused to compromise in its position. According to the article, “a compromise measure was introduced a few days ago asking the board to rescind its action and leave the whole question to a committee of seven men to be appointed by the governor. This committee was to study the situation thoroughly and make a report two years hence.” However, the president of the board, Trewin, defended the board’s position. He said “in a sneering attitude”, he did not believe that the change would decrease the attendance at Cedar Falls nor affect the popularity of the school.³⁵⁶ In a note to students, in the closing of the article, the editors wrote “school question soon to be decided; the future will be blinded by false argument or

³⁵⁵ "Coordination Discussed by College Grads " *The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette* 1912.

³⁵⁶ Students, "Editor Criticises Trewin: Editor David Brant of the Iowa City Republican Shows up Board," *The College Eye* 1913.

convinced by imaginary statistics when balanced against an unprecedented record of growth and service for the past one third of a century.”³⁵⁷

In late February, as the proceedings continued, President Seerley grew hopeful there would be a postponement of any coordination plan for at least the next two years. In his personal correspondence he wrote that the general assembly, by a vast majority, was opposed to the action of the board and many members of the legislature thought that the board should have submitted the plan to them rather than to have put it into action. Seerley also pointed out that, at the suggestion of some members, a new proposition was discussed to have a commission of experts advise the general assembly in two year regarding the status of the state colleges.³⁵⁸

Members of the legislative committee tried to compromise on the education issue. In February, representative Klay, of Sioux City, introduced a bill that ensured the courses of study at the three state institutions remain unchanged. The Klay Bill defined each of the state colleges in terms work conducted at each school so that the education question could be solved once and for all. The bill was sent to the appropriate legislative committee, and according to *The College Eye*, on February 20, 1913, “it would soon be debated.”³⁵⁹

In a final attempt to sway the minds of the legislative committee, President Seerley wrote to Senator Boe, pleading

“the teachers college will suffer so much in reputation if the college course of four years beyond high school graduation is taken away, and it will become much less attractive to would-be students, and the diploma will be discredited in Iowa and in other states. If an investigation of the increase of expenses was made at the University or at the state college, I'm sure it would show a still larger increase in the expense for such institutions. Of course, this

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to President E.B. Craighead*, 1913. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

³⁵⁹ Students, "Klay Introduces Bill: Approaches Question from Another Angle: Reduests That Schools Be Left as Now," *The College Eye* 1913.

is not necessary as the board does not attack these schools on a similar basis as they do the teachers college.”³⁶⁰

At the beginning of the month of March, the colleges received word that that Iowa's State House was against The State Board of Education and its plan. By a vote of 89 to 16, the house of representatives passed the Klay Bill in an amended form. The Klay Bill ensured that the three state schools would remain as they were. However, students, faculty, and staff, were still concerned the bill would be changed in the Iowa Senate prior to its passage. The public received contradictory reports concerning the final decision. One rumor stated the majority of the senators supported the board's plan. Another rumor suggested the senators would vote unanimously in favor of the school's position. As of March 20, the school question was still under review in the Senate committee, and it was rumored that the majority of senators sided with the board. According to the article, “the Senate was in sympathy with the board and if any action was taken by them it will be the passage of a Bill upholding the board.”³⁶¹

On March 27, *The College Eye* reported “that in the last week friends have appeared in the upper house of Iowa’s legislature and the prospects of our absolute pardon from the decapitation sentence, seems to be good.” The senate committee determined to bury the school question. It was demanded in the senate chamber that they hold the Klay Bill as passed by the House. The senate committee decided on the Klay Bill’s indefinite postponement. The article reported that Governor Clark had made it plain to the most influential senators that he wanted the school question settled before adjournment.³⁶² On April 3, *The College Eye* reported that no decision had yet been reached, and no further developments had occurred. It went on to say that

³⁶⁰ Seerley, Homer H. *Homer Seerley to Senator Lars. W. Boe*, 1913. Letter. From the University of Northern Iowa Archives, *The Homer Seerley Papers*, 1886-1928.

³⁶¹ Students, "Legislative Action: School Question Tied up in Senate Committee: Senate Friendly to Board " *The College Eye* 1913., "House against Board: Senate Expected to Take up Bill This Week," *The College Eye* 1913.

³⁶² "Optimistic Spirit Prevails," *The College Eye* 1913, vol. 2, no. 24, p.1.

the settlement of the school board question was being watched far beyond the border of the state of Iowa, and that the decision of the legislature may mark a turning point in educational management.³⁶³

Finally, after a period of approximately six months, a settlement had been reached regarding the education question. Surprisingly, in a meeting in Des Moines, as the Klay bill was about to be removed from the senate calendar, the Board of Education said it would rescind the proposed action if ordered to by the legislature. The legislature passed a resolution to that affect, ordering the revocation of the Board's consolidation plan. This resulted in what The State Teachers College entitled, "the simplest solution." The spokesman of the state Board of Education commented that the board as a governing body "acted on the belief that they were furthering the educational interest of the state. We hope, we can forget the past, and we hold no hard feelings toward the state institutions and we will do all we can to further our usefulness, and we will cooperate with the schools to further education in the state."³⁶⁴

For students, alumni, and friends of the State University of Iowa, it was a victory of the ages. They printed in *The Daily Iowan*:

"No there won't be any fringe of stove pipes sticking out of the upper windows of the engineering building next year. There won't be any merry damsels inside, clattering stove lids and spattering grease on the cement floor. No beauteous maidens will be leaning out of those windows and throwing doughnuts down the hill toward their Hungry Henry's doing military drill on the armory lot. Nay! Nay!"³⁶⁵

³⁶³ Homer H. Seerley, "School Legislation Next: Important Question of Coordination Reached in Senate " *The College Eye* 1913.

³⁶⁴ Students, "School Board Rescinds Action: State Institutions of Learning to Remain as Before: Most Simple Solution," *The College Eye* 1913, p.1.

³⁶⁵ unknown, "Engineers to Remain: State Board Beaten," *The Daily Iowan* 1913, p.1.

The Daily Iowan, on April 5th, 1913, reported the state senate passed a resolution asking the board of education to rescind its famous edict of October 8th. Immediately following the resolution, the board rescinded as per request and according to the article thus ending the war which had been waged over educational matters in Iowa for nearly seven months. According to the article, it ended “in rousing victory” for the opponents of the board. The paper reported the satisfaction and glee of the student body that the college of engineering would not be transferred to story county. Relieved, the students felt the action of the state settled “once and for all” the engineering situation at Iowa allowing it to evolve into a greater and even better engineering school. The article also reported that “the board claimed to have experienced a complete change of heart and states that it will do all in its power in the future to give Iowa and the college of applied science a fair and equal show with other schools in the matter of appropriations for maintaining the school.” For students at the state university, the board’s retraction, they claimed “is a great victory for the engineers and for the students of the other colleges who did so much toward helping in the fight waged during the last six months. The prompt rallying together of all the engineers, and the ready alliance of the other colleges to meet a common misfortune last fall certainly was a grand indication of the right sort of college spirit.”³⁶⁶

In a special note to President Seerley from the editorial staff of *The College Eye*, they wrote “in behalf of the student body we wish to express our appreciation of the kindness shown by the Cedar Falls commercial club and all unite in their praise and esteem of Roger Leavitt and Homer Seerley.” In celebration of the favorable ending to the six month battle over the fate of the teachers college, for the first time in the history of the college, the senior class of 1913 decided to host a mayday celebration beginning on May 1, the largest celebration the school's history. The purpose behind the mayday celebration, according to the senior class, was the

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

celebration of what promised to be a new era of prosperity in service for the teachers college. The hope of the senior class was to make it an occasion long treatment be remembered by all fortunate enough to be present. The mayday festivities included a large parade put on by the societies and organizations of the school, a picnic dinner which took place on central campus, and afternoon ballgame between the professionals of Cedar falls in the college varsity team. The day closed with a grand concert, performed on the steps of the new library building.³⁶⁷

As discussed previously in chapter two, the social efficiency movement in education gained momentum shortly after 1900. The consolidation movement in the state of Iowa was one example of how state authorities and education leaders pushed for a system of higher education that graduated more students at lower costs. They attempted to eliminate what they termed “education waste” (coursework taught at more than one college) by consolidating and reorganizing programs at their three state institutions.

Perhaps it was this very push for consolidation that propelled the state normal school into full-fledged collegiate status. Through the politics of the consolidation movement, the state board changed the atmosphere in favor of the institution at Cedar Falls. Prior to the report published by the state board, tensions existed between the state normal school and the other two state institutions of higher education, most notably between the State University of Iowa’s liberal arts college and department of education, and the Iowa State Teacher’s College. By pushing for significant changes among the institutions, the state board changed the relationships between the schools as they rallied together to fight the state to prevent the board from enacting their suggested changes which “prevented education duplication.” Instead of remaining rivals – and

³⁶⁷ Students, "Extensive Plans for May Fete: Begin with Grand Parade and Closes with Band Concert," *The College Eye* 1913., "May Festival Grand Success," *The College Eye* 1913., "Leavitt Speaks at Celebration," *The College Eye* 1913, p. 1.

perhaps even enemies – as they once were during the state normal school’s campaign to become the state teacher’s college, The State University, The Agricultural College, and the State Teachers College became allies. For members of the state board, and for proponents of the consolidation movement, the politics of social efficiency spun out of control, creating an environment of institutional autonomy among the three state schools.

Chapter 8

Conclusion: State Normal Schools Surrender to Isomorphic Pressures

What initially caused state normal schools to transition to teachers colleges? Perhaps state normal schools in the early twentieth century fell victim to the rumors and criticisms that originally plagued them shortly after their inception. In an attempt to shed the unwanted lowly status which came to be associated with the word "normal" the institutions simply dropped that word from their title. But, as evidenced by the case study of the Iowa State Normal School, changes made by these schools to be seen as legitimate institutions of learning involved so much more than a mere title change. The Iowa State Normal School devoted a significant amount of time and energy to defending itself against criticisms concerning the caliber of academic work conducted at the school. Additionally, even after proponents of the school successfully changed its name to The Teachers College, the struggle for what it perceived to be its rightful place among the other institutions of higher learning continued. This study analyzes the experience of one state normal school out of hundreds in the United States. What can such a small glimpse of the history of teacher training programs tell historians of education about the larger picture of the history of normal schools and other institutions of higher learning? This chapter summarizes the findings in the previous chapters, and broadens the discussion from the context of this one state normal school to the larger field of the history of education and shows how the process of isomorphism and institutional dynamics affect teacher training programs.

Through the analysis of the story of the Iowa State Normal School, this study reveals how mimetic and regulative pressures forced these institutions to adopt changes to reflect trends set

by other dominate institutions in the field of higher education in order to stay afloat. Had the Iowa State Normal School chosen not to adopt certain thematic trends, the legitimacy of the institution could have been compromised, and instead of transitioning to a teacher's college (and later a university) it may have been forced to close its doors. The main changes adopted by the institution included curricula, a graded system of faculty rank, a new system of governance, and a new title.

Summary of Analysis

Chapter three discusses the curricula developments which occurred at the State Normal School of Iowa from 1887 through 1915. A close analysis of the evolution of the curriculum at institution revealed that the school offered a smattering of coursework available to any student at least sixteen years of age willing to declare the intention to teach in the state of Iowa. The course catalog provided numerous different academic plans to accommodate the many different education backgrounds of the students who enrolled at normal. Since the inception of the institution, The Iowa State Normal School conferred two degrees to students who completed the required coursework – the Master of Didactics and the Bachelor of Didactics. It also offered several different state certificates for teachers seeking training in special courses such as music or manual training. After the State University announced that it equated a four-year degree from the State Normal School with two years of undergraduate training at its school, the State Normal School adopted a Bachelor of Arts program and began conferring B.A. degrees to those students who completed the required coursework. The requirements for admission to this program were much higher than the requirements for other courses at the normal school.

In addition to emulating colleges and universities through curricular changes and the addition of a B.A. degree, state normal schools began changing their student activities as well. Though not a central focus in this study, Christine Ogren discusses in her book on state normal schools how substantial changes in student activities and on-campus student groups contributed to changes in the overall focus and "professional spirit" of state normal schools. Student societies began imitating trends at other colleges and universities. According to Ogren, at the normal schools in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and San Jose, collegiate sororities and fraternities replaced the literary societies which once existed on normal's campus. At San Jose, as reported by its student newspaper, the literary society adopted a social agenda where semi-annual functions and affairs became the favorite reason for students to join such a society. Parties and festivities took the place of oratorical debates. A few years later, the newspaper reported that the societies existed "for a closer association of the students, for recreation and for pleasure" while also admitting that the educational purpose of the societies no longer existed.³⁶⁸ Shortly after, Ogren notes that literary societies followed in San Jose's footsteps. At Oshkosh for example, the all-female Alethean society dispensed with an educational meeting in order to attend a basketball game. In New York, the Agonian Society at Geneseo replaced the study of modern authors with the study of sisterhood, which Ogren reported that members explained was "after all, our chief sorority aim." Ogren provides several additional examples of this trend across normal campuses and notes that the complete transformation of literary societies into sororities and fraternities took less than a decade.³⁶⁹

Ogren also discusses how state normal schools embraced "the cult of football that reigned at colleges and universities" aligning themselves more closely with other institutions of higher

³⁶⁸ Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good.*, p. 206

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 207

learning.³⁷⁰ Though, as Ogren points out, normal schools participated in intercollegiate sports and competed with other normal schools, it was during the early twentieth century that the student body imitated "the spirit of pep that surrounded men's collegiate sports." At Oshkosh, for example, the student newspaper reported a "mass meeting" the night before a football game where students sang school songs in support of their team. According to Ogren, similar rallies took place at other normals, and in San Jose, student even formed a "Pep Society."³⁷¹ The curricular adoptions combined with the changes in student societies and campus activities were signs that normal schools were slowly attempting align themselves more closely with other colleges and universities in the state. In the state of Iowa, it is worthy to note that only after the state university created a College of Education on its campus, that the State Normal School adopted a graded system of faculty rank which reflected structures in place at the State University. It also changed its name to the State Teacher's College.

A close study of the faculty at both the state normal school and the state university revealed that the latter hired more faculty with a terminal degree than did the normal school. Additionally, faculty members hired at the state university obtained degrees from more reputable institutions such as Yale, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, among others. Most of the faculty at the state normal school obtained their degrees from other institutions in the state of Iowa including the state university, the state normal school, Cornell College, Coe College, and the Iowa College. It can be argued that the Iowa State Normal School simply preferred to hire faculty with extensive teaching experience rather than employing faculty with strong scholarly backgrounds. However, it may also be the case that the hiring of teachers from less prestigious institutions was directly related to the meager financial resources and sparse funds available for teacher salaries.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 208

Consistently, since its inception, the Iowa State Normal School received significantly lower appropriations from the state when compared with the appropriations given the State University and Agricultural College. In 1879 the state approved annual appropriations in the amount \$20,000 for building and maintaining the institution in Iowa City. In 1881, it appropriated another \$30,000 for a medical building, and then again in 1884, appropriated an additional \$45,000 for the construction of another new building. Ten years later, the total annual appropriations from the state to the state university amounted to \$125,000 including \$50,000 for a chemistry lab. By 1892, the state of Iowa appropriated around \$315,000 for the institution, and by 1900 that number had nearly doubled.³⁷²

In 1864, four years after the state first established The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in Ames, it had appropriated \$110,000 for equipment and building maintenance, a library, and other expenses of the institution. In 1868 the state appropriated another \$12,000 for professors houses, \$10,000 for a steam heat system, \$10,000 for college buildings, and another \$3,000 for "additional expenses." In the 1870s, the state gave the agricultural college tens of thousands of dollars in appropriations for the purpose of expanding the campus' main building, boarding cottages, to build a mechanical and civil engineering program, and the erection of an experimental station. By 1900, the state appropriated nearly \$400,000 for the institution.³⁷³

The Iowa State Normal School was not so fortunate in receiving adequate funding from the state. When it first opened its doors, the state only appropriated \$14,500 for the purpose of "putting the property in order and to prepare for the students." In 1878, the state allotted \$13,500 for building a library, substantially less than the \$50,000 it gave to the Agricultural college for the same purpose. In the next few years, the state appropriated several thousand dollars for

³⁷² Board of Regents, "Minutes of the Board of Regents," (1900)., Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, 2.

³⁷³ Regents, "Minutes of the Board of Regents.", Clarence Ray Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, vol. 4 (Iowa City State Historical Society of Iowa 1916).

buildings and facilities, the erection of a boarding house, and the building of a dormitory for women. By 1893, almost twenty years since the school opened, the state had contributed less than \$70,000 for the advancement of the institution. As the student body continued to grow, the need for additional space became more desperate. In 1894, the normal school requested \$75,000 in appropriations to construct new buildings on campus. The state only approved \$30,000. Considering what little financial resources the school had available for maintaining facilities and providing appropriate resources for its faculty and students, funds available to pay teacher salaries were likely just as limited. Due to this fact, teachers who accepted positions with the state normal school were most likely paid very little when compared to teachers who accepted positions with the state university or the agricultural college. In light of this issue, though the state normal school did, to a certain extent, prefer to hire professors with strong teaching backgrounds, it was probably difficult for them to attract professors with extensive research training.³⁷⁴

Chapter four explains the process of adopting a graded system of professorial rank and the establishment of department leadership. According to Christopher J. Lucas, toward the end of the nineteenth century, many colleges and universities began experimenting with elaborate hierarchical systems of academic rank “starting at the bottom with instructors and ascending to assistant professors, then associate professors, and finally, full professors.”³⁷⁵ At the university of Chicago under President Harper, they ranked their faculty even more specifically by using titles such as readers, lecturers, docents, assistants, associates, instructors for teachers who were employed with the institution part time or on a temporary basis.³⁷⁶ As time progressed, more

³⁷⁴ *History of Education in Iowa*, 2.

³⁷⁵ Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History*, p. 185

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186

colleges began to follow suit, adopting similar structures for ranking their faculty, including the University of Iowa and the University of Michigan.

State normal schools had titles for their faculty as well, but prior to 1908 at the State Normal School in Iowa, the titles given to faculty indicated something else entirely, other than academic rank. Faculty at Iowa's state normal had titles, but they merely indicated how long the teacher had served the institution. Due to increasing levels of faculty tension which resulted from nonexistent department leadership, Homer Seerley recommended to the Board of Trustees to adopt a graded system of faculty rank similar to system used by the State University. By 1909, the state normal school distinguished faculty by rank listing each member in the course catalog as a department chair, professor, assistant professor, instructor, or assistant. In order to function better, the institution at Cedar Falls succumbed to mimetic pressures and adopted changes in order to be viewed as a desirable institution of higher learning.

Chapter five highlights the presence of regulative pressures that compelled the State Normal School to change its system of governance. Before 1909, three separate boards governed the three public higher education institutions in the state of Iowa (The State University, The State Normal School, and the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts) Due to inaccurate financial records submitted by all three institutions; the State Board of Control hired a committee they named The Whipple Committee to investigate financial matters at each school. They uncovered poor management on the part of each institution, and discovered many flaws associated with the governing structure of state's higher education system. The committee therefore concluded the official business organization methods used by each institution to be ineffective, and recommended that state create one managing board which could undertake the governance of all three schools and regulate matters of finance. Despite misgivings on the part of the normal

school, the state university, and the college of mechanic arts, the state elected members to newly formed State Board of Education in 1909. The Normal Board of Trustees was required to surrender all of their governing power to The State Board of Education. Regulative pressures from the state compelled the State Normal School to comply with the changes and adopt a new system of governance.

Chapter six uncovers the process behind adopting a new title for the school in Cedar Falls. According to Christopher Lucas, criticisms of normal schools had been mounting steadily since the 1880s, and “it reached a crescendo of sorts just after the turn of the century, when no one, or so it seemed, had good things to say about them.”³⁷⁷ Lucas also suggests that normal schools never fully succeeded in providing a reliable supply of high-quality classroom teachers, educating only a very small percent of teachers who currently taught in the nation’s public elementary schools. He also noted that “successive name changes over time pointed to their evolution in an entirely new direction.”³⁷⁸ Shortly after the University of Iowa began its department of education, other colleges and universities such as the University of Michigan and Johns Hopkins University followed suit and added departments of the science and art of teaching. By 1893, several major universities including the University of Minnesota, the University of California, Northwestern, and Columbia University had adopted either a chair, a department, or at least a set of courses in pedagogy or related coursework in teacher education.³⁷⁹ Eventually, the addition of these departments on university campuses led more state normal schools to gradually eliminate their one or two-year course of study and replaced it with a four-year course of study leading to the baccalaureate degree. According to author James Fraser, as more normal schools granted baccalaureate degrees, questions emerged concerning the equality

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 195

³⁷⁹ *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century.*, p. 142

of these degrees when compared with the academic degrees granted by other colleges and universities.³⁸⁰ As a consequence, normal schools became teacher's colleges, hoping to eliminate the stigmas associated normal schools regarding the quality of their academic work. The state of Iowa provides an example of this trend. The story behind the name change at the Iowa State Normal School revealed the true intent behind the name change including elevating the school's status by eliminating its association with the word "normal" and all that it had come to represent. Seerley openly discussed that the name change movement originated from the faculty's desire to qualify for retirement packages under the Carnegie Foundation of Education Advancement. However, over the course of the movement, Seerley admitted in letters his desire to remove the word normal, and the negative connotations associated with it, from the title of the school. By adopting the new title of "Teachers College" Seerley hoped to gain elevated status for his school and be recognized for the work the school conducted in training of teachers. Though the potential of a name change was met with resistance by some parties, including the State University of Iowa, the General Assembly approved the name change. In April of 1909, the school went from being The State Normal School of Iowa to the State Teachers College of Iowa.

An Example of Isomorphism

As noted in Chapter 1, many cities used their high schools to train teachers for their public schools. As a result, the high school complicated the normal school problem. Though Seerley acknowledged the role of high schools in training teachers, he was adamant that his institution offered something different from, and better than, what the high schools offered their potential teacher candidates. Unlike city high schools, his teacher's college conferred a degree. The degree of bachelor of arts in education distinguished teacher college graduates from those

³⁸⁰ Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History.*, p. 147

students who completed their teacher training in high school. By offering a bachelor's degree in education, the state normal school separated itself from the high school. By adding the degree, it also aligned itself more closely with the other institutions of higher education in the state.

John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan hypothesized that organizations in a particular field adopt innovations that field views as good and desirable. Organizations do this in part because they too want to make sure they are similar to leading organizations in order to maintain legitimacy and gain resources. This process of change is called Isomorphism.

Faced with the choice of emanating institutional trends at other institutions of higher learning or perhaps ceasing to exist entirely, the state normal school of Iowa slowly adopted structures in place at Iowa's state university. The story of the state normal school in Cedar Falls, Iowa is an example of how isomorphic pressures forced the institution to adopt changes in order to stay afloat. According to isomorphic theory, had the state normal school failed to adopt the new logics of governments that took hold in the field of higher education, it simply could have ceased to exist. However,

The state normal school persisted because it underwent transformations to align itself with templates in the field of education that were rewarded. Some examples of the "templates" included having graded systems of faculty rank, conferring Bachelor of Arts degrees, and having a title which designated the school as a college or university.

In their study *The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields*, Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell theorized that "organizations are rewarded for being similar to other organization in their fields."³⁸¹ They also discussed how this similarity made it easier for organizations "to be acknowledged as legitimate

³⁸¹ DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields.", p. 153.

and reputable, and to fit into administrative categories that define eligibility for public and private grants and contracts.”³⁸² By complying with mimetic and coercive isomorphic pressures, The Iowa State Normal School was able to successfully transition into The State Teacher’s College of Iowa and remain an institution of higher education.

While this study represents only one school, it is an informative tale on the process of isomorphism and the effects of institutional dynamics on teacher training programs. This study is not suggesting that this story represents a road map of how every state normal school transitioned into a teacher’s college. It does imply that state normal schools changed due to the fact that their legitimacy was threatened. As a result, they were pressured to adjust the ways in which they operated. The state normal schools which persisted underwent transformations to align themselves with the template that was rewarded by the organizational field of higher education.

Limitations to this Study and Future Research

There are a few limitations to this study, most of which are related to the research used to develop the story of how isomorphism affected the state normal school and the processes of change which occurred in those institutions. One limitation is that it employs the use of historical documents from only two institutions; the University of Northern Iowa (the ISNS) and The University of Iowa (the state university). Specifically, this study focused mainly on comparing the Iowa State Normal School with The State University and how the normal school aligned itself with the department of education at the University of Iowa. The insights that came out of this study could be strengthened and supported further if it had incorporated the histories of other state normal schools. Greater observations concerning the process of change may have occurred

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 153

had this study employed the use of documents from other state normal school archives. Additionally, by including the experiences of other state normal schools in this study, commonalities between each of the state normal schools may have existed which might have changed the conclusion.

An interesting area for future research would be a comparison of the histories of several state normal schools and their experiences during their period of transition. This type of study may reveal commonalities among states and state normal schools which could provide an additional element to the story presented in this study. It might also be worthy to incorporate the stories of state normal schools which eventually closed to understand why they were unsuccessful. Did their demise occur simply because they refused to incorporate changes occurring during the period in question? Exploring the process behind the disappearance of normal schools could also add an additional element to the history of these institutions.

Another limitation is that the historical account of this study stops in 1913. Following this transitional period the State Teacher's College changed its name again 1961 to The Northern Iowa State College, and then again in 1967 to The University of Northern Iowa. Had this study incorporated information pertaining to the period of transition that occurred in the sixties, it may have strengthened the conclusions posited by this account. A comparative analysis of the two periods may also provide additional information concerning the process of change. This leads to more research questions. How were the two transition periods different. What similarities existed between the two periods? What other adjustments did the institution in Cedar Falls have to make in order to successfully transition into a university? A study that focuses on this part of the history could add some interesting insights into the history of teacher education programs and be a strong piece to the puzzle.

Whether or not such studies are framed using the context supplied in this research, the contribution to the history of normal schools this research hoped to make was to link the changes these institutions made to the process of isomorphism. State normal schools did become institutions which occupied a position in the field of higher education, either through becoming a state teachers college or a department of education on a university campus. Understanding how this transition occurred provides historians as well as education leaders insight into how teacher education programs change to adapt to changing circumstances and gain additional resources.

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