

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Sways Us; No Fear Shall Ave"
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Frankenstein System

(Continued from page 1)

plan of the state board is proposed designed to realize that conception. Educational institutions are not a system of branch factories or chain stores. Education is peculiarly intimate and personal. Above all it deals almost entirely with human elements. As a result we join issue immediately with the organization laid out for administration of the SYSTEM. We believe in a single governing board which by legislation and regulation shall effect the coordination required; but the administration should be local, direct and proximate rather than remote, indirect and impersonal. Entertaining these views the Statesman has consistently opposed the creation of elaborate super-offices in Salem, has opposed making the executive secretary an administrative agency over individual schools, has opposed the creation of the office of super-chancellor. We regard such a super-organization not only as costly but as multiplying the chances for misunderstanding and intrigue, causing delay and inconvenience, and destroying the local responsibility as well as authority which are necessary for the success of the individual institution.

The Administrative Plan
Chart I shows the plan of administrative organization being put into effect by the state board. We call attention to the rabbit tracks showing division of responsibility. The chart is a veritable maze of lines of authority crossing each other promiscuously. The subordinate instructor may thus find himself responsible to a dean on his own campus, a dean on another campus, a director of lower division work, to the president of his institution and to the executive secretary at Salem and the chancellor of as yet indefinite location. Suppose a man in charge of the experiment station at Hermiston wants to build a poultry house. Under the former type of organization he would take the matter up with the director of experiment stations at Corvallis who would effect on the one campus all the coordination required; authority from the president's office, a building plan from the poultry department, and a requisition from the business office. Now, presumably the man at Hermiston will take the matter up with the Director of Properties at Salem whose only acquaintance with poultry is at the dinner table. The latter will take the matter up with the executive secretary from the poultry department, and the chancellor who will take it up with the president at Corvallis or if he wants to snub the president, with the director of the experi-

ment station. Eventually the chicken house may be built. Suppose a university instructor in science wants a new cupboard built in his laboratory. Formerly he went to his department head or dean who if he approved got the authority from the president's office and the university carpenter did the work. Under the plan presumably he must get approval of the Dean of Science at Corvallis, and then it must be taken up either directly or through the executive offices at Eugene with the director or executive secretary's office in Salem.

Are these fanciful cases? Not at all. They are typical of the actual experiences thus far in the operation of the plan. It is not merely the added cost and delay of such procedure, but the irritation and uncertainty of such an amazing routing of authority.

Vital Criticisms of Plan
The Statesman submits the following vital criticisms of the administrative plan thus being developed:

First: The excessive overhead. It is one of the simplest rules of business management to reduce overhead to the very minimum, to bring the chief executive just as close to the actual workers as possible. Yet this chart shows the creation of two new officials, chancellor and executive secretary, and an army of "vice presidents" in the form of directors. Some of the latter it is true are not yet appointed, and some were already functioning under somewhat different titles. Nevertheless, above the institutions which have to do virtually all the work are created numerous super-offices and the overhead offices at Salem.

The inevitable tendency of such overhead offices is to grow into strongly entrenched bureaus. Thus the Salem office of the executive secretary began in the summer of 1930 with Dr. Lindsay and one or two stenographers. In September, 1931 it had grown until 15 were on the payroll, 10 full time and 5 part-time, the total payroll being \$2349.65. Another year saw nearly a 50% increase. In June, 1932 the payroll total was \$3,164.40 with 19 full-time employees and 1 part time.

The assertion may be made that some of these employes are now doing bookkeeping which formerly was done at the individual schools. They are; and what bookkeeping!

It will be recalled that when the state board took charge, E. C. Sammons, chairman of the finance committee, criticized the systems of some of the institutions as "archaic." So a brand new SYSTEM was inaugurated. To handle it there are now employed one auditor, three assistant auditors, and two bookkeepers, besides the necessary stenographic help. One would think with such a

SYSTEM and with competent help in the office that information respecting costs could be quickly obtained. The writer thought so, too, and wrote asking the executive secretary to give us information regarding the costs of his office, the costs of the business offices of the separate institutions, and the amount of travel and per diem for the members of the state board of higher education. This would seem to be simple information which any properly planned bookkeeping system could show almost instantly. Dr. Lindsay replied that our request would be submitted to the state board of higher education "in regular order" at the next meeting. When we called Dr. Lindsay by telephone and later talked with him in his office, protesting the delay, and insisting on the privilege of at least copying the records, we were told that the books were not in condition whereby such information could be obtained without a great deal of searching, that such a task would take much time from the regular duties of his staff and he would not feel justified in permitting it without the order of the state board.

Accepting as true the statement that such information is not readily available, one cannot but raise the question as to what kind of "modern" system is this by which an office is not able to tell its own costs, is not able to tell the amount it expended for telephone and telegraph for example without serious research? The bookkeeping system at Corvallis or Eugene may have been "archaic," but they did have instantly available this information. If it be alleged that there is some saving through doing all the bookkeeping at a central office, of what virtue is the bookkeeping if it is so abstract or complicated that pertinent and simple information is not readily available. It is true the SYSTEM has been in process of organization, and the change-over has been trying; but we find it impossible to conceive of a bookkeeping system properly laid out which would not show from the start the expenses of the overhead offices, and the per diem and subsistence costs of the governing board.

On this very point we think the economy of central bookkeeping to be a myth. It takes the same number of entries for properly posted bookkeeping items in one place as another. In addition central office bookkeeping always calls for a constant interchange of explanatory correspondence. Local business offices still have to be maintained. If the bookkeeping forms are the same in the several institutions, then the footings of the various segregations may be reported to the governing board monthly or quarterly as the case may be; and the duplication of accounts for the SYSTEM at the end of the term or biennium would be a very simple matter. This would provide the necessary coordination of accounting for comparison of costs without increasing the hands through which requisitions, claims, vouchers, etc. must pass for checking and entry.

The payroll costs only partially reveal the cost of the overhead offices at Salem. In addition there are supplies, light, heat, telephone, telegraph, express, travel. And there must be some one at the other end to initiate or answer the correspondence, to travel and telephone items is serious. The trails from all the institutions have been badly worn by professors and deans and staff executives coming to Salem for conferences. High-salaried men have cooled their heels for hours in waiting rooms, perhaps to be told to come back again another day. This is not only a travel expense to the state of Oregon, but has seriously disrupted the work which these men are supposed to do on the campuses.

While it is impossible to tell what HAS been spent for administration so far this biennium, the state board in the budget it presented at the last legislature called for \$520,659 for administration, which compares with \$412,303 spent in the 1927-1928 biennium, an increase of 26%.

Division of Authority Causes Friction
Second: The complex division of authority is certain to cause delay and friction. Observe the

Chart I: Administrative Plan Being Established by State Board of Higher Education

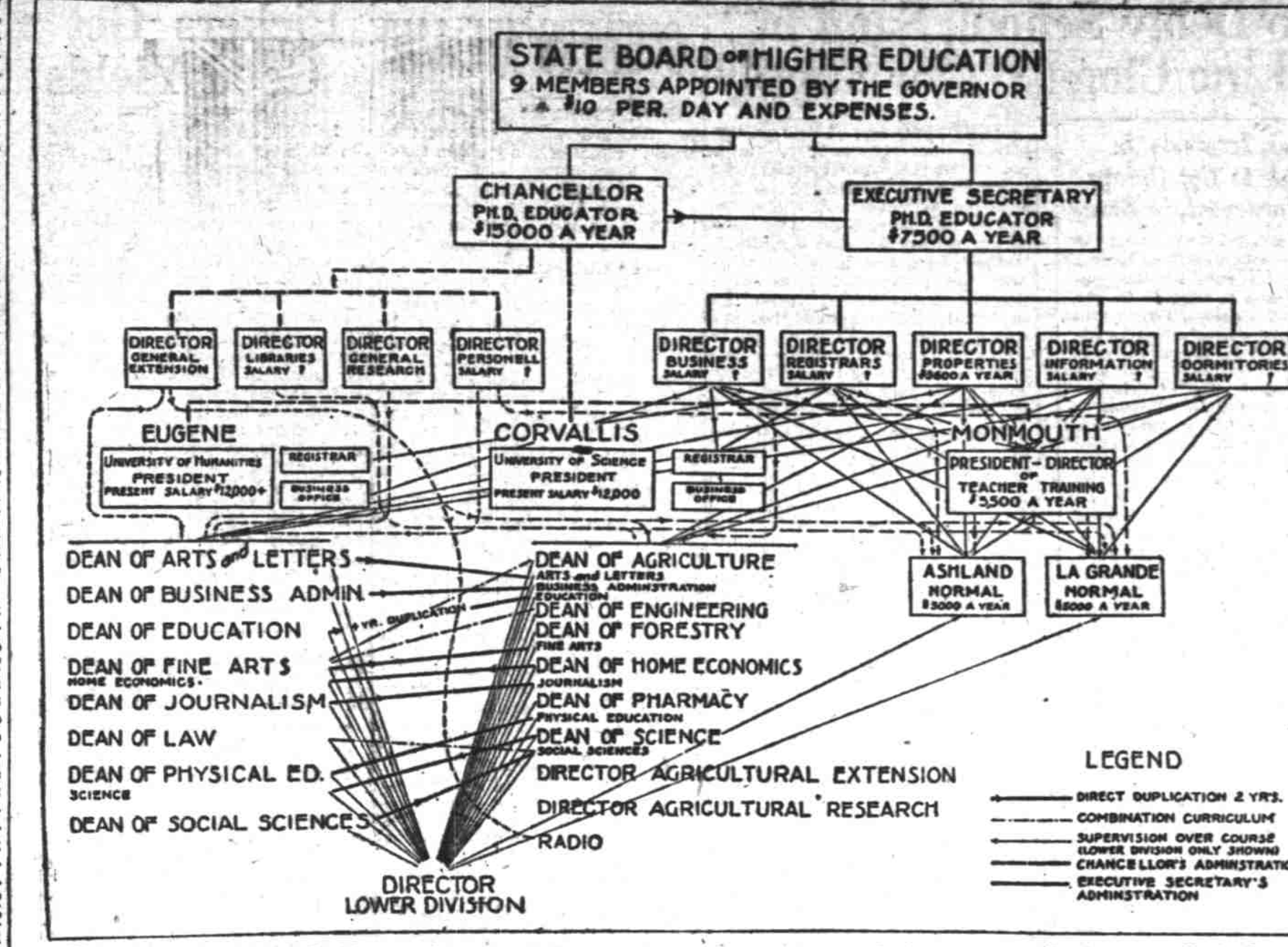


Chart shows new overhead offices of chancellor and executive secretary being created, also numerous directors, not all of whom have yet been designated. Diffusion of authority is indicated by cross-cross of lines.

two officials at the head of the SYSTEM, the chancellor and the executive secretary. Both are highly trained educators, with degrees of Ph. D. Both draw high salaries. Each has a definite zone of authority. Now while the executive secretary may nominally or actually be subordinate to the chancellor, the fact that both are educators and that both have these more or less definite zones of authority opens the way to friction and rivalry. One pair of men may work well together, then a new chancellor may be named, with the old secretary hanging on. We do not need to take counsel of our fears but of our knowledge of human nature to anticipate difficulty because of this dual control system.

In addition there is the overlapping of authority among directors and deans who function on different campuses. The registrar, for example, who ought to work closely in harmony with the faculty committees on entrance or credits, is made responsible to the executive secretary off at Salem.

The friction or misunderstanding among deans and presidents and directors has already been manifest. So acute was the situation last spring that the state board itself had to take action. Perhaps a super-chancellor could control this complicated organization, but it seems safer to predict that he will merely be a buffer and coordinator, constantly called on to iron out differences, rather than a great, constructive leader in education.

Third: We wish to give an added warning against the Super-Chancellor idea, particularly if the Chancellor is an "off-campus" executive. The history of such officials has been a sorry one in this country. The experiment has been tried and almost uniformly it has failed. The chancellor system becomes a hotbed of intrigue. Local jealousies still thrive; ambitious deans or presidents may seek to undermine his authority. We have seen such an able practical administrator as former President E. A. Bryan of Washington State college, and such a fine intellect and winsome personality as Dr. E. O. Sisson, now out trying to serve as commissioner of education in Idaho.

If your chancellor is to have general charge of all the institutions in the state and the execu-

tive offices at Salem, then he must be chiefly an "off-campus" or traveling official. "When the cat's away," etc. Already the political character of the chancellorship is recognized in Oregon, with all manner of wire-pulling and intrigue for or against certain candidates. Though the men themselves be above any such practices, so great is the prize of the chancellorship that it becomes a bone of contention, even as it is at the present time.

It is significant that the survey report recommended no chancellor system. Oddly too, the state board instead of engaging a chancellor and having his aid in designing the plan, has proceeded to complete an administrative and educational reorganization and then to invite some chancellor to carry it out. It is a veritable bed of Procrustes, and the poor chancellor will have to be stretched or shortened to fit the SYSTEM.

Fourth: This administrative plan magnifies the SYSTEM and makes it a vast machine. The control is far, far off from the boy or girl who is wanting to prepare for teaching or a profession. A university is not a big machine now. Instead of building up a super-machine in the form of administration by remote control, we need to keep administration close to education, close to teaching, close to the young people to be affected. The old definition of a college as a big machine of one end of a log and the student on the other may be "archaic"; but after all that is the right conception of the heart of the educational process. And any SYSTEM of organization which puts the professor across the river from the boy, or which imposes an elaborate administrative superstructure in which the energies of professors and students are wasted in finding their way about and in keeping the machinery oiled defeats the very purpose for which the institutions are created.

Already the effect of this FRANKENSTEIN SYSTEM has been observed on the various campuses. Local jealousies and intrigues and initiative are virtually paralyzed. Uncertainty gnaws at the hearts of professors and students because control is growing distant and unstable.

The only reason we can see for creating this elaborate plan of administration is properly to "police" the bitter rivalry. Eugene and Corvallis; but harmony has not resulted from the establishment of the executive secretary's office in Salem. Nor is it likely to result from the election of some super-chancellor. Unless the SYSTEM can curb this rivalry it has no excuse for existence. It is our conviction that it will not, that this plan of administration will be costly, cumbersome and ineffective; that it will seriously cripple the organization of instruction which needs to be continuously in close touch with administration.

So much for the administrative plan.

of deans and directors, and there are infinite possibilities for friction and discord. College deans and professors are jealous of power, are ambitious and sensitive. While there may be need of conference for coordination of courses, universities are not like grammar schools, there is no need of "supervision". Instead the genius of university instruction calls for reasonably wide liberties for the individual instructors and professors. The multiplication of "supervisors" has proven irritating and expensive in the public school systems; and a similar result may be forecast for this clothing of deans and directors with authority on several campuses.

The first question the general public is interested in is this: Does the plan eliminate duplication? A study of this chart will show that instead of eliminating duplication the plan validates and authorizes it for lower division work, which means freshman and sophomore years. But these classes are by far the most numerous, making up about two-thirds of the whole student body. In Arts and Letters, Corvallis has in lower division work the same courses as Eugene except Library Method and a few languages such as Greek and Portuguese. Then there are four years of duplication in Education, besides combination curricula calling for division of residence or for travel back and forth between the campuses. The plan contemplates consolidating upper division work in "special lines on single campus; but it is a serious question whether the economies by this elimination will offset the complete duplication in the more populous lower classes. It must be admitted at any event, that little progress has been made toward eliminating duplication. Perhaps little could be made.

But the heart of the question regarding the reorganization of the educational offerings at Eugene and Corvallis is over the type of institutions to be maintained. What are we to have the separate institutions for? Are we to continue them just to wear out the buildings, or to provide higher education of university and state college grade? If the latter shall the institutions be maintained as natives of one university, or shall they be made integers, complete institutions according to their particular type?

Plan Creates Two Universities
For this educational plan makes a fundamental change in the type of these two institutions. The university has developed as a university, with a college of liberal arts and sciences, and professional schools such as law, medicine, journalism. The state college has been a different type of institution, a "land grant" college, with schools in agriculture, mechanic arts, engineering and commerce. Its emphasis has been vocational and technical rather than cultural.

Should not the schools at Eugene and Corvallis be continued as university and land grant college, rather than to attempt "unification" of the two?

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brushed out before the state board. The board however failed to see the ultimate effect of their decision to create such a division of courses making a university of arts and letters at Eugene and a university of sciences at Corvallis. For a study of the plan both administrative and educational which the state board has adopted reveals that it leads almost directly and inevitably to consolidation of the two major institutions on one campus. Why, the taxpayer will ask, should we maintain one incomplete university at Eugene and the other half of the institution at Corvallis with the governing office at Salem another 40 miles away? Why should we create this office of chancellor at \$15,000 whose chief job is to police the beat between Corvallis and Eugene? Why should we establish the shuttle system for professors and students between the two campuses, under which professors and students would commute back and forth for classes? If both institutions are typical universities, why maintain two universities, or two halves of one university; why not unite them on one campus, using one set of buildings, one administration, and eliminate all duplication save as size of the classes may make separate sections necessary?

From the standpoint of operating economy there is no doubt but it would be cheaper to maintain and run a single university than two universities or two half-universities. From the standpoint of capital outlay, in view of the extensive rebuilding needs at Eugene, the construction of necessary additional buildings at Corvallis would cost far less than the building-outlay required at Eugene over the next ten years. And the unification "permanently" on one campus would end the ancient hostility between the two institutions, though not of course between the two cities for a considerable period.

The entire logic of the administrative and educational plan of the state board of higher education points directly toward the physical merger of the two major institutions into one superior Oregon State university, both for economy and for administrative and educational efficiency.

Not Best Answer
But is consolidation the correct answer to the problem of Oregon's higher educational system? This writer is not convinced that it is. We have been and still are opposed to consolidation. There are values in the separate institutions that deserve to be conserved. While we concede the strength of the economy argument, there are considerations which make physical merger of the two institutions impractical save as a drastic "last resort". The removal of the business from the university would seriously injure one of the finest cities of Oregon, and the loss of the normal school at Monmouth would be a severe blow to this small community. In addition education is more than books and laboratories and libraries. It is a melting process which produces the young mind invaluable perspective. Our schools lack even now the virtues of age; and to throw them together and start anew means to forsaken this perspective and make education in Oregon raw rather than rich. Yet opposed as we are to the Zora-MacPherson measure we regard it or something like it as a virtually inevitable if the plan of the state board is finally attempted.

With no presumption to being an "expert" either in education or in administration, this writer would like to submit a substitute form of organization for higher education in Oregon which would save the university at Eugene and the state college at Corvallis, yet would avoid the administrative complexity and educational deficiencies of the plan of the state board. We would first wipe out the overhead offices of chancellor and executive secretary, reducing costs and simplifying administration, bringing control back to the campuses yet assuring through the state board the coordination which is its objective. This substitute form of organization is submitted in Chart III.

Substitute Form of Organization
Its provisions are simple and may be stated briefly:
1st. A single board of lay members appointed by the governor. Preferably it should be smaller than the present board. Its size has not justified itself. This board should have full control over all institutions.
2nd. One president (or chancellor), a single executive over the university at Eugene and the state college at Corvallis. He should divide his time between the Eugene and Corvallis offices. A leased telephone wire which would cost only around \$100 or \$200 a month should connect the exchanges of the two campuses.
(Continued on page 7)

Chart II: Educational Organization Creating "Two Universities" at Eugene and Corvallis

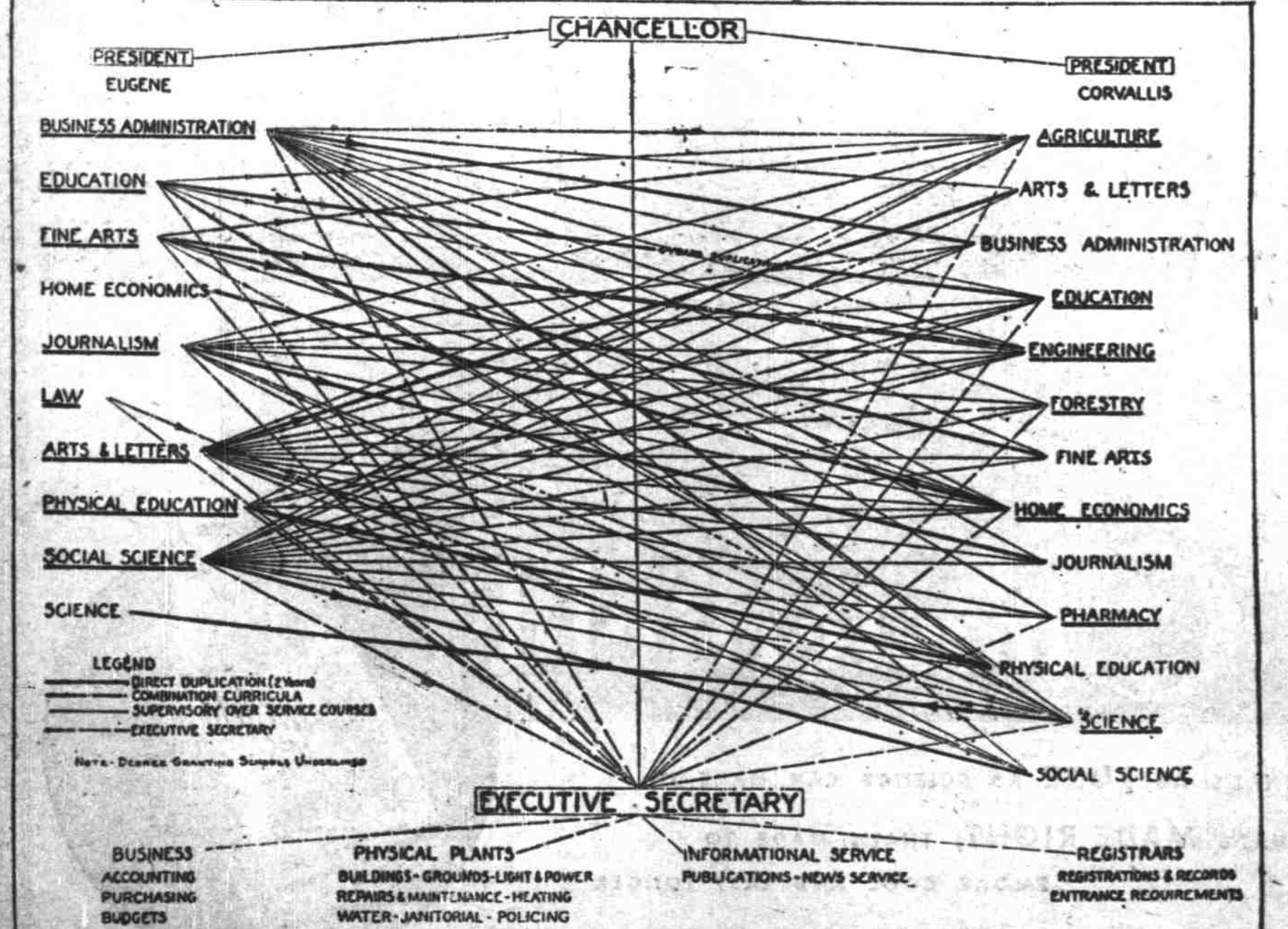
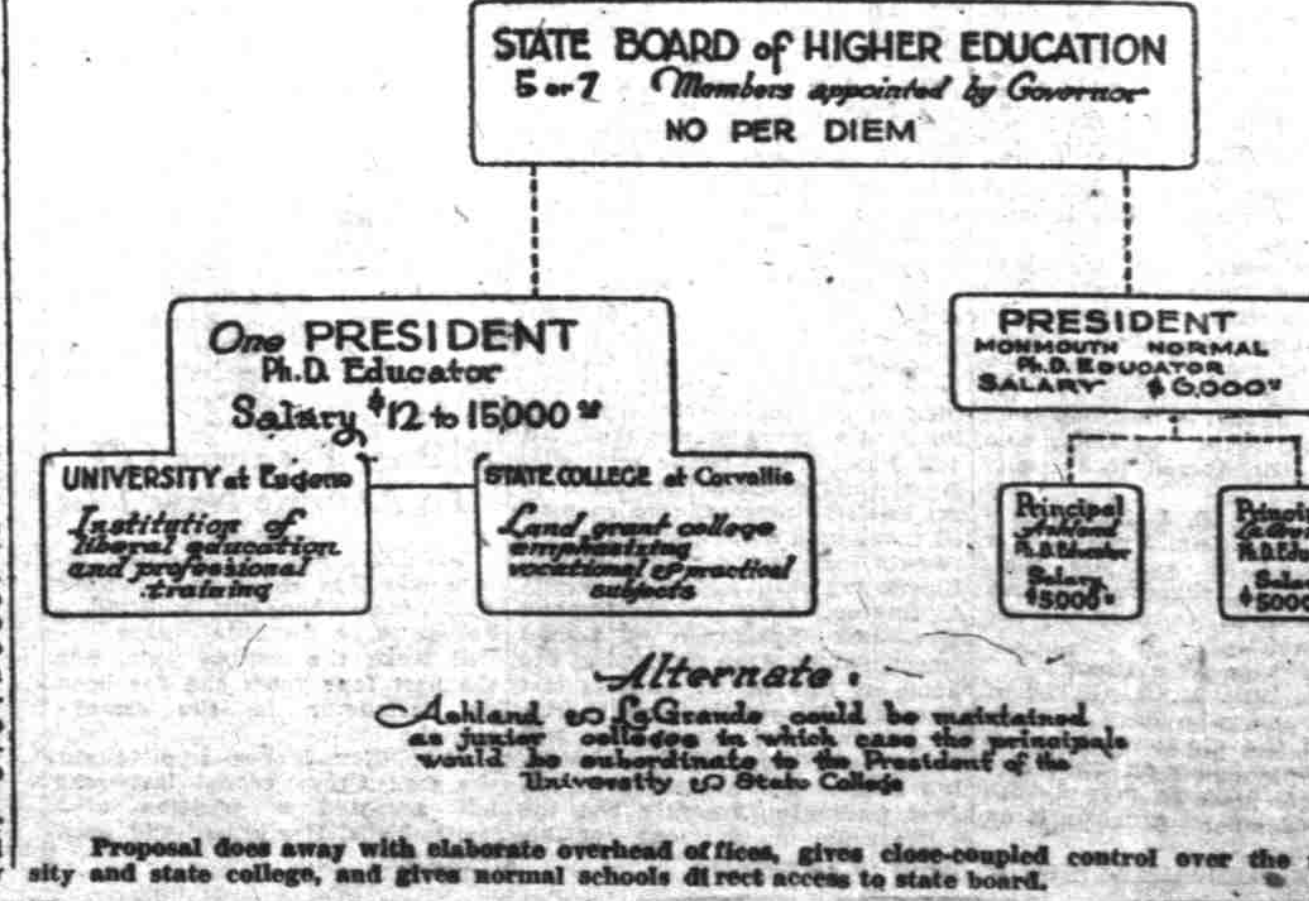


Chart shows extent of duplication validated by board, and expansion of authority of deans from one campus to the other, with responsibility of subordinates running to deans, chancellor and executive secretary.

Chart III: Suggested Substitute Form of Organization



Proposal does away with elaborate overhead offices, gives close-coupled control over the university and state college, and gives normal schools direct access to state board.