

C O P Y

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

February 28, 1945

Herbert H. Maass, Esq.
20 Exchange Place
New York 5, New York

Dear Mr. Maass:

I have been thinking over carefully the matter of Friday's meeting and I am writing to ask that you excuse me from attendance. Since I am to be the subject of discussion, it seems to me that this discussion will be freer if I am not present.

When you raised the question of my position at the Institute last spring, I feared that members of the Faculty might object to my continuing beyond sixty-five. This feeling I could readily understand in view of the fact that I found myself compelled to enforce the sixty-five year rule so rigidly on others. Under the circumstances I felt, as I reported to your Committee, that it was only just that it should apply also to me.

It now appears that the view of the Faculty is exactly the opposite. Instead of wishing me to retire at sixty-five, they would like me to continue for some years beyond that age. Whether I should do so or not is for the Board to decide. I appreciate your friendly attitude, and, whatever your decision may be, I shall continue to interest myself in the development of the Institute as I have done since its organization in 1930. I am intensely proud of the way in which it has held so far to a rigorous conception of scholarship and I am confident of its success in the future so long as it follows that ideal.

The most important single responsibility of the Board of Trustees is to find a Director who can command the confidence of the Faculty and carry out the purposes of the Founders of the Institute. As a Trustee I share that responsibility and shall be glad to do anything I can to fulfill it once you settle the question of my own tenure

Herbert H. Maass, Esq.

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February 28, 1945

of office. In the solution of that problem it does not seem proper that I
should participate.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Aydelotte

FA:jsr

Faculty Lunches

These lunches are usually held on the first Monday of each month during term when there is not a scheduled faculty meeting, but there are sometimes exceptions to this rule. I believe that during the present academic year we had meetings in November, December, February, and March. The dates/will probably be decided upon at the first faculty meeting next autumn, September 18.

When the dates are decided upon they should be given to Mrs. Dilks, Miss Miller, Miss Blake, Miss Wise, Mrs. Hartz, and Mrs. Liebman.

About a week in advance of each scheduled faculty lunch is it/well to get in touch with the secretaries (the last four of the names given above) and ask them to let you know if their professors will be able to attend the luncheon. Mrs. Dilks should be kept posted as to the probable number and should be given a final number shortly before the luncheon. Miss Miller should be reminded to arrange for having the room cleared for the day of the luncheon.

(2 or 3 days
advance)

Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings are held theoretically on the first and the last day of each term. During war time, however, when so many members of the faculty are away on war jobs but are often available on Mondays, the meeting at the end of term has sometimes been held on the Monday nearest the end of the term.

Meetings are called by the Secretary of the Faculty (at present Professor Meritt) and minutes are taken by him. The meetings are held in the Director's office.

The faculty includes Professors only.
Emeritus professors not to be included.

(Notices should be sent 10 days in advance - may be necessary to remind Meritt.)

	<u>began</u>	<u>Princeton</u>
Alexander	10/1/33	
Earle	9/1/34	10/1/37
Einstein	10/1/33	10/17/33
Goldman	11/1/36	
Hersfeld	7/1/36	9/26/36 ? (9/21/36 in N.Y.)
Tove	7/1/36	1/1/37
Merritt	Fall 1935	9/24/36
Mitray	9/1/33	Sept-Oct. 1935 6 May-June 1935
Morse	7/1/35	Fall 1935
Pontryagin	9/1/35	
Rieffel	1/15/35	9/15/35
Stewart	1/1/39	beginning of 2nd term 1939 (1/17/39)
Veblen	9/1/32	
von Neumann	4/1/33	10/1/33
Warren	1/1/39	1/4/39
Weyl	1/1/34	10/24/33 ?

- 10/1/33 - 12/20/33 1st term
1/21/34 - 5/1/34 2nd term
- 10/2/33 meeting of members of school of mathematics
- 1935 School of Economics & Politics
1935 (4/29/35) School of Humanistic Studies
- 2/1/0/36 Faculty meeting
3/1/36 Flexner to Veblen, to call faculty meeting during Dr. Flexner's absence
- 3/14/36 Faculty meeting
- 3/31/36 Faculty meeting
Present: Carle Rieffel
Veblen
- ?
- 10/2/36 Faculty meeting
11/2/36 Faculty meeting
11/24/39 Faculty meeting, 1st set of minutes in book

Institute for Advanced Study

FACULTY

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment Began</u>	<u>Arrived in Princeton</u>
Alexander	10/1/33	
Earle	9/1/34	10/1/37
Einstein	10/1/33	10/17/33
Goldman	11/1/36	
Herzfeld	7/1/36	9/26/36 ? (9/21/36 in New York City)
Lowe	7/1/36	1/1/37
Meritt	Fall 1935	9/24/36
Mitrany	9/1/33	September or October 1935 Left May or June 1939 for Europe
Morse	7/1/35	Fall 1935
Panofsky	9/1/35	
Riefler	1/15/35	9/15/35
Stewart	1/1/39	Beginning of second term 1939. (1/17/39 ?)
Veblen	9/1/32	
von Neumann	4/1/33	10/1/33 ?
Warren	1/1/39	1/4/39
Weyl	1/1/34	10/24/33 ? in U.S. 12/11/33 ? in Princeton

10/1/33	Opening day. Opening of School of Mathematics
10/2/33	Meeting of members of School of Mathematics
10/1/33 - 12/20/33	First term.
1/21/34 - 5/1/34 1/22/34 1935	Second term. <i>Faculty meeting</i> Opening of School of Economics and Politics
1935 (4/29/35)	Opening of School of Humanistic Studies
2/10/36	Faculty meeting.
3/6/36	Letter from Flexner to Veblen to call Faculty meeting during Dr. Flexner's absence
3/14/36	Faculty meeting
3/31/36	Faculty meeting Present: Earle, Riefler, Veblen and others
10/2/36	Faculty meeting
11/2/36 2/6/39 11/24/39	Faculty meeting <i>Faculty meeting 3 pm. at Princeton Inn.</i> Faculty meeting. First set of minutes in book.

2/15/45
jsr

C O P Y

18 June 1939

In view of the possibility that there will shortly be some changes in the administration of the Institute for Advanced Study, I am submitting certain suggestions which it is hoped will receive the serious consideration of the Trustees. Although they are not in any formal sense proposals from the Faculty, they do, I am confident, represent the best judgement of a majority of my colleagues.

1. Choice of the new Director. It appears to us that the position of the new Director would be immeasurably stronger if he were to be chosen by a joint committee of faculty and trustees. The proposal for a joint committee is by no means a radical procedure in the academic world; just recently the new president of Brooklyn College was chosen in this manner. As the qualifications of the Director involve both administrative ability and scholarly accomplishment, they should be scrutinized by trustees and faculty who have special knowledge of these respective fields. A choice made in this manner would have unanimous and enthusiastic support. Although we are confident that the faculty will be consulted in any case, we nevertheless feel that the proposed procedure would be most satisfactory. The members of the faculty to serve on the proposed committee should be elected by the faculty at large and should not include members of the faculty who also happen to be members of the Board of Trustees. This is, of course, a frankly democratic procedure; speaking only for myself, I feel that democracy as a way of life and a state of mind is being increasingly justified in the world at large and that, in particular, it might have avoided some of the worst ills from which the Institute is now suffering.

2. The trustees should take into consideration the advisability of setting a retirement age for the staff of the Institute, including members of the faculty and the Director. It would seem advisable for a number of reasons to set the same retirement age for the Director as is set for members of the faculty.

3. Appointment of future members of the faculty. There is the strongest sort of feeling that future appointments should be made by the trustees only upon the nomination of the faculty as a whole. Neither the faculty nor the trustees should be put into the position of ratifying or of rejecting as a matter of course the choices of the Director. Appointments to the faculty involve almost entirely the question of scholarly accomplishment (including those qualities of character which make one a satisfactory member of an academic community), of which, it will be generally admitted, the faculty is most likely as a general rule to make the best-considered decisions. In rare instances there may be reasons for departing from this procedure, although such would not seem to be the case. It might be added that the Institute has had most success where it itself has followed this method of appointment, namely in the School of Mathematics. As each new appointee ^{will} be a member of the faculty and of the Institute community, he should be nominated solely by the School of which he is to be a member.

4. Faculty trustees. There are at present three members of the faculty who also happen to be members of the board of trustees. They are not representatives of the faculty on the board and therefore are in an anomalous position. If there are to continue to be members of the faculty on the board

not

| of trustees--as we hope there will be--they should be there as representatives
| of the faculty. If they are not to be truly the representatives of their
| colleagues, it would appear the wiser not to have them on the board at all.
| It might be wise to have members chosen by the faculty at large even though
| the choice be made with some reference to representation for all three schools.
| The number of faculty-trustees need not be fixed but might be altered with
| changing circumstances and needs.

5. The budget. It is our profound conviction that by cooperation of the Director, the trustees, and the faculty in the preparation of the budget, it would be possible to effect substantial economies, to assure the best possible utilization of the Institute's funds, and to assure a minimum of personal favoritism. In this same connection the trustees could be assured that expenditures would be made with sole consideration to the welfare of the Institute.

There is in the faculty of the Institute an extraordinarily fine body of men, possessed of loyalty, technical competence, and a large measure of good sense and sagacity. It would appear unwise for the Institute to overlook these very considerable assets.

D.W.L.

To Maass
.. Ayerath

COPY

MARSTON MORSE
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Apr. 1, 1939

Dear Ben:

In the brief letter signed by Einstein and by me and sent out at the request of Einstein, an erroneous impression was conveyed of the conversations Dr. Flexner had with Einstein and myself. I understand this from Dr. Flexner, who states that the substance of what he said is as follows: "The professors are the natural and logical advisers of the trustees of the Institute." I am glad to add this in the form of a correction. I would tell this to you personally but am down, I fear, for a day or two more with a cold. I hope you will tell your immediate colleagues of this.

As ever,

(signed) Marston Morse

C O PY

March 30, 1939

Dear Colleagues:

We are enclosing a copy of the letter of March 15 which we sent to Dr. Flexner in accordance with your request that we convey to him the opinions expressed at our dinner on March 13. Morse and Einstein have seen Dr. Flexner individually at his request, and talked matters over. We obtained no assurance from Dr. Flexner that he would convey the contents of our letter to the Board of Trustees.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) A. Einstein

Marston Morse

Records of the Office of the Director / Faculty Files /
From the Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Cen

This contains comp.
which belongs in 9A's
files. Not personal to

Velsler -

It shows that FA per-
mits Velsler to
take materials from
Inst files & retain
them -

Keep in file
a/c

March 18, 1939

Memorandum to Professor Morse

Dear Professor Morse:

I have the letter of March 15 signed by a faculty committee in reporting the conclusions reached by the professors at their informal dinner. It seems to me that there is nothing in this communication which really requires extended comment. If you will review the history of the Institute, you will see that at the outset no effort, time, or expense was spared in order to obtain the best advice in the world. There was no faculty to consult, but, as the several faculties have been built up, they have been and will continue to be consulted by the director and by the trustees in the way and to the extent that such consultation seems at the moment to be desirable.

I do not believe that there is any particular kind of wisdom of which either the faculty or the trustees or the director has a monopoly. There are scores of men and women not connected with the Institute who understand our problems as well as any of us do and whose suggestions may or may not prove to be more important than any that can be obtained from the small group comprising trustees, faculty, and director. Inasmuch as we relied upon this body of wisdom and experience prior to making any appointments at all, it would surely be the utmost folly to cut ourselves off from it or restrict our access to it now or at any time in the future, as far as one can foresee.

Inasmuch as the schools have had complete autonomy so that scholars could devote themselves unreservedly to the pursuit of the objects for which they were called to the Institute, I should myself be opposed to any definite commitment to the effect that on any particular point any procedure agreed upon now should be followed at some future time. The moment a formulation of this sort is put upon paper, it becomes not a stabilizing but a fossilizing influence.

There are in the files of the office suggestions from members of the faculty which show how extremely important it is not to attach undue weight to

Professor Morse

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suggestions emanating from members of the faculty, just as it is equally important not to attach undue weight to suggestions emanating from the trustees or the director. I have in mind one memorandum submitted, the author of which ^{He did!} would be extremely glad to recover it. Surely men who have served in universities as faculty members do not have to be reminded that faculties in course of time developed habits and assumed prerogatives that instead of promoting the objects for which institutions are founded may prove, as they are today proving in one institution or another, the most serious obstacles to progress and freedom.

The members of the faculty are the natural and logical advisers and consultants to the director and the trustees, but they have no vested rights, and, in my judgment, they would be very unwise to ask for a vested right or privilege. As far as I know, there is no institution in the world in which a scholar is as free to pursue his scholarly interests in the way that he individually and in conjunction with his colleagues desires as here in the Institute, and I should be the first to urge anyone who is offered more perfect conditions elsewhere to accept them.

I know Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld far better than any member of the faculty knows them. I think they would both be dismayed and perhaps disheartened if a communication from the faculty aiming to pin the trustees and the director down to a definite procedure in reference to emergencies and contingencies, no two of which are ever alike, should be brought to their attention.

This communication strengthens my conviction that the autonomy of the schools, the freedom accorded to individuals, whether they be professors or members and the easy and informal relations which have always prevailed between faculty, trustees, and director, render faculty meetings futile and wasteful, though I have no objection in the world to their being held.

Sincerely yours,

AF:ESB

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS
FINE HALL

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

March 15, 1939

✓ Dear Doctor Flexner:

You have been kind enough to send the faculty your report made to the Trustees at a meeting on January 25, together with the comments which the members of the Board made thereon. At a recent informal dinner certain aspects of this report were discussed by the professors of the Institute, and we were requested to give you an account of the conclusions reached.

The Institute has now developed in its three schools to a point where its character can be clearly seen and appreciated, and the most important problem from now on, in our eyes, is the stability of what has been achieved by the generosity of the donors and your own creative insight.

This stability will depend upon the wisdom and deliberation with which future Directors are chosen. It is the unanimous opinion that this choice should be preceded by a preliminary consultation with the faculty.

It is equally essential in the opinion of a majority of the faculty that no professor be appointed without a similar consultation with his future colleagues.

We understand that both the responsibility and the final choice in each case rest with the Director and the Board of Trustees. Their action should however, in our opinion, be preceded by a consultation with the faculty which should be made effective by allowing adequate time for the consideration and inquiries which are necessary in each case.

The professors earnestly desire that the above conclusions be conveyed to the Board of Trustees. We should like very much to talk these matters over with you, and to add any information which you may desire concerning the opinions expressed.

Yours sincerely,

A. Einstein.

Hetty Goldmen
Maurice Moore

Dr. Abraham Flexner
P.O. Box 631
Princeton, N.J.

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THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

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Director of the Institute

(FOUNDED BY LOUIS BAMBERGER AND MRS. FELIX FULD, 1930)

OFFICE

20 NASSAU STREET

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

CABLE ADDRESS: VANSTITUTE PRINCETON NEW JERSEY

February 23, 1939

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PERCY S. STRAUS

OSWALD VEBLEN

LEWIS H. WEED

LIFE TRUSTEES

LOUIS BAMBERGER

MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Hetty:

At a meeting of the Trustees of the Institute, held January 23, there was so little business to transact that I made use of the occasion to refresh the memories of the Trustees regarding the fundamental points of organization and purpose which preceded the founding of the Institute for Advanced Study. Professor Veblen suggested that my report would be of interest to the members of the faculty, though I believe there is nothing in the report with which every member of the faculty was not made acquainted before he accepted a post in the Institute. I am, however, happy to accept Professor Veblen's suggestion, which was endorsed by the members of the Board present at the meeting, and I am sending you herewith the report, and also the comments which the members of the Board made thereon.

Very sincerely yours,

a.t.

Professor Hetty Goldman
Prospect Apartments, Apt. D-2
Princeton, New Jersey

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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

January 23, 1939

A regular meeting of the Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study was held at the Uptown Club, 60 East 42nd Street, New York City, on Monday, January 23, 1939.

Present: Messrs. Edgar S. Bamberger, Louis Bamberger, Carrel, Flexner, Friedenwald, Hardin, Maass, Riefler, Veblen, Weed, and Miss Sabin.

Absent and excused: Messrs. Aydelotte, Houghton, Leidesdorf, Stewart, Straus, and Mrs. Fuld.

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Maass, presided.

The minutes of the meeting held on October 10, 1938, having been distributed, their reading was dispensed with, and they were approved.

The following report was presented by the Director and, on motion, was accepted and ordered to be incorporated in the minutes of the meeting:

The first term of the sixth active year of the Institute has passed busily and productively. The relatively large mathematical group shows no loss in enthusiasm or fertility. Professor von Neumann has been elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society, a distinguished honor for one who has so recently come to the United States and who has just reached the middle thirties. He was also in October last awarded the Bôcher Prize for his work in his special field. The prize, founded by the late Professor Bôcher of Harvard, is given once in five years. Of seven persons who have received it in the last thirty-five years four are at Princeton, and a fifth now at Harvard was formerly a professor at Princeton.

The mathematicians who have previously been members of the Institute and who have returned to their former or to more advanced posts continue to give a good account of themselves. I have a recent note from Professor Murnaghan of the Johns Hopkins, who sends me a copy of his new book called Theory of Group Representations. He writes that without the leisure afforded him by his stay in Princeton he doubts whether he would have embarked on the undertaking of writing this book. Other professors and members have also made important contributions, too numerous to mention in this report.

We are looking forward with great enthusiasm to a protracted visit from Professor Niels Bohr of Copenhagen, who has just arrived in Princeton. Professor Bohr is not only one of the most distinguished mathematical physicists in Europe, but has in the difficulties which have overwhelmed German and Austrian mathematicians shown himself a humanitarian of the widest sympathy. Under his roof there have been sheltered a succession of distinguished men, who have been his guests until they have found suitable positions in other parts of the world.

I feel similar satisfaction with the activities of the humanistic group. Professor Meritt, like Professor von Neumann, has been made a member of the American Philosophical Society. He and Professor Capps have also been chosen honorary members of the Greek Archaeological Society in Athens as has likewise Professor Shear of Princeton, who has charge of the Agora excavations. The three men have worked in closest harmony, and it is pleasant to record that of the four honorary memberships recently created by the Greek Archaeological Society three belong to the Princeton groups.

Professor Panofsky was invited by Northwestern University to give a series of lectures on Albrecht Dürer, which we are informed were most enthusiastically received. The series of lectures which he gave at Bryn

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Mawr and repeated at Princeton last year will shortly be issued by the Oxford University Press, and this will be followed by the series more recently given in Evanston, Illinois. Professor Herzfeld has one volume soon to appear and a second book almost ready to be published in Paris. Professor Lowe's great publication moves on steadily. Others could be mentioned in the same terms.

The Institute has received a gift of one hundred Korean books on the subject of art and philosophy from Dr. Kei-won Chung, a Princeton Ph.D., who is working with Dr. Swann in the Gest Oriental Library. Also, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss of Washington have provided the sum of \$3,500.00 which will be used to bring temporarily to the Institute Professor Doro Levi, one of the first victims of the new Italian racial and religious laws. Professor Doro Levi, who has been welcomed by all his colleagues in Princeton, will give a series of lectures during the second half year on Etruscan art; he has also been invited by New York University to lecture to the advanced students of the Graduate Institute of Art and Archaeology.

With the beginning of the second term Mr. Stewart and Mr. Warren have taken up their active duties. As additional rooms were needed, an advantageous and economical arrangement was made with the Princeton Inn where they, Mr. Riefler, and a few foreign workers in the field of economics will be comfortable until Fuld Hall is ready for occupancy in the early autumn. Among these visitors are Professor Henry Clay, formerly professor of the University of Manchester and now financial adviser to the Bank of England; Mr. Fleming, an Edinburgh economist, brought to the United States by the Rockefeller Foundation; and Professor John Jewkes, professor of economics at the University of Manchester. Mr. Warren, Mr. Clay, and Professor Wolman of Columbia are each this month giving three lectures at McGill University, Montreal, on the economic aspects of social organization.

Thus at the very outset the quality of the Institute economic group has been recognized. Since writing this report I have read Mr. Warren's lectures and have been delighted with their lucidity, restraint, and learning. I am amazed at the range of Mr. Warren's knowledge and experience.

The instances which I have given are not exhaustive, but they are indicative of the quality of work which has been carried on by the Institute and its prompt recognition in our own country and abroad. I have frequent occasions to discuss with scholars the question as to what gives the Institute its unique character. Few Americans have had actual experience with organizations like our own, for American scholars have been usually confined to university work which involves a regular teaching schedule, small or large, and incidental opportunities for research under conditions that leave something to be desired. What is it that distinguishes the Institute from the most advanced type of university organization in this country? In a general way, our Institute can, I think, be fairly described in words that Mr. Stewart recently quoted to me:

"The deepest joy in life is to be creative. To find an undeveloped situation, to see the possibilities, to identify yourself with something worth while doing, put yourself into it, and stand for it - that is a satisfaction in comparison with which superficial pleasures are trivial."

We cannot, I think, too frequently remind ourselves that between the Institute and a university there are characteristic and profound differences - differences that in the years to come must never be lost sight of. Perhaps most important of all is the way the Institute is set up. Instead of an all-embracing school like a graduate school made up of various departments which are directed and managed through faculty meetings, committees, and deans, the Institute has from its very inception been composed of practically "autonomous, self-governing groups". There are, of course, interests and experiences which the various groups have

in common, but, inasmuch as Princeton is a small town and members of the Institute see one another frequently in informal fashion as they meet also the Director, Trustees of the Institute, and members of the Princeton faculty, these common experiences and interests can be most profitably discussed when absolute informality prevails. Each of the three schools has its own individual needs and its own individual problems. It would be a waste of time and a hindrance to effective progress if the three groups were regarded as a faculty which met at stated intervals and legislated for the entire Institute: the mathematicians, for example, do not wish to legislate for the humanists or vice versa. By making the several groups autonomous and self-governing each has been able to advance in the ways best suited to the subject with which it deals and to the performance of which it is committed. Informal meetings within each group take place frequently. Conclusions are reached which sometimes apply to the entire group and sometimes only to some particular individual. Thus not only the group is self-governing, but the individual professor is self-governing. The Institute is small and compared with a university should forever remain small. Effort can therefore be unified without being regimented.

Professor Royce of Harvard once remarked to me that he had no difficulty whatsoever in understanding the "Absolute" of Hegel; what he could never understand were the proceedings of a faculty meeting. To be sure, at long intervals some point of general interest may arise on which the faculty should be brought together and consulted, and its views or conflicting views should be transmitted to the trustees, but anything more than this would be a waste of time and energy and would be the first step in forming a routine which might ultimately choke what is today the outstanding merit of the Institute.

The spirit of the permanent group pervades the ranks of those

who as members come to Princeton for limited periods. They attach themselves to this or that person or persons and themselves seek out the activities which it will best profit them to pursue. There is no danger that so mature and carefully selected a group as the members will fail to profit by the rich opportunities offered to them. There is far greater danger that, as time is short, they will overwork. The wife of an Englishman now working with Professor Mitrany asked not long ago in all seriousness whether everyone in the Institute stays up and works until two o'clock in the morning.

/ The preservation of the autonomy of the schools of the Institute, the absence of regulations adopted at faculty meetings - both these seem to me to distinguish the Institute from a university and to be of inestimable importance to its free and effective functioning. No rules have been laid down, and no rules necessarily applicable to all three schools or within each school applicable to all individuals alike should ever be laid down. If we cling to the principle that no one will be asked to join the faculty who has not already demonstrated high intellectual quality, we need have no fear of either stagnation or chaos. /

The same informality is characteristic of the relations which are developing between the Institute and Princeton University. No effort has been made, and no effort should ever be made to reduce these relations to formal shape. Once more, the smallness of the town conduces to intimacy, social and intellectual, between the Princeton professors and the Institute workers and professors. No human being is wise enough to devise a formula which will fit every contingency. Each of the two institutions has its own specific functions to perform. Each contains eminent men. The Institute has for six years allowed its members to seek each other out and to enjoy the fullest and freest social and intellectual contact with one another. I can perhaps give no more striking instance of the helpful

way in which informality works than by citing one or two specific instances.

My attention was recently called to a young German, thirty years of age, working in the field of international politics, who was described to me as a brilliant person already known to Professor Whitton of Princeton University. I called Professor Whitton by telephone, and he replied that this young man whom he had known for two years was one of the ablest young men whom he had ever met. I found that his work was known to our own Professor Earle, who gave me an equally high opinion of its importance. With little difficulty I procured for him - mainly from outside sources - the modest sum needed to bring him to Princeton. It took less than twenty-four hours to consummate the entire arrangement, and Dr. Herz, the young man in question, is now working with Professor Whitton of the University and Professor Earle of the Institute and is happier than he has ever been in his whole life.

A similar incident happened recently in the mathematical field. Professor Lefschetz of the University came to see me one day to tell me that he was rewriting his book on the subject of topology. He had sent his proofs to eight mathematicians, seven of whom had returned them with a few suggestions. The eighth was a former Princeton student of his, who, he said, had slashed his manuscript to pieces and compelled him to rewrite the book. The young man in question had already been agreed upon as one of those who would be invited to come to the Institute next year to spend a year or a year and a half working at Fine Hall and Fuld Hall. He will thus enjoy not only the facilities offered by the Institute, but also be in close contact with the teacher by whom he was originally inspired.

/ It may be asked what under these circumstances is the role of a director. The answer is an easy one. It may at any time be his most important function to have the final word - after conference inside and outside the Institute - in the matter of faculty appointments, though the presumption

is strong that the members of a given school are the best and the proper judges. It is also the business of the Director, using such income as is annually available, to enable the scholars, who really are the Institute, to do, in so far as is humanly possible and reasonable, what they themselves regard as important. That is, of course, a more complex and delicate task where there are three schools, each moving ahead with interest and enthusiasm, than it was at the outset when the Director had only to deal with the mathematical group; but it has not been a difficult or an unpleasant task, for the members of the various groups respect each other thoroughly and have been fair and broad-minded in recognizing the needs of one another. I must in fairness add that the autonomy of the several schools and the lack of centralization, one of the vital characteristics of the Institute, make a heavy demand upon those who, as so-called secretaries, are associated not only with the Director's office but with each of the three schools. It would, I think, be very difficult indeed to find anywhere else a group of young women of the devotion, intelligence, and scholarship characteristic of those whom we call for the lack of a better name secretaries, though the word "secretary" is altogether inadequate to describe the responsibilities which they discharge and the demands which are made upon them. Does this mean anything resembling disorder? Far from it. Informal but effective centralization such as is needed in the conduct of any enterprise involving the expenditure of money takes place in the office of the Director and the Secretary of the Institute. Thus expenditures are kept strictly to the limitations of the budget, and the instructions of the Board are effectually carried out. This will all be made easier when the various parts of the Institute are gathered together beneath the roof of Fuld Hall, but, scattered as we are, with improvised quarters and facilities we have lived happily and coöperated effectively so that professors, members, and secretaries have from the beginning formed a happy and efficient group, every member of which has

been interested not only in his or her work, but in the welfare of the Institute and the cultivation of friendly and helpful relations with Princeton University and other universities, even those at a distance.

I would not have the Board believe that the Institute is in all these respects absolutely unique. Prior to the present regime in Germany the various institutes maintained by the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft worked very much as the Institute for Advanced Study is working. It is interesting to note that of the two men who were directors of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft the first, Professor Harnack, was the most distinguished theologian in Germany, the second, Professor Planck, one of the most distinguished mathematical physicists. Harnack, the theologian, established institutes of physical chemistry, genetics, and physiology, most of them at Dahlem. Planck, the mathematical physicist, intimate friend of Einstein and others of our mathematical group, established a second physiological institute at Heidelberg and an institute of economics at Kiel. Of the various institutes supported by the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft each operated individually as our own several schools operate. They were autonomous, they were sympathetic with one another, but no effort was ever made to standardize their procedure. German science reached its highest level in the work of the various institutes maintained by the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft, though in recent years with perhaps a single exception they have all been reduced to mediocrity or worse.

Individuals here and there, both in this country and in Europe, though connected with more highly organized faculties, enjoy as individuals the kind of freedom and opportunity which everybody enjoys in the Institute for Advanced Study. Our form of organization and our procedure are therefore vindicated by experiments which have been made elsewhere both in this country and in Europe, though we have in some respects not hesitated to vary our own activities whenever the ends for which the Institute was established could be best served.

Since we last met, a beginning has been made in the construction of Fuld Hall, but I do not feel that I am the person to give an account of the building situation. This pleasure I yield to the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Maass, who with his associates on the committee has been unwearied in giving time and thought to all the problems connected with its construction. In addition, Mr. Maass and his legal associates have responded promptly without expense to the Institute to every call which we have made involving any kind of legal question whatsoever. I must pay the same tribute to the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer and those associated with them in their office. They have taken infinite pains in the conduct of our financial affairs and have thus relieved the office of the Director of many and varied responsibilities.

legal
Serv. Maass
for to 9 AM

The interest and confidence of the Founders have never fluctuated, and it is a source of immense satisfaction to us all that Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld enjoy the fruits of their wise and far-sighted generosity. Mrs. Fuld, I rejoice to say, has improved in health and, but for the severe cold, would have attended today's meeting.

After concluding his report, the Director stated that he would welcome an expression of opinion regarding his views.

Professor Veblen, while agreeing in the main and particularly with the strong emphasis on the autonomy of the three schools, thought that occasional faculty meetings would be advantageous inasmuch as they would familiarize all members of the faculty with matters concerning the Institute as a whole.

Dr. Weed suggested that the group might be brought together to approve the recommendations regarding assistants, etc. of the various schools.

Mr. Flexner pointed out that the groups were so highly specialized that it would be difficult for a humanist, for instance, to pass on an appointment in the School of Mathematics, and vice versa.

Dr. Carrel in very emphatic language upheld strictly the point of view which the Director's report had taken. He took the position that this report was a clear statement of the fundamental principles underlying the organization and conduct of an institute for advanced study. Informality, absence of rules, autonomy of the several schools were, in his judgment, the principles absolutely necessary which distinguished a living and growing institution from one which otherwise would inevitably harden and grow old. All endowed scientific institutes with the exception of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute had grown old and largely ceased to develop because through the accumulation of rules a bureaucratic spirit had developed. He thought the report by far the most important one that the Director had ever submitted, and he expressed the wish that every person charged with a responsibility like that of the Director might have access to this clear formulation of the only principles which could possibly enable the Institute to retain its vigor and vitality indefinitely. If the Institute adheres to the principles of selection which have thus far guided it and retains the autonomy, flexibility, and complete absence of rules and regulations, it will, in his judgment, never become senile.

Dr. Sabin strongly endorsed the views expressed by the Director and emphasized by Dr. Carrel. The cardinal point for the continued welfare of the Institute is to retain the ability to choose the right people for the faculty. This can be obtained, as at present, through consultation by the Director with the existing faculty with help and coöperation from outside authorities. It is possible, however, that occasions may arise when certain general matters affecting everyone might be handled more wisely through discussions of the

faculty with adequate opportunity to present the view or the varying views of the faculty to the Director and the Trustees. This could be brought about as occasion arose without previous formal organization. As an example of the kind of thing in reference to which the faculty might profitably meet, she instanced the discussion of a plan for retirement, which, however, in the case of the Institute for Advanced Study was disposed of when the Institute was organized.

Dr. Weed cited the instance of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, parts of which are isolated, and stated that the officers of the Institution had found it desirable to bring together the members of the staff in informal conferences in Washington. These conferences had proven to be of utmost value in the conduct of affairs of the Institution.

Mr. Riefler stated that the fundamental importance of the Directorship lay, not in administration as such, which Dr. Flexner has reduced to a minimum, but in the selection of personnel. The power, standing, and value of the Institute - in fact, its whole future - were inseparably tied up with the quality of the persons who were called to professorships. During his period at the Institute Mr. Riefler had been amazed at the spirit of loyalty to each other and to the Institute that permeated the faculty. There was a superb group spirit among the different professors, who were happy in doing their work and were sympathetic with their colleagues. The point made by Professor Veblen which impressed itself upon him most was the extent to which some of the professors appeared to be ignorant of what the Institute was doing. When it was necessary to restrict the budget last year, for instance, the questions asked by some of the professors indicated less familiarity with the Institute and

its problems than he had thought possible. It was his hope that the completion of Fuld Hall next year and the gathering of all of the professors under one roof which that would make possible would remedy this situation. Under all these circumstances, he stated that he personally would not be in favor of disturbing the existing situation.

Mr. Hardin and Mr. Maass were also of the opinion that, if there was a problem, it would disappear when the faculty instead of being scattered was housed in Fuld Hall.

The Director in closing the discussion stated that he had no objection whatsoever to the faculty's meeting whenever it pleased but that, in his opinion, any regular machinery such as faculty meetings, committee meetings, etc., would annoy the most productive and fertile minds in the Institute and tend to increase the importance of those who were intellectually less important, in case persons answering this description were ever members of any of the schools. As for himself, he had no desire to participate, just as he did not attend the meetings of those composing the several schools because he did not wish by his presence to interfere with the utmost freedom of discussion. Therefore should the faculty choose to meet, he would not attend unless a meeting were called for some such specific object as Dr. Sabin had indicated.

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Here is the copy of Minutes 1 January 23-39
with Dr. Flanagan's own letter
48.

V22

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

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LEWIS H. WEED

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

Director of the Institute

November 2, 1936

LIFE TRUSTEES

LOUIS BAMBERGER

MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Professor Veblen:

I have given very thoughtful consideration to the gratifying memorandum submitted in behalf of the faculty by you and Mr. Riefler. I am inclined to believe that the attitude which the faculty group recommends is sound and that we should make no commitment until in the course of nature it becomes unavoidable.

The one change I would suggest is the following,-that in place of my communicating such ideas as float into my mind from/to time as I think of the problem, I will embody them in confidential memoranda which I shall seal and deposit in Mrs. Bailey's care. In that way I shall feel free to change my mind, and there will be absolutely no danger of leakage which inadvertently might take place under the method suggested by the group. This is of course not meant, as you well understand, as a reflection upon their discretion but rather as a means of enabling me to retract or modify my opinions in the light of experience and further thought.

I am very deeply touched by the attitude of the whole group towards me, and I trust that for the few remaining years nothing will ever disturb the spirit which has prevailed within the Institute and between the Institute and the University.

Will you let Mr. Riefler see this and use your own discretion as to communicating it to the other members of the faculty group?

Very sincerely yours,

Abraham Flexner

Professor Oswald Veblen

October 23, 1936

a.3.

The problems arising from the extraordinary prominence of the group of mathematicians assembled at Princeton are not simple. Princeton now consists of three separate but overlapping groups: the undergraduate school, which to some extent overlaps with certain portions of the Graduate School; the graduate School, which overlaps with the Institute for Advanced Study; and the Institute for Advanced Study, which overlaps with the Graduate School. In so far as numbers are concerned, a limit can be fixed ^{to} on the undergraduate school on the basis of considerations which do not concern the other two units. In so far as the Graduate School ~~is~~ concerned, a limit is fixed to some extent by the size of the Graduate College and to some extent by the consideration that there are other graduate schools in this country that can take care of students not accommodated at Princeton, however worthy they may be. Even so, the precise number of graduate students that can be admitted depends also upon (1) physical facilities, (2) size and quality of staff, etc. Fine Hall will inevitably attract more first-rate students than certain other faculties at Princeton because it has had for many years a worldwide reputation, and hence more first-rate students will wish to study mathematics at Princeton than at certain other institutions which on general grounds may be even more eminent than Princeton as a whole is. It is, in other words, impossible to apply precisely the same yardstick to the graduate school of mathematics as one would apply to a less eminent department for whose graduates there is a less emphatic demand.

The Institute for Advanced Study carries this same difficulty a step further. It can easily impose certain limitations as, for example, that (1) it will admit no one who has not achieved the Ph.D. degree, (2) no one who has not beyond the Ph.D. degree ~~routine~~ given independent evidence of promise; but with the Ph.D. degree ~~routine~~ training comes to a halt, and the Institute was founded to offer easy-going, informal, and stimulating help to men capable of independent work, precisely as in their best days the German universities did. If the Insti-

tute succeeds in bringing together an eminent faculty working in the closest cooperation with the graduate faculty in Princeton University, the two forces will inevitably bring to Princeton more applications than would otherwise be received. The precise load upon the teaching faculty of the two institutions is difficult to determine and will shift from year to year. A careful study of the figures shows that during the current year there are 41 persons registered in the Institute, but this does not mean that there are 41 persons who receive anything like regular instruction or guidance from the members of the Institute staff. That may be either greater than 41 by reason of the fact that some graduate students of Princeton seek advice, guidance, and attend lectures or seminars, or it may mean less because certain members registered in the Institute attend courses and take their main work under members of the Princeton faculty. Thus a series of interviews during the past week shows that one member registered in the Institute is doing all his work with Professor Russell at the Astronomical Observatory, and there are others who do their main work with Dean Eisenhart, Professor Lefschetz, Professor Bochner, Professor Condon, Professor Thomas, Professor Wedderburn, etc. In so far as this is true, the number is less than 41, but there are also some graduate students at Princeton who are attracted mainly by one or another of the Institute faculty so that this feature would tend to increase the number. Finally, there are certain persons who are registered twice, as, for example, National Research Council, Commonwealth Fund, and C. R. B. Foundation Fellows.

It ought to be assumed at the outset that there are going to be more students in mathematics in Princeton than in certain other branches because we can say without conceit that the mathematical groups and especially the two mathematical groups will inevitably attract ^{more} men and better men than certain other groups. There are, however, certain limiting features which ought to be considered. In order to preserve the eminence of the two groups, neither the University nor the Institute

group must be overworked. Fine Hall cannot accommodate comfortably an indefinite number so there is a question as to whether additional space elsewhere, properly equipped with books, might not be utilized as a supplement to Fine Hall, provided that any such space would not increase the burden of the teaching staff of either the University or the Institute. Too rigid a limitation and too small an enrollment would be bad for both groups, for an able body of students does as much good to a professor as a professor does to the advanced student. These considerations would seem to indicate that it might be a mistake to fix for either the University group or the Institute group upon an absolutely rigid arithmetical limit. On the other hand, the same considerations emphasize two points: (1) that Fine Hall must not be overcrowded; (2) that the members of the staff must not be overworked. If they are to maintain their eminence, they must have time and leisure for their own research and for the sort of reflection and repose that are necessary to original thinking. In place therefore of a rigid numerical limit largely determined by reason of conditions that may fit certain other departments better, would it not be well to agree to restrict the number on a qualitative rather than a quantitative basis; (3) to emphasize a quantitative limit whenever there is the real danger that the members of the staff are being pushed unduly hard; (3) to procure additional space, if the total admitted by the two groups seems to make Fine Hall too populous? The Princeton faculty has of course the first claim upon the space available in Fine Hall, but the union and interaction of the two groups is spoken of by every person who comes here as one of the distinctive and most advantageous features of mathematical study in Princeton. Hence it would seem therefore to follow that, if additional space is provided, the mixture of the two groups should continue, certain members of each group being found in Fine Hall and certain members of each group being found in the additional space provided. This mixture is good for both formal and informal reasons. Thus cooperation between Thomas and Mayer, between Lefschetz and Alexander, etc., ought not to be interfered with or made

difficult. And again it is a wonderful thing that the men doing advanced mathematics here glide unconsciously from one group to the other without raising any question either in their own line or in that of their respective staff.

V-2

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

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20 NASSAU STREET

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

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October 9, 1936

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LEWIS H. WEED

LIFE TRUSTEES
LOUIS BAMBERGER
MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Dr. Flexner:

The Faculty at a meeting on October 2 took up once more the problem which you laid before it last Spring, namely, whether it would be wise to choose now an understudy to act as your assistant and possibly to succeed you. The undersigned were requested to lay before you the results of this discussion as well as of those which preceded it.

We as a Faculty are, of course, deeply concerned about the qualities of the person who will succeed yourself as Director and appreciate the foresight which raises this problem at a time when it has no immediate urgency. In view of the fact that the question is not a critical one at present, however, we feel that it would be a mistake to approach it too formally at this time. Specifically, we doubt the wisdom of appointing an assistant to act as an understudy. At the same time we do not wish the question to be forgotten, nor the choice to be made without the benefit of your advice. It is our feeling, therefore, that the problem will be more satisfactorily handled for the present if, from time to time, you will confide your

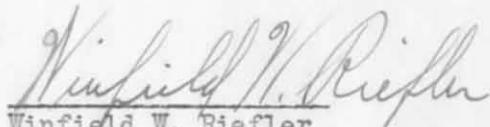
meditations as to possible candidates for a successor to members of the Board and also, if you wish, to members of the Faculty. This we feel is the best guaranty of continuity of policy in case an emergency should arise.

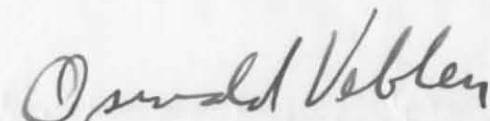
We have debated at great length the suggestion that an understudy be appointed. It has in our opinion one advantage which we hesitate to forego, namely, it would insure that your successor would be intimately aware of the Princeton situation, both in the Institute and in the University. This qualification on the part of a successor we regard as almost essential. The appointment of an understudy would also avoid the uncertainties and loss of morale which would ensue if the directorship were vacant for a considerable time. Attractive as these considerations are, we have come to the conclusion that the appointment of an understudy would be unwise. You have reduced administration as such to a minimum and have established scholarship here on the basis of a minimum amount of interference with the Faculty. The contribution of the Director to the Institute under these conditions is not measured by his performance of executive duties, but rather by the insight and guidance which he brings to the development of the Institute as a whole. To function effectively he must be sensitive to conditions within the Institute and within the University as well as aware of the deeper currents in the world of scholarship. Responsibility for action resting upon insight of this character must be taken largely by the Director

himself. It is difficult for us to see how an individual of the requisite calibre and imagination could be happy in the role of understudy, or to visualize what he would find to do.

In the meantime, we have one practical suggestion to offer toward deferring the problem for as long a time as possible. We feel that the severity of the weather in Princeton in February constitutes the greatest present hazard to your continued good health. Would it not be possible for you to repeat regularly the vacation which you took last Winter with such satisfactory results?

Very sincerely yours,


Winfield W. Riefler


Oswald Veblen

Oswald Veblen

March 31, 1936

MEMORANDUM READ TO THE FACULTY BY MR. FLEXNER
AFTER RECEIPT OF LETTER OF MARCH 14, 1936

I have read the letter of March 14, 1936, and I am naturally glad that the members of the staff have expressed themselves with such complete candor. This letter was written so shortly after the receipt of my letter of March 6 that I do not feel sure that it represents the final views of the faculty. Two things are therefore clear to me: (1) the person who succeeds me must be as acceptable to the faculty as in your own language I have been; (2) members of the faculty should have a longer period in which to think over the problem which has been in my mind for several years. The one thing of which I am perfectly sure is that an amendment of the By-Laws such as is proposed would be a mistake because it would destroy the informality with which faculty, director, and trustees have hitherto acted and continue to act certainly as long as the institution is small. The trustees and faculty should therefore approach these problems rather as committees of the whole than through representatives who might easily get into the position of being attorneys, one group for the trustees, and the other for the faculty.

The second point deals with the general question of the wisdom and desirability of appointing an associate director and the possibility of finding one who would be thoroughly acceptable to both the trustees and the faculty. My feeling is that on this point the faculty should proceed with greater deliberation. They can talk it over between now and next autumn in an informal way and frame their conclusions, if they arrive at something like a unanimous conclusion, any time in the early autumn. We do not wish to act in haste, and we do not wish above all to destroy the type of relationship that has existed between the director, the faculty of the Institute, and the faculty of Princeton University. I think therefore that for the present the matter can be dropped but not dropped out of your minds. You can think about it as you would think of any other serious problem, confer with one another in the informal way to which you are accustomed, and come together in the autumn to compare notes and formulate any view that is practically unanimous.

MEMORANDUM

MEETING OF DIRECTOR AND PROFESSORS
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

March 31, 1936

I have a communication signed in behalf of the faculty by Messrs. Veblen and Riefler. While I am naturally pleased with the general attitude which this memorandum embodies, I cannot but feel that my own part is really exaggerated. I have been fortunate in the experience of a lifetime with both the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations during their golden days. This experience brought me in contact with universities both in this country and Europe. I saw what seemed to me certain useless and deplorable features. I have tried to use whatever I saw that was good and to avoid whatever I saw that seemed to me to be needless and obstructive. Any other person of ordinary common sense with the same experience would, I venture to say, have pursued very much the same policy that we are pursuing here.

The second paragraph of the memorandum describing our method of consulting with one another and obliterating distinctions between faculty, trustees, and director gives me most satisfaction, as you will see from my subsequent comments. I said in my last report to the Board that no director could direct an institution of this kind. I might have added to it that no body of professors ought to wish to be bothered with the infinite variety of petty details that would simply destroy the ideal conditions under which we work. We appear to have hit it off pretty well, and there is something worth talking about when we meet as we now do or communicate in some other way. The Board, made up, as it is, of laymen, outside scientists and scholars, and some of our own professors, keep a general supervision over the affairs of the Institute and see to it that its finances are so secure that short of a financial earthquake no one need to bother about his/^{own} security. I meet with the individual trustees at luncheon or otherwise from time to time for discussion of special topics, just as I meet with individual professors, and my own course is always the result of the combined influence of what I gather in this eclectic fashion.

The arrangements proposed would be very good if we were dealing with a fully developed institution like Princeton or Harvard, but we are not. We are dealing with an institution that is just beginning to grow. Now my whole effort during these five

years has been directed to preserve informality in my relations with the professors, in my relations with the trustees, and in the relations between the trustees and the professors. I have tried to get you acquainted with one another in a gradual way so that a good many of the prejudices and preoccupations that exist in American institutions may never come to exist in the Institute. Whether I shall be successful in that I do not know, but at any rate that has been my idea. I have myself taken either the professors as a whole or some individual professor into my confidence whenever anything is needed to be done. You have done the same with me. Now let us keep it up in just that way.

You are right in saying that I wished administration reduced to a minimum. You are wrong if you suppose that administration has not been time-consuming. The administration which we have kept to a minimum is administration within the schools. I have myself been so busy that with two competent persons to help me I have not been able to keep up with my work. You have to distinguish between the administration within the various schools which is practically nil and the administration of the Institute as a whole, which is far more intricate and delicate than you are apt to consider. For instance, we are living in close contact with Princeton University. No one here has any idea of the time and thought and diplomacy which I have given to perfecting that relationship; I do not believe that any one knows what has been involved in these efforts, and there is no reason why I should bother you as long as I do nothing that does not imperil the interests which you have primarily at heart.

The Institute has attracted a great deal of attention in this country and in Europe so that there has been an enormous correspondence with which I am simply unable to keep up, and I could not keep up with it if I had an additional secretary. I manage it the best way I can with due regard to my strength and other demands so that, while we have really kept administration at a minimum inside the schools, there is no way of controlling it as far as my own particular functions are concerned.

On reflection, I think you are right in objecting to an appointment on a one-year basis on the ground that it would be difficult to get a person of the proper

caliber. On the other hand, it would be wrong to make an unconditional promise of succession to anyone. We shall therefore have to find somebody who is willing to take it on an indefinite tenure and on a chance. I shall make it my business to initiate in him/the spirit of this enterprise. Having done so, I will sometime go away for a period of a few months and see what he can do with the entire responsibility. If he measures up in these trials, the presumption would be that he would be considered first when it comes to the choice of a successor. I believe that the post is so attractive and the possibilities of the Institute are so great that some highly competent person, confident of his own ability and with imagination enough to realize the possibilities of the Institute, may be willing to be an understudy for an indefinite period - a year, two years or three, perhaps more, dependent upon my health and strength.

An example of precisely the sort of plan which I have in mind was as a matter of fact suggested to me by the experience of the Rockefeller Institute at Princeton. Dr. Theobald Smith was about fifteen years ago empowered to develop a department of animal and plant pathology, the like of which does not exist anywhere in the world. He was himself not a young man at that time. When he had reached just about the age which I now have reached and things were going well, he suggested to the trustees that he should be allowed to bring in to the Institute someone whom he might train to be his successor inasmuch as the Institute was too young to have settled down as most universities have. He was given an absolutely free hand to do what he pleased, and on that basis he brought in Doctor Ten Broeck who spent four or five years with him until he himself retired about two years ago. Doctor Ten Broeck had a chance to study and to see at first hand what Doctor Smith was doing, how he had done it, and to cooperate with him. He has stepped into his place with the good will and approbation of every person in the department, which, as it now stands, is a larger and more complex affair than the Institute for Advanced Study is today.

I am asking you to make me any suggestions of any person whom you think fitted by his experience and personality for this task. We must not spoil a first-rate scholar in finding him, and the task does not require a specialist in any of the divisions in which the Institute is busy. It does require a person of varied interests

who has had experience and has acquired wisdom, who knows how to say "Yes" and may be able from time to time to say "No". I can recall a case in which, relying on my instinct and experience, I said "No" to a scheme propounded by one of the present professors. He probably thought that I was wrong at the time. My guess is that he knows now that I was right. I have had the same experience in dealing with the Board. I have been quick to pickup valuable suggestions that have been made by the members of the Board. I have also not hesitated in a quiet way to express doubt or even opposition.

Let me call your attention to one factor of enormous importance. The tradition in this country is that trustees are laymen. I have never believed that that is sound. At the General Education Board and the Rockefeller Foundation we mixed laymen and scholars and scientists. We sought wise men who could take broad and long views, and we found them. We have done the same with the trustees of the Institute. There are some invaluable laymen. There are some outside scholars, scientists, and administrators. We have also made the experiment of putting on a member of the faculty, and I hope that this experiment will be extended. In this way we have preserved unity, intelligence, good will, and above all informality, and no machinery on earth can take its place. The Institute is safe, safe in its ideals, and safe in its management as long as this sort of coöperation continues - a coöperation which leaves the lay trustees to admire without being too proud of the Institute, a coöperation which leads professors to see that there are many things on which they should not waste any time. The moment a committee is appointed on which the faculty is represented you establish a conflict of interest between the faculty and the trustees, because representatives are attorneys. That is why they are appointed and, if the faculty representatives are attorneys, so will the trustee representatives be attorneys, and you will create here at the Institute precisely the feeling that does exist in most institutions as between trustees and faculty which I have been trying to avoid. I would regard it as a serious error of tactics at this stage of our development to create a committee of any kind in place of the easy and informal intercourse which we have enjoyed. Everybody is free to come to

me just as I feel free to go to any of you. The trustees are free to talk with you. You are also free to talk to the trustees, as you know, but there are certain proprieties that all observe. In all matters as much depends upon how you do a thing as what you do. No anti-faculty or anti-trustee complex exists. For heaven's sake, let us not manufacture it.

There is another reason. The representatives of the faculty, if any such feeling as I have described is brought about, will always be outvoted. You will have two trustees, two founders and myself on the one side, and two faculty members on the other. As it would be a division that you have brought about, you would have no reason to complain. In other words, you will exchange influence which you now possess for power which won't amount to anything. The important factors in a small institution are informality and cooperation, not power. I don't myself want power, and you don't need any. What we want to do is to work along together harmoniously. There is another fallacy in representation. You all know that there are divisions in every faculty: divisions between the young and the old, divisions between conservatives and progressives. If you appoint representatives, they will always represent the majority, and the minority will go unrepresented, though it may be that the minority is the wise section. If you keep the thing on the basis of influence rather than representation, an influential and correct minority may have far more influence than a reactionary majority.

I should like to impress upon you all what you doubtless know, namely, the need of refraining from miscellaneous talk about the University or from ever contrasting the conditions as they exist within the University with those which exist within the Institute. Princeton has been extraordinarily generous and high-minded in all its relations and dealings with the Institute. It is in our interest, as in theirs, that the University should be made as strong as possible. If therefore the question should ever arise as to whether a particular person should be invited to join the University faculty or the Institute faculty, I should without hesitation step aside in order that the University might secure him. I did this, for example, in the case of Professor Meritt. Knowing that Professor Capps would soon retire,

I told President Dodds about Professor Meritt and said that the University might have a mortgage on Meritt if they wanted him to succeed Capps or any other person and I would not raise a finger. He would be just as useful to us if he were in the University as he would be in the Institute. President Dodds appreciated this attitude very deeply. Two weeks later he told me that the department had decided on a person whose interests lay in the general field of Greek rather than in the more highly specialized field represented by Meritt. Thereupon I asked Professor Meritt whether he would come to the Institute and we thus created a situation in which the Princeton Greek Department and the Institute are both thoroughly happy. That attitude ought, I believe, to characterize every step we take. If it does, Princeton and the Institute together will have made a notable contribution to American scholarship in the form of a new type of co-operation.

There is a final consideration. When I suggested to Mr. Bamberger that the Institute be established, he replied that he would do it if I would consent to be the first director. I said that I was too old, that there ought to be a younger man, not much younger, but a person experienced and wise and well informed; Mr. Bamberger insisted that, as the Institute was my idea, I should start it and then he added that I should do, as he would do in his own business, namely, train an understudy. It is perfectly obvious that, if I propose to the Board or to him the formation of a committee of this kind which shall be permanently functioning, I may create an obstacle in his mind and in the Board's mind. What I hope is that you can rid yourselves of the idea that there is any antagonism, actual or probable, between the trustees and partly the professors. They have different functions. It is the main business of the professors to attend to their separate subjects. It is the main business of the trustees to see to it that as far as possible the professors are supplied with what they need and are freed from all kinds of distracting routine such as exists in most academic institutions. If we handle questions as they arise on an informal basis, we can keep this up and, as the institution will be very small for many years to come, there is no obstacle to informality. If we handle it upon the basis of rules and

regulations, you will reproduce the situation in miniature that exists in other institutions, and the Institute will lose most of its charm and originality.

My conclusions therefore are to take your advice in dropping the one-year feature, to discourage action through a joint committee, to maintain the spirit of helpfulness and cooperation not only within the Institute and its members but between the Institute and Princeton University so that we may be just as proud of our association with the University as we hope that the University may be proud of its association with us. It might well, therefore, in my judgment, be left in this shape. If any of you or all of you know of any one who ought to be considered and whom I would probably find congenial, helpful, and teachable, tell me who he is. I have the success of the Institute so continuously on my mind that you may be very sure that I will use my best judgment to find someone who can work with you in the spirit in which you have been good enough to say that I have worked with you up to this time and shall work with you to the end. Working in the spirit which I have described, we shall make a detour around problems, some real, some quite unreal that exist or that have grown up in old established institutions. We shall not have, for example, to raise what I regard as the mythical question of faculty government because faculty government exists nowhere in the world in an unadulterated form and in its modified form is incapable of transplantation from one country to another. In its stead we shall have worked out something that is congenial to the American spirit and that gives everybody the opportunity to contribute all that is in him towards the end, for which the Institute was established. If we can accomplish this successfully, it may be that older institutions in which there exists some sort of antagonism between faculty and trustees may gradually modify their form of government, though as a matter of fact in an experience covering a third of a century devoted to improving higher education only once, as far as I can recall, did my main obstacle lie with trustees. It was the faculties who with their instinct for self-preservation blocked the way. Let us see therefore if we can join in taking both a broad and a long view, avoiding decisions that may possibly embarrass us in the future.

March 14, 1936

Dear Dr. Flexner:

At our Faculty Meeting this morning we discussed in considerable detail the problem which you put before us in your letter of March 6, namely the desirability of adopting some procedure for the orderly selection of an understudy, and possible eventual successor, to yourself. We found ourselves, in substance, unanimously agreed on the following points:

1. We are pleased at your consideration in consulting us and welcome the opportunity to formulate our views. We all feel that the problem raised is of primary importance; the Institute is young and owes its existence to the generosity of Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld and to their supreme confidence in your wisdom, experience and insight. It is especially necessary that we provide for a continuation of the wise policies which you have developed.
2. We feel that the custom you have inaugurated of consulting the Faculty as well as the Trustees with regard to a basic question of this kind is sound academic procedure and establishes a precedent, the wisdom of which we hope to justify.
3. We are not convinced that the specific suggestion laid before us, namely that an understudy to the Director be appointed on a year by year basis, would prove feasible in practice. In the absence of any specific nomination, we doubt whether a person of the caliber required would accept such a position on a temporary basis. We also doubt whether the duties which could be found for him to perform, in case he did accept, would be compatible with the qualities of the man who should be chosen. You have made it one of your main purposes to reduce administration as such to a minimum and to establish scholarship here on the basis of minimum interference with the faculty. Under these circumstances the Director is a sort of an artist. He must be sensitive to conditions in the University, to conditions in the Institute, and intimately aware of the deeper currents in the world of scholarship.

Dr. Flexner

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4. We would suggest that the proposed order of procedure in meeting this problem be reversed--that the Institute attempt first to find that individual who would seem most eminently qualified to carry on this work, if and when the time comes that you are forced to lay the burden down. Having found such a person, if he can be found, we would then suggest that an endeavor be made to work out the specific procedure necessary to bring that individual into effective contact with the problems with which he would be called upon to deal. You have outlined in your letter the considerations which you would try to convey to him. We are convinced that, if we know the individual, a method can be found for imparting these considerations to him, and that that method should be designed to meet the specific requirements of his situation.
5. In order to carry out this approach to the problem, we have a definite suggestion to advance which would involve a slight change in the by-laws and procedure of the Institute. The by-laws at present provide that when a vacancy in the directorship occurs, a committee of the Board of Trustees be appointed to nominate a candidate for the vacant position. Would it not be possible to amend the by-laws to provide that such a committee be in existence at all times? It would then be in a position to make a study of the field of possible candidates, and, when necessary, to prepare a definite recommendation. If that were done, this committee could meet the problem raised by your letter by canvassing the field. It could agree tentatively on the person or persons whom it would be most likely to consider as a successor, in case the need arose, and then proceed to interest one or more of these candidates in the Institute and to bring them into effective contact with its problems. It might be that such a candidate would be in a position to come here and occupy the position of understudy which you have outlined. If he were not, rather than select the second choice for understudy, we would prefer to canvass other means of educating the first choice in the ideals, problems and policies which you have developed. We attach importance to the greater flexibility of procedure which this plan would permit.

Dr. Flexner

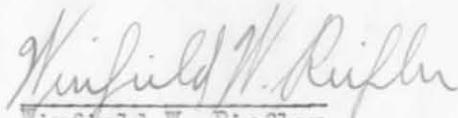
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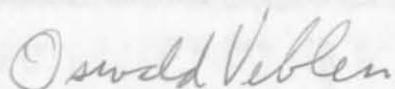
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6. We would suggest that membership of such a committee consist of yourself, the Founders, two members from the Board of Trustees, and two members from the Faculty. We feel that the Institute would be inaugurating a very sound precedent in American academic procedure if it should provide definitely that those members representing the Faculty on this committee be nominated by the Faculty themselves.

You will realize, of course, that these are tentative suggestions which we are advancing as our contribution to the discussion of the problem. They are put forward for your consideration only at this stage and are not intended for transmission to the Trustees. We would all appreciate a further complete discussion of the problem with you present to give us the advantage of your wisdom. It was with this in view that the undersigned were requested to formulate the results of the discussion this morning.

Very sincerely yours,


Winfield W. Riefler


Oswald Veblen

Oswald Veblen



Arizona Biltmore PHOENIX.

March 6, 1936

Dear Professor Veblen:

I have had a glorious week in this perfect paradise, in which cloudless and mild days follow one another without a break. I wish the whole Institute, wives and all, could be transported here during the dull, cold winter months. One does nothing but sit in the sun from early morning till sunset.

Naturally, one does think and my mind has often reverted to the question which I discussed with the entire group some weeks ago. One or two persons have spoken to me on the subject since then. As I am under the necessity of making some sort of report to the Board a month hence, I should appreciate it if you would assemble the faculty and in my absence discuss quite frankly the problem as I stated it to you. You may all be sure that I desire your honest opinions and that I shall submit a resume of them to the Board for a final decision. As I view the matter, the following are important considerations:

1. It would be a mistake to select a successor now, before the necessity of so doing really arises.

2. On the other hand, the Institute is a novel affair, the outlines of which are growing more definite year by year.

3. The choice of an assistant or associate to serve annually would not necessarily be final, since the bylaws provide the manner in which the director is to be selected to fill ~~the~~, in case of a vacancy.

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4. While the person chosen as assistant would have an advantage, he would also be on trial.

5. The general administration and the unique character of the Institute are something that can really be learned and I have the feeling that I could teach a great deal to a competent person in the next few years. If he should fail to learn, the Institute would be protected against a mistake. If he should learn, the Institute would avoid the danger of a break in policy.

6. While these considerations are important in the case of the Institute, they are also important in the cases of other educational institutions or foundations. Consider how much might have been gained had Gilman or Eliot or Vincent at the Foundation had assistants competent to step in their respective places, instead of persons who had to learn everything and who in each of these instances made very serious errors. By way of contrast, Rose at the International Health Board did have an understudy, Colonel Russell, who succeeded him and who carried on and expanded the work in the same spirit in which Rose had developed it.

These constitute briefly my reasons for inclining to the opinion that as the Institute is in its growing stage, it might prove very helpful if some possible successor were on the ground to learn both from the faculty and from me the technique which we have employed in developing the Institute itself and its relations with Princeton. I should like to have them laid before the faculty, and after discussion, I should like each person who is interested to prepare for me a brief statement of his own views, so that I could present to the Board both sides of the question. I believe that in this way, the Professors will have a larger share in determining the general policy than they are likely to have if the whole question is dismissed until I myself retire.

There is an additional reason which occurs to me as I finish: In choosing a person, if the Board decides to take such action, we should, I think, seek not a distinguished specialist, but rather a person of my own type;

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namely, one who has varied interests and sympathies, a large acquaintance with men and institutions in this country and in Europe and profound respect for scholars and their own individual ways of solving their own problems. This sort of choice seems to me important at this stage, while the Institute is gradually expanding. A decade hence, some other type may be more useful; but while I shall present my views to the Board, with whom the ultimate responsibility lies and in my judgment should lie, I shall not, of course, insist upon it.

I shall be here until towards the end of next week and I hope to arrive in Princeton on the 15th, bringing with me a big chunk of Arizona weather.

Remember me warmly to Mrs. Veblen and believe me

Always sincerely,

Abraham Flexner

Professor Oswald Veblen,
Fine Hall,
Princeton, New Jersey.

AF/HB

may suggest that at the next meeting you read this letter to the entire group, so that each may have my bearings. The views may be modified by considerations which you or your associates present.