

Central Lancashire Online Knowledge (CLoK)

Title	'We Alone are Passive.' The Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals and the organisation of British universities, c.1918 - 1939'
Type	Article
URL	https://clock.uclan.ac.uk/id/eprint/13310/
DOI	https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2014.880521
Date	2014
Citation	Vernon, Keith (2014) 'We Alone are Passive.' The Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals and the organisation of British universities, c.1918 - 1939'. <i>History of Education</i> , 43 (2). pp. 187-207. ISSN 0046-760X
Creators	Vernon, Keith

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2014.880521>

For information about Research at UCLan please go to <http://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/>

All outputs in CLoK are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including Copyright law. Copyright, IPR and Moral Rights for the works on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the <http://clock.uclan.ac.uk/policies/>

‘We alone are passive.’

**The Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals and the Organisation of British
Universities, c.1918 – 1939**

Keith Vernon

University of Central Lancashire

Preston

PR1 2HE

01772 893052

KVernon@uclan.ac.uk

Abstract

The CVCP was a leading collective body for British universities for most of the twentieth century, yet there has been very little historical study of its organisation and work. Brief references tend to be dismissive of its effectiveness, although some authors have been more favourable. This article considers a formative phase in the history of the CVCP and progenitor organisations, examining its foundations at the end of the First World War, although with roots in the late nineteenth century; its complex constitutional status that led to considerable debate about the role and nature of the committee; and some of its main activities and priorities during the inter-war period. It assesses the extent to which we should regard the CVCP as merely passive, or a quietly effective body.

Keywords: CVCP, British Universities

Introduction

In the early years of the twentieth century, W. M. Childs, Principal of University College Reading, circulated a stinging memorandum to a meeting of his fellow university heads:

. . . are we likely to secure adequate State recognition for University institutions as an integral part of any scheme of national education, unless we first make the public mind more familiar with their purpose, significance and opportunity, and make much more widespread than at present the conviction that liberal support of them is expedient and indispensable in the interests of the community as a whole? May it not be said that in this matter a responsibility to the nation is laid upon ourselves? . . . We alone are passive.¹

Although British universities were then relatively small, they were growing quickly and increasingly regarded as important national institutions, so it is remarkable that their leaders apparently failed to press their case more vigorously. Towards the end of the First World War, the Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals, which subsequently morphed into the CVCP, was established, becoming the leading representative body of university institutions for most of the twentieth century. This too has not been regarded as very effective by some authors.² Nor, a century later, when universities have become vastly more prominent, has the current collective body of vice-chancellors been regarded much more kindly. Universities UK has been criticised for factionalism and a supine response to recent government policy towards higher education.³

There is very little historical analysis to contextualise these criticisms, assess their validity, or illuminate the role of the CVCP more generally. This historical invisibility is also remarkable, for there is a growing literature on the development of British universities during the twentieth century.⁴ A central concern of the discussion is the question of institutional autonomy. By tradition, UK universities have been regarded as enjoying considerable independence from external interference, particularly from the state. One view maintains that this autonomy has been undermined by recent government policies, which has also injected unwelcome competition and factionalism into the sector. Against that is the argument that the state has long played a pivotal role in university development, and that British universities cohered into a recognisable system from early in the twentieth century and should not be conceived of as completely atomistic. A key focus of attention is the University Grants Committee (UGC), formed after the First World War to allocate state funds to universities in the UK.⁵ While it served as a buffer between individual universities and the state, it helped preserve institutional autonomy; as it came to control an ever increasing proportion of university funding, it exerted ever greater authority. As ultimately an agency of the state, it was always vulnerable to changes in government policy. Throughout the literature, the CVCP is conspicuous by its absence. Although it was contemporaneous with the UGC and, in bringing together all the heads of UK universities to meet in regular conference it ostensibly had a significant position, all we have is rather anecdotal and passing references.

Nevertheless, from these sources, one can glean some insights. The most detailed account appears tangentially in Simpson's study of the PhD in Britain, which locates the foundations of the CVCP in an international context. During the First World War, the Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, called for the establishment of an organisation that could represent the universities; some machinery 'by which this great body of University Institutions and centres of University life can speak . . . with a common voice and can receive from foreign countries communications intended for the whole body of academic workers in this country.'⁶ Balfour's speech indicates that a potentially important role was envisaged for the committee, but the author's concern is not with vice-chancellors and their story is not taken any further. If such was Balfour's intention then, according to most recent writings, the CVCP failed to fulfil the potential, serving merely as a more or less ineffectual club.⁷ Indeed, there is more analysis of the contemporary role of the vice-chancellor within their respective institutions than of the collective body.⁸ In some older writings, however, an alternative view emerges, although again made largely in passing. Berdahl offers a cautiously favourable assessment of

the CVCP.⁹ Although hampered by administrative complexity, he suggests it came to play an effective role during the inter-war period, with a much more active phase beginning with preparations for wartime. His view is substantially informed by an assessment made by Hector Hetherington, himself one-time chairman of the CVCP, who cast it in a positive light.¹⁰ Halsey and Trow also see the CVCP as important, although they, in turn, draw heavily on Berdahl.¹¹ Another favourable interpretation is by Ashby who regards the CVCP as an important vehicle for drawing British universities together.¹² He too refers to complex organisation and, like Simpson, writes about the committee in an international and imperial context. Thus, there are contrary indications of the importance and effectiveness of the CVCP, but little in the way of a substantive historical account.

The purpose of this article is to begin to provide such an account, although clearly there are limits to what can be achieved here. Temporally, the main focus will be on the inter-war period and what may be regarded as the first phase in the development of the CVCP. This was an important period in the development of university organisations in Britain, so it will be instructive to assess the role of the CVCP in this formative period. The main issue to be addressed is the extent to which the CVCP served to bring the universities together and act as a collective body, or whether it was merely passive, to institutional independence or external pressure. To gain some purchase on this issue, the principal topic will be the constitutional status of the committee. Several authors identify this as problematic, so examining the administrative development of the CVCP can help us understand the nature and purpose of the organisation and the limits of its potential effectiveness. Consequently, the principal source base is the committee's own records.¹³ Reflecting its historical invisibility, there is little reference to the work of the committee in other contemporary sources, although something of an independent view of the CVCP can be gained from considering an alternative forum of vice-chancellors that met in parallel throughout the period.¹⁴ The first section of the discussion considers origins. Strictly speaking, the CVCP was only created in 1931, but as a re-constitution of its fore-runner the Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals and attention will be focussed on the end of the First World War, when a number of organisations for the co-ordination of universities were created. It is important, however, to consider an alternative line of development from the 1880s. The second section examines more closely the role and status of the vice-chancellors' committee. At the beginning of the 1930s, a debate blew up about potential infringements of institutional autonomy, which resulted in the re-constitution of the CVCP with clearly prescribed powers.

During this debate, other fault lines were revealed between different kinds of institution, threatening the cohesiveness of the group. Finally, there is a very brief survey of the work of the committee to identify some of its key activities, priorities, and limitations. The conclusion returns to assess the central question of passivity and effectiveness.

A Common Voice

To appreciate the nature of the CVCP between the wars and the parameters of its potential effectiveness, it is important to go back to foundations. These have been analysed by Simpson and Ashby, both of whom firmly identify an international framework and the need to provide a collective voice of the British universities for an external audience at the end of the First World War.¹⁵ This was a central feature, but there was also a need to address domestic issues as well. There were precedents for this as the majority of university heads had been meeting in regular conference from the late nineteenth century, to address matters of common concern. Thus, there were several strands that contributed to the debate and which resulted in a complex set of over-lapping and intersecting organisations all seeking to bring some semblance of order and co-ordination to the British universities. The Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals, the forerunner of the CVCP, was the most comprehensive one, which operated closely with a re-launched Universities Bureau of the British Empire. At the same time, the regular conference of university heads continued in modified form, arguably offering an alternative forum. Nor should we forget the University Grants Committee (UGC), created to manage state funding for higher education and to mediate between individual institutions and the state. To begin with, it is worth briefly rehearsing what is already known about the international dimension and the establishment of the Standing Committee. Then we shall consider the conference of university heads that had been operating since the 1880s.

The Edwardian drive to forge closer links between UK and imperial institutions can clearly be seen in the university sphere as well. There were already informal relationships through the routine movement of staff. University of London external examinations, used extensively throughout the empire, offered more formal links, which made it the centre of a vast international network.¹⁶ Early in the twentieth century, the Rhodes scholarships gave a significant boost to connections between Oxford and the empire.¹⁷ It was in this context that a delegation from Oxford and representatives of colonial universities met at the Colonial Office

in 1902.¹⁸ Further meetings over the next few years generated a measure of goodwill, but little real momentum. The University of London took up the matter and, with support from Oxford and Cambridge, proposed a much larger conference. Other UK universities were drawn in and a Congress of Universities of the British Empire met in 1912 with widespread representation.¹⁹ One concrete outcome was the formation of a central bureau for universities of the empire, primarily to gather and co-ordinate information. Despite some misgivings among the provincial universities, of which more below, there was a commitment to continue liaison between universities of the empire. The outbreak of war overtook any further developments, but this was a notable initiative in university co-operation.

The need to establish a collective voice of British universities for international purposes emerged as a more pressing issue through the second half of the First World War.²⁰ Earlier in the war, there was some concern, not least at the Foreign Office, over the cultural sway German universities held in the United States.²¹ To a large extent, this derived from many American academics having studied for doctorates at German universities at a time when UK institutions offered no equivalent post-graduate degree. Understandably, there was often a residual affection for their *alma maters* which, it was feared, transposed into some sympathy with the German cause. When the USA entered the war, and while the Axis powers were closed off, the Foreign Office saw an opportunity to use higher education to promote cultural links across the Atlantic, through post-graduate research, staff and student exchanges. International liaison on university matters also exercised the Board of Education. Requests from overseas for advice on higher education in Britain were often addressed to the Board on the assumption that it had authority over universities.²² Not only was this not true, there was no other body to which such requests could be referred. The only viable candidate was the bureau established at the 1912 congress. Consequently, the Board of Education asked the bureau to convene a meeting to consider the possibility of a collective organisation. Negotiations continued, with some reluctance, but by 1917 opposition was overcome and a general meeting agreed to co-operate on a number of issues, most notably the establishment of a research degree open to overseas students.

A year later, two conferences met on consecutive days. The first was convened by the Foreign Office and, in his opening speech, Balfour called for the establishment of some machinery 'by which this great body of University Institutions and centres of University life can speak, as it were, on certain occasions with a common voice and can receive from foreign countries communications intended for the whole body of academic workers in this

country.²³ The conference resolved that it was in the interest of the universities and of the nation that there should be greater co-operation and mutual consultation and, the following day, established the Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals. At the same time, the central bureau was re-constituted as the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, which also provided the administrative machinery for the Standing Committee.²⁴ The Standing Committee was asked to ‘consider any matters of common interest arising out of the proceedings of this conference or submitted to it by the Government, and to report from time to time to the Conference.’²⁵ Although apparently authoritative, the constitutional position of the Standing Committee was ambiguous from the start. Strictly, it had been appointed by the conference and asked to report back to it again. This would become an issue later but, for the time being, a representative body of the British university heads had been appointed with an important, if informal, brief.

Throughout these proceedings, there had been some resistance to the formation of a centralised organisation. This had come primarily from representatives of the English provincial universities, who already had a long-established tradition of, and forum for, discussing common concerns. It is important to consider this constituency as, arguably, it served as an alternative to the Standing Committee and subsequent CVCP. We also need to examine why it was so hesitant. The origins of this group go back to the late nineteenth century and the emergence of a distinctive new set of university colleges. Modelled on University College London, they appeared in most of the major industrial and commercial cities of England, but also in Wales and Scotland.²⁶ While making much of their local support base and civic identity, they had a great deal in common. Indeed, while the government was reluctant to establish new universities, they were required to work together through the federal Victoria University, and reliance on external examinations.²⁷ With much to concern them, the heads of the new university colleges began meeting from at least 1884.²⁸ The central issue binding them together was shortage of funds. Local philanthropy could be generous, and crucial to the foundation of a college, but routine maintenance was harder to come by. The state was identified as the most likely benefactor so, from the mid-1880s, the heads of the university colleges worked together to secure state funding. It was a co-ordinated campaign to gather support and lobby the Chancellor of the Exchequer, initially led by Ramsey (Bristol) and Hicks (Firth, Sheffield).²⁹ The campaign was successful and, in 1889, a state grant-in-aid for university education was secured, apportioned to eleven English

colleges and one in Dundee.³⁰ These state grants defined a set of institutions and from 1889 there is evidence of more formal co-ordination between the heads of recipient institutions.³¹

The university colleges grew quickly from the late nineteenth century, both physically and in taking on new roles and responsibilities.³² Thus, there was much for the heads to consider and a regular conference was initiated. It was leisurely, meeting once a year in rotation around each institution, with the host taking the chair, but it was a regular, minuted conference.³³ To take a few examples of the issues discussed, a recurring problem in a rapidly evolving situation was matriculation of students and the need to establish some common standards of entry. Similarly, the question of superannuation denoted a desire to regularise staffing arrangements.³⁴ One of the most important topics was developments in educational policy, with which the university colleges were much interested, and the conference lobbied government on several issues. Through the 1890s, there was much attention devoted to the new Day Training Colleges, which quickly became central features of most of the university colleges.³⁵ Administrative regulations, examination arrangements and student welfare were scrutinised in considerable detail and raised with the Board of Education.³⁶ A much larger issue was the drafting of the Bill for the 1902 Education Act and a sub-committee of the conference was appointed to follow proceedings.³⁷ The Bill was discussed several times 'at length' and a list of proposed amendments printed and circulated to seek parliamentary support.

Membership of the conference was defined by receipt of the government grant and this was a primary preoccupation. The funding was issued on a five-yearly basis, direct from the Treasury, and the quinquennial deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer became a regular set-piece. Discussions began well in advance on how to present the case, who could be called on as supporters, and the allocation of tasks in the final visitation.³⁸ Negotiations were successful as the parliamentary grant grew slowly to the end of the century, then significantly from the beginning of the twentieth. Increasingly, the parliamentary grant was a life-line; with funding, however, came scrutiny. In the late nineteenth century, this was, like the grant, quite limited.³⁹ From the early twentieth century, as several of the larger institutions were chartered as full universities, and the grant grew noticeably, so did the level of inspection. In 1905, an advisory committee was appointed by the Treasury to oversee the distribution of the grant, which was noted by the heads with some apprehension.⁴⁰ They soon made their peace with the Treasury committee in the light of more threatening moves from the Board of Education. Although university colleges were not subject to the Board of

Education, there were obvious connections between them and the rest of the educational system. Through the second half of the decade, the secretary to the Board, Robert Morant, actively sought to bring university institutions under its authority, which considerably alarmed the conference.⁴¹ Although a relative newcomer, it was in this context that principal Childs of University College, Reading, lambasted his colleagues.⁴² While he accepted that their conference might not have official authority, he maintained that it was the only corporate representation of the new universities and offered a crucial vehicle to form opinion and organise action. It seemed to him that of all educational institutions the vice-chancellors and principals was the only group not to seek corporately to influence public opinion; as he complained, '[w]e alone are passive.' Somewhat chastened, the conference promised to take up the matter, but without much urgency and Childs continued to fulminate at the apparent inability of the university heads to be more dynamic.⁴³ When Morant was removed from the Board of Education, however, the threat of intervention from this source receded and there is no further record on the matter before the outbreak of war.⁴⁴

Childs' criticism had some substance. Although not comprehensive, up to the First World War, this regular conference was the only collective body representing British universities. Yet, it made few real initiatives to shape, influence or lead either public opinion or government policy. Surprisingly, the conferences appeared to trail off during the second half of the 1900s, at just the time that the Board of Education was potentially threatening university autonomy. In fact, the heads kept up their resistance, although it seems not to have been channelled through their regular meetings.⁴⁵ It would be unfair, however, to dismiss the conference as entirely passive.⁴⁶ From the mid-1880s, the vice-chancellors and principals had worked in concert to mobilise support, plan strategy and organise the detailed tactics to secure, maintain and enhance a parliamentary grant. They watched developments in educational policy and lobbied their views, and had also broached the difficult areas of matriculation of students and pensions of staff. Proceedings were leisurely, with conferences only once a year and sometimes not that, yet they constituted an important means of bringing the heads together for regular consideration of matters of common concern.

It was probably because of their experience with the Board of Education that several of the provincial vice-chancellors were sceptical about the moves to establish a central imperial agency. Before the wartime meeting with Balfour, they met to formulate a common position to take to the conference.⁴⁷ When their fears were allayed, they entered into the formation of the Standing Committee, although continued to meet independently. Whatever

the scepticism, there was a growing need for greater co-ordination of higher education for domestic purposes as well. It was becoming clear that universities would have a much bigger role to play in national life after the war, for which they had neither the resources nor organisation. From early in 1918, the Board of Education pressed the Treasury for greater funds for the universities, but also for greater co-ordination, with authority located firmly under the Board.⁴⁸ Individual institutions could not be treated in isolation and the universities had to see themselves as a national collective. Discussions began in the middle of 1918, initially only with those institutions already in receipt of the parliamentary grant.⁴⁹ As the year went on, the scope of discussions expanded until the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the President of the Board of Education and his counterparts for Scotland and Ireland invited a deputation from all universities to meet together to consider their post-war requirements. In this situation, the new Standing Committee with its comprehensive representation had a role and a meeting was called under its auspices for the day before the deputation to formulate their position.⁵⁰ A carefully choreographed sequence was drawn up, which proved eminently successful and substantial additional funds were forthcoming.⁵¹ Thus, the first full meeting of the Standing Committee was concerned with funding and co-ordination for domestic purposes, not international liaison. The Board of Education still argued for university administration to be brought under its authority, but the Treasury insisted that a new UK-wide body be formed.⁵² There seems to have been no suggestion that the Standing Committee be given this responsibility, nor that it was sought. The role was allocated to a new agency, the UGC, which would mediate between individual institutions and governments, so that there was no direct connection between universities and the state. While implemented to help preserve university independence, it also meant that on a crucial issue, the vice-chancellors' committee had no direct authority.

At the end of the war, then, a set of organisations had been established to bring greater co-ordination and coherence to the British university sector, although the relationships between them were complicated. The Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals was called into existence to provide a common voice and common reference point for the British universities, although it was formally answerable only to a conference comprising largely its own members. It was closely associated with the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, to facilitate closer connections between British and imperial universities, which gave it a strong international dimension. The Standing Committee was not just an outward-facing organisation. There was also a need for greater co-ordination on domestic matters, to fulfil

the growing importance of higher education. On a key issue of co-ordination, however, and arguably the most important, responsibility for funding was allocated elsewhere and the Standing Committee had no formal relationship with the UGC. While the Standing Committee was the first time all UK university heads were brought together, most had been meeting together for some time, and continued to do so apart from the Standing Committee. Their experiences, moreover, had also left them sceptical of central co-ordination.

Autonomy and Cohesion

In the post-war years, British universities expanded significantly with more students, additional funding and an enhanced position in national life. With the extended role of the state and the establishment of the UGC, the questions of institutional autonomy and central co-ordination remained contentious. To begin with, whatever scepticism some may have had was set aside and vice-chancellors gathered to the Standing Committee to address the new situation. Before long, however, there were rumblings of discontent and suggestions that alternative forums were actually more useful. At the end of the decade, a full-scale row erupted, revolving around the perennial problem of institutional autonomy. This dispute exposed the committee's uncertain constitutional position and a new formulation had to be negotiated, resulting in the establishment of the CVCP proper. The new constitution confirmed the boundaries of the committee's practical effectiveness and the debate is worth examining in detail. In the course of the debate, other fault lines were revealed. The institutions whose representatives comprised the Standing Committee were a disparate collection from the large, ancient and wealthy to the small, new and impecunious, yet the hierarchy that emerged was also constitutional, concerning the status of the university colleges.

Through the 1920s, the Standing Committee and Universities Bureau settled into a pattern of regular meetings in London and an annual conference of home universities. Although formally separate, officials of the Bureau served as the secretariat for the meetings of vice-chancellors, and they operated largely in tandem.⁵³ To facilitate its work, the Board of Education offered the Bureau a non-recurrent grant of £5,000, provided the universities met longer-term maintenance.⁵⁴ It was agreed to levy each university £100 a year for three years. Alfred Dale (Liverpool), a vocal former sceptic, admitted that 'the whole sentiment of universities . . . had changed. They now recognised the necessity for an organisation capable

of promoting co-operation and speaking for the Universities as a whole.’⁵⁵ This sentiment was echoed in the pages of the prominent scientific journal *Nature*, which suggested that the formation of the Standing Committee was a ‘step which is likely to have a profoundly important effect upon [the universities’] usefulness and prestige’, and had quickly proved to be ‘one of the most noteworthy events in the long history of the universities of the United Kingdom.’⁵⁶ Three years, however, quickly passed and extracting further subscriptions for the Bureau proved more difficult.⁵⁷ Sufficient was found, but the Bureau rapidly became financially embarrassed.⁵⁸ A significant outlay was the production of the *Yearbook of the Universities of the Empire*, which by the end of the decade was incurring a loss of almost £500 a year. Prestigious premises in Russell Square were expensive to maintain and other commitments also proved to be liabilities. In the light of these problems a review was ordered into what functions the Bureau could realistically sustain.

Nor did the improved reputation of the Standing Committee among provincial vice-chancellors last long. This party had been the mainstay of the original conference of grant-earning institutions that had met from the 1880s, and they continued to meet independently, although in a different guise. Since the seventeenth century, Oxford, Cambridge and Trinity College, Dublin had enjoyed Parliamentary representation, which was extended to London and the Scottish universities in 1868. With further parliamentary reform in 1918, the university constituencies were also re-fashioned and a new Combined English Universities constituency was created, comprising the graduates of the English provincial universities.⁵⁹ Although they had no political function, the vice-chancellors of those institutions formed themselves into an informal gathering, variously known as the constituency group or the northern universities. The nucleus of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield were used to meeting occasionally, as it was a requirement of their charters to consult with each other over new developments.⁶⁰ With Bristol, Birmingham and Durham (including Newcastle), and later Reading when it acquired a charter, it was largely a continuation of the earlier conference, minus the London colleges. Like the previous grouping, they met in rotation with the host head occupying the chair. In the mid 1920s, a brief flurry of correspondence raised the possibility of a more formal role. ‘It appears to me’, wrote Jamieson (Leeds), ‘that the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals meeting at the Bureau is rather a fizzle and a failure and is likely to remain so.’⁶¹ The meetings were desultory and there was no momentum to get things done. His preference was to consolidate the constituency group into a more effective and efficient body with more formal machinery and more regular meetings.

Some thought that it was already becoming more official, which others deprecated.⁶² The discussion quickly faded and the northern vice-chancellors continued to support the Standing Committee and the Bureau, if not entirely wholeheartedly.

Misgivings regarding the role of the Standing Committee erupted into full-blown controversy at the end of the 1920s. The dispute arose with preparations for the quinquennial deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁶³ Baillie (Leeds) argued that it was unwise to ask for any increase in the universities' grant in such economically straightened times, but the prevailing view was against him. Something of an irascible character, at the next meeting he queried the whole status of the Standing Committee.⁶⁴ This was followed up by a letter from the Leeds' Registrar asking for the proposal to approach the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be put before the governing bodies of each university for their consideration and approval. 'As you are aware' the letter argued, 'the Standing Committee . . . has no official standing with the Universities of the country and has no executive power on their behalf.' Furthermore, '[i]n such an important matter as the financial relations of this University with the Treasury, our Council considers it essential to preserve its freedom of action, though naturally willing at all times to act in concert with other Universities under suitable conditions of consultation.'⁶⁵ Again, there was little support for Baillie's position as it was pointed out that the committee had effectively been operating on behalf of member institutions for some time. Privately, several heads were scathing of Baillie's antics. The Standing Committee was merely asking for something that all universities actually wanted; if it did attempt to do something about which there was a real difference of opinion it would 'speedily be made to realise its temerity.'⁶⁶ Ultimately, a memorial was forwarded to the Chancellor, signed by all members of the committee in terms which 'gave a semblance of reasonableness to Leeds' objection of which it is otherwise entirely destitute.'⁶⁷

Nevertheless, once raised, the question of the constitutional position of the Standing Committee would not go away. Strictly, it had been appointed by, and to report to, the conference held in 1918. The coincident financial embarrassment of the Universities Bureau gave an opportunity for a review of both bodies.⁶⁸ It was agreed that an organisation of vice-chancellors was a good thing, but that it was impractical to reconvene the 1918 conference to re-constitute the committee. The decision arrived at was to re-establish the committee by inviting each university to nominate its head to be a member. Although it was noted that the committee would have constitutional functions, it was made clear that it could take no actions on behalf of institutions without further reference to them. Thus, the committee was

comprised of individuals who each had the responsibility to report back on proceedings to their respective institutions. Some objected to the legislative sleight of hand but, before long, the terms of reference were approved and all institutions nominated their chief executive to the newly constituted Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals.⁶⁹ This re-constitution clarified an uncertain position; the committee was not to have executive functions nor commit individual institutions to any course of action. Whether this was a confirmation of established practice or a new policy is difficult to tell. Several vice-chancellors assumed that they could and did act on behalf of their institutions and were scathing of Leeds' objections, yet none seemed prepared to write this into a new constitution. Thereafter, the CVCP was extremely careful not to give even a hint of acting in an executive manner. Meanwhile, the Universities Bureau was also re-constituted with new articles of association.⁷⁰ The two organisations remained connected, and the Bureau continued to provide the secretariat, but the CVCP was now a fully independent body and the association was more distant than before.

For the most part, an amicable solution to the debate was achieved, but one clause drew further harsh words, which exposed the most serious divide within the committee. This reference allowed for the university colleges to be associated with the CVCP in a way that the committee may decide.⁷¹ When most of the university colleges had been elevated to full university status early in the century, Nottingham, Southampton, Reading and Exeter were not, with just Reading receiving a charter in 1926.⁷² The university colleges occupied an anomalous position. In many respects they did the same kind of work as the provincial universities, but they could not award their own degrees, relying on external examinations. They also tended to be smaller, less financially secure and with fewer degree-level students. The Board of Education and the UGC disliked anomalies and initially argued to suppress them or convert them into technical colleges.⁷³ Ultimately, they were allowed to continue as an appendix to the main body of university institutions in a slightly precarious situation. Nor were they fully represented on the Standing Committee with only two nominees from the university colleges invited to attend.⁷⁴ Their uncertain status could materially act against them, as in the case raised by Nottingham, which complained that the new Miners' Welfare National Scholarship Scheme barred holders from attending university colleges.⁷⁵ This was clearly prejudicial to a college located in a large coal field. The situation had arisen from the welfare scheme copying Board of Education scholarship regulations, which stated that holders study at 'universities'. In practice, the Board recognised a wider category of

‘university institution’ and promised to amend their regulations, but the miners’ scheme was not to know this bureaucratic subtlety. Spurred by the issue, the principals of the remaining three university colleges asked for equivalent status, but the Standing Committee would not budge.⁷⁶ When their subordinate status was confirmed in the CVCP’s constitution, the university colleges were mightily annoyed.⁷⁷ Eventually, however, the university colleges seemed to accept the *fait accompli* and their nominees attended CVCP meetings as not quite equal partners.

At the other end of the spectrum, the rather high-handed statement on university colleges also raised questions about the place of constituent colleges of the University of London. University, Kings, and Imperial College were each at least comparable with provincial universities, with numerous other specialist colleges, institutes and medical schools comprising the vast conglomerate that was the University of London.⁷⁸ As recipients of the university grant, the heads of University and King’s Colleges had been members of the pre-war conference of principals, but a succession of Royal Commissions and special treatment had given the London colleges and University a more cohesive and significant status.⁷⁹ Under this arrangement, just the vice-chancellor of the University attended the Standing Committee. With its important overseas connections, University of London’s vice-chancellor, Gregory Foster, objected when the CVCP severed its formal links with the Universities Bureau.⁸⁰ He was even more annoyed when the world-leading London colleges appeared to be treated so dismissively. In high dudgeon, he refused to attend further meetings until personally invited during a later crisis.⁸¹ On the face of it, the attitude towards the university colleges seems an unwarranted snub both to poor and powerful relations. It suggests a bureaucratic mind-set or a too-refined sensibility over the meaning of the term ‘university’. Keeping to precise definitions, however, did make for clear boundaries of membership. There were no hierarchies or factions of size, wealth, lineage or supposed prestige and both sectors of university colleges became reconciled to the CVCP.

Relations between institutions, however, were not always harmonious. The emergence of the University of London as a higher-educational powerhouse caused some wariness among the northern universities. London was preferentially treated between the wars, and did encroach on the provincial institutions.⁸² One example was an imperious appeal from the University of London to all English local authorities to support a new Chair in Highway Engineering in the capital.⁸³ Robertson (Birmingham) was not pleased and advised the local authorities in his area not to contribute. The constituency meeting agreed to issue the same

advice, and to forward their views to London. Another threat to the provincial universities was the London external degree, which rival technical colleges were all too happy to embrace. There was genuine concern that technical colleges teaching to degree level would provide serious competition.⁸⁴ Sometimes, however, the competition was self-generated, as when Sheffield's Engineering Faculty decided to offer the London External B.Sc.⁸⁵ Provincial pride was stung as it would require opening laboratories and note books to inspection. Somewhat shame-faced, Sheffield's vice-chancellor asked London for the usual inspection to be waived for a 'sister university'.

The question of institutional autonomy versus central co-ordination recurs as an issue in the modern history of the British universities, so it is not surprising that it emerged as a controversial point in the development of the vice-chancellors' committee. The constitutional status of the Standing Committee was ambiguous from the start and, although many members seemed initially quite content to commit their institutions to collective action, when the question was raised directly, they backed away, somewhat to their own surprise. The CVCP re-affirmed that it was not an executive body, which had no rights or authority over individual institutions, which in large part determined the nature and extent of its activities. On the other hand, for the most part, university heads remained faithful to the idea of a united body. The constituency group flirted with breaking away, but did not, although they remained a little distant and also wary of the more powerful London University. Otherwise, the main fault line revealed was not one of wealth, longevity or supposed prestige, but a constitutional one. If it betrayed an overly bureaucratic mind-set, it made the boundaries clear and, in general, there was little overt factionalism within the Standing Committee.

Co-ordination and Co-operation

Although there were divisions and disputes, the Standing Committee/CVCP held together. Even when they concluded that it was not, and should not be, an executive organisation, the heads still found value in meeting together several times a year. There was certainly plenty to occupy them. With both an outward-facing aspect towards empire and the wider world, and the need to address a new situation at home, the issues they had to wrestle with multiplied exponentially. Moreover, many problems were of Gordian complexity and susceptible of no straightforward solution. Given this, it would be impossible, here, to consider everything that the vice-chancellors had to contend with and how they dealt with each one. The purpose of

this section, then, is merely to give a flavour of some of the principal concerns facing the committee and how it operated to address them. To throw the main committee into some relief, the work of the constituency group will also, briefly, be considered. Overall, despite numerous setbacks, the Standing Committee/CVCP worked assiduously to find resolutions to problems affecting the sector as a whole.

The international dimension to the Standing Committee's work was extremely important. In the aftermath of the First World War, educational, cultural and intellectual exchange was part of the tremendous efforts to secure greater co-operation and accord between nations.⁸⁶ Each meeting of the committee began with the business of the Universities Bureau, giving considerable prominence to international matters. One of the immediate triggers for the establishment of the Standing Committee was the drive to create a post-graduate research degree to draw students from the US and empire away from Germany.⁸⁷ This was a great success and the PhD degree helped significantly to promote closer relationships between UK and overseas universities. Actual implementation, however, posed considerable challenges. Admitting an overseas student for a post-graduate degree required assessing the suitability and standard of their first degree. With wild optimism, the Universities Bureau offered to gather comprehensive information on the relative standards of undergraduate degrees but, unsurprisingly, the scale and complexity of the issue soon proved overwhelming. An initial listing was produced, but the issue was referred back to individual institutions, with the Bureau offering to help if necessary.⁸⁸ Another large, but more straightforward event was the quinquennial congress of universities of the empire, which continued from the pre-war gathering.⁸⁹ These were elaborate affairs, with wide-ranging programmes drawing large numbers of visiting dignitaries who often followed the meeting with a perambulation round UK universities.⁹⁰ Although not generally yielding binding commitments or policies, these regular meetings helped to draw the imperial universities closer together.⁹¹ The Bureau was also committed to compiling the *Yearbook of the Universities of the Empire*, which was intended as a comprehensive listing of institutions and staff from across the empire. Extracting the information for this, however, could be tortuous and producing the yearbook was expensive.

At times, the plethora of communications from overseas threatened to become overwhelming. Seemingly innocuous requests for information could entail a great deal of work. A flurry of interest in one area could be as quickly dropped and some grand-sounding undertakings turned out to be rather spurious affairs.⁹² For example, at just one meeting, the

following miscellany of international topics appeared: a possible conference with Swiss universities was discussed, a list of current overseas students was sent to various bodies, the make-up of the Interchange Committee on relations with the US was revised, the visits of several US scholars and Dutch professors was noted, an invitation to the Pasteur centenary was accepted, and a proposal from the University of Malta for an Imperial Degree was not thought practicable.⁹³ The actual administrative work was the responsibility of the Universities Bureau's limited secretariat, which could not hope to manage the volume and variety of topics addressed to it. Meanwhile, the committee work fell to the vice-chancellors, who spent a good deal of time pre-occupied with international affairs. When the association with the Bureau was loosened after the re-constitution of the CVCP, the amount of international work reported in the minutes declined noticeably, but overseas matters continued to feature significantly. A sign of changing times was the discussion about what to do about the increasing number of university refugees coming from Europe. Ominously, it was noted that since the University of Heidelberg had withdrawn its invitations to UK universities, it was decided not to do anything about its 550th anniversary.⁹⁴ Despite the initial over-optimism about what realistically could be achieved, the international activities of the Standing Committee/CVCP were very important. Through the introduction of post-graduate degrees, a considerable amount of routine exchange and interaction, punctuated by large-scale periodic conferences, the UK universities became much more connected with their overseas counterparts.

On the home front, too, there was a range of pressing, and often equally convoluted, problems, of which a sample will be briefly reviewed. The over-riding concern of the vice-chancellors was finance, particularly the state grants, on which there was a tradition of concerted action. In the straightened circumstances of the inter-war period, it was often a difficult time, although across the period, university funding fared reasonably well.⁹⁵ When the Geddes Committee proposed cutting the parliamentary grant, the Standing Committee, initially prompted by the constituency vice-chancellors, wrote direct to the Prime Minister urging re-consideration, and the proposed cut was not fully implemented, although whether as a result of the Standing Committee is difficult to say.⁹⁶ In the worse financial crisis ten years later there was a cut in the universities' grant. Despite this, and setting themselves against government policy, the CVCP boldly resolved that there should be no steps to raise fees or reduce salaries to offset falls in income. As the situation deteriorated, a rapidly-convened special meeting saw a more chastened mood and an acknowledgement that some

institutions might be forced into retrenchment.⁹⁷ It is important to remember that in the set-pieces over the quinquennial grants, the vice-chancellors' committee acted as a lobbyist, gathering what support it could to petition government. Formal representation on university finance came from the UGC. Noticeably, the UGC did not consult with the Standing Committee/CVCP as a collective body. In preparing their own case for government, the UGC liaised with individual vice-chancellors on the needs of their separate institutions.⁹⁸

With the growing importance of state grants, and the advent of the UGC, combined with difficult economic circumstances, it was probably inevitable that questions about academic consolidation would be raised. The Board of Education had long worried that universities followed academic trends in establishing departments in specialised areas, for which there was really insufficient demand.⁹⁹ The issue emerged quickly in the squeeze of the post-war depression, when the UGC asked the Standing Committee whether there was scope for some rationalisation of specialist provision. Although the committee conceded that it was undesirable for all institutions to teach all subjects, this intervention by the UGC was resented.¹⁰⁰ Even the suggestion to consider new ventures jointly was opposed. As the economy declined further, pressure grew. From the Board of Education, Fisher, himself a former vice-chancellor, gave friendly advice, and the matter was debated at the imperial congress.¹⁰¹ Even *The Times* pressed for some rationalisation.¹⁰² Eventually, the chairman of the Standing Committee spelled out the warning to his colleagues, '[the government] will not give you any more money if you spend what you have on subjects which are not required.'¹⁰³ There are very few examples of this kind of overt external pressure being brought to bear, or of the vice-chancellors being required to act collectively and, when it came, they had no powers of resistance.

With the writing on the wall, genuine efforts were made to compile information on areas of specialisation at each institution. The gesture of goodwill, however, was quickly undermined by the difficulty of defining what counted as specialisation. How much focus, in what respects, did there have to be before it counted as an area of specialist expertise for an institution? A specialist unit might actually be quite small and drawing attention to it in an official survey might give a wrong impression. After some wrangling, institutions provided self-defined statements on their areas of specialisation were included in the *Yearbook*.¹⁰⁴ That the issue could not readily be resolved might have afforded a Pyrrhic victory, but was a recurring theme. We have already seen the difficulties of determining the relative level of foreign degrees for post-graduate study. Fixing common matriculation standards for home

students was equally as complex.¹⁰⁵ There were several other examples where negotiations, sometimes extending over a decade provided no clear solution.

In other areas, however, sound progress was made. Although representation on state funding was ceded to the UGC, another area of finance that was within the committee's purview was fees. With such a diverse membership, fees could have been a highly divisive subject. Biting the bullet, the matter was raised at the very first meeting of the Standing Committee, where it was readily agreed that institutions needed to move together. Helpfully, a tariff of fees for different faculties had been proposed by the Royal Commission on the University of London. Despite some concerns, it was agreed that uniform fees along these lines should be implemented across the board.¹⁰⁶ There were also fruitful negotiations with the Board of Education on the training of teachers, another long-standing issue. In 1925 a deputation from training colleges to the Standing Committee asked for closer relationships between themselves and the universities. A meeting was convened by the Board of Education and a plan for a regional organisation devised.¹⁰⁷ While the Board would continue to inspect and set examinations, the training colleges in a particular area would forge closer liaison with their closest university institution. This was a far-reaching arrangement, which helped co-ordinate the universities with the rest of the educational system.¹⁰⁸

There was genuine concern among the vice-chancellors over graduate employment prospects, which became more acute through the difficult inter-war years. Post-war fears about over-crowding in the professions did not seem to be a major issue. A few years later, a proposal to co-ordinate the supply of graduate engineers to the likely demand was not deemed necessary, since most institutions worked on a more local basis.¹⁰⁹ By the mid-1930s, however, there was greater concern and evidence of a more active approach from the CVCP. A letter was sent to the Civil Service Commission, pressing for regulations covering public appointments to be changed to facilitate graduate entry. The Ministry of Health was lobbied to promote the recruitment of graduates into local government, which was taken up by the ministry. When the Foreign Office changed the regulations for some of its entry examinations, unfavourably for graduates, the CVCP protested. In response, the Foreign Office promised to consider coming into line with the Home Civil Service, which was seen as a great improvement.¹¹⁰

To gain an alternative perspective on the work of the Standing Committee/CVCP, it is worth glancing briefly at the activities of the constituency group. In many respects, they were

much the same, although with a provincial flavour. There was a good deal of attention to foreign affairs, such as the exchange of professors between France and England. The number of invitations to ceremonial occasions became such that they decided on joint representation, although they agreed to send as many as possible to Harvard!¹¹¹ As with the larger committee, there was a lot of discussion about finance and teacher training. Debates about the admission of undergraduates had specific reference to the northern university-based Joint Matriculation Board. There was more concern expressed about student life, which was a major concern among provincial institutions.¹¹² The northern vice-chancellors spent much more time debating student health and welfare and also the excessive amount of time spent on athletics and Rags. In several instances, the northern group provided the spur for the general committee, as in challenging funding cuts in 1922 or pressing for graduate recruitment to local government. On other occasions, such as on recruitment to the Civil Service, the constituency vice-chancellors by-passed the CVCP altogether and sent a memorandum of their own straight to the commission.¹¹³ The constituency group had no more authority than the Standing Committee/CVCP and somewhat less status, but it was more cohesive and, for some purposes, a more appropriate forum. Nevertheless, on most matters, the northern vice-chancellors chose to work with and through the larger committee. Nor was the Standing Committee inactive in addressing problems affecting the university sector as a whole and there are indications that the CVCP was taking a more vocal approach through the mid-1930s that culminated in an energetic and concerted effort to prepare for wartime. Preparing for war, however, marks the beginning of a new phase for the CVCP, and is beyond the scope of this study.

Conclusions

During its first two decades, the Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals, and the CVCP that continued it, experienced a chequered history, beset with administrative complexity and enjoying somewhat mixed success in resolving common problems. How, then, should we assess this phase and can the committee reasonably be dismissed as passive? On the constitutional issue, it became apparent that the vice-chancellors' committee did not have any effective authority or executive powers. Although established at the behest of government, and with an important informal brief, the Standing Committee had no official status, formal terms of reference or responsibility to report to anyone. A key factor was the

allocation of responsibility for funding to the UGC, although this was a continuation of the pattern established early in the twentieth century. The role of the Standing Committee, then, was advisory and consultative, and this was confirmed in constituting the CVCP. If it was passive, it did not really have the authority to be more decisive. Yet, there is another dimension to the issue. The vice-chancellors' committee did have a brief to act as a collective voice of the British universities, and for more than ten years, many heads thought they could act on behalf of their institutions. Even so, there was little attempt to formulate policy or put forward a universities' view on matters of the day, educational or otherwise. A reasonable contrast might be with the extremely vocal scientists' lobby. For the universities, however, the over-riding concern was institutional autonomy. No vice-chancellor would accept being bound by the decisions of a collective group, or of being regarded as simply one of a set. The experience of its pre-First World War conference may have made vice-chancellors suspicious. If they presented themselves as a collective, they might be treated as one in ways that over-rode their independence; far better to maintain the principle of institutional autonomy, albeit behind the protective skirts of the UGC.

Nevertheless, the vice-chancellors must have found some value in their meetings and the Standing Committee/CVCP worked hard on addressing serious issues facing universities during the inter-war period – international co-operation and exchange, funding and fees, matriculation and post-graduate degrees, specialisation and graduate prospects. Frustratingly frequently, no clear resolution was achieved, but it would be unfair to castigate the committee for their failure. Many of the issues were intractably complex, susceptible of no easy solution and almost certainly beyond the capacity of the limited secretariat available. Perhaps the aims were too ambitious, especially when trying to operate on a global scale. Arguably, the smaller and more coherent group of constituency vice-chancellors was more effective in working together at a grassroots level. On the other hand, much was achieved towards standardising fees, matriculation requirements, degree standards and post-graduate research, and on advocating graduate employment. There was also considerable success in maintaining university funding during very difficult times. Even where there was limited achievement, the fact of the university heads meeting regularly together forced them to engage with, and take account of, each other. Having to address common problems engendered a sense of cohesion, not just atomistic independence. When the need for decisive, collective action came with the onset of the Second World War, the means and common purpose were already in place.

¹ ‘Memorandum by the Principal of University College, Reading, 14 January 1909’; entered in minutes of a meeting 13 March 1909. Minute Book of Proceedings at the Annual Conferences of Principals of University Colleges. [Hereafter: Minute Book]. MSS.399/1/15/1. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick [MRC].

² C. Bargh, J. Bacock, P. Scott and D. Smith, *University Leadership. The Role of the Chief Executive* (Open University Press, Buckingham; 2000). As analysed further below, the CVCP was a continuation of the Standing Committee, but the proper name of each will be used for the period of their existence.

³ For a satirical view of Universities UK, see the Laurie Taylor column, *Times Higher Education* 12 April 2012.

⁴ R. Anderson, *Universities and Elites in Britain Since 1800* (Macmillan, London; 1992). R. Anderson, *British Universities. Past and Present* (Hambledon, London; 2006). T. Tapper and B. Salter, *Oxford, Cambridge and the Changing Idea of the University. The Challenge to Donnish Domination* (Open University Press, Buckingham; 1992). K. K. Jarausch (ed.), *The Transformation of Higher Learning, 1860 – 1930* (University of Chicago Press; 1983). M. Shattock, *The UGC and the Management of British Universities* (Open University Press, Buckingham; 1994). H. Silver, *Higher Education and Opinion Making in Twentieth-century England* (Woburn, London; 2003). H. Silver, *Tradition and Higher Education* (Winchester University Press; 2007). K. Vernon, *Universities and the State in England, 1850-1939* (RoutledgeFalmer, London; 2004). S. Collini, *What are Universities For?* (Penguin, London; 2012). G. Graham, *The Institution of Intellectual Values. Realism and Idealism in Higher Education* (Imprint Academic, Exeter; 2005). A. H. Halsey, *Decline of Donnish Dominion. The British Academic Profession in the Twentieth Century* (Clarendon Press, Oxford; 1992). D. Maskell and I. Robinson, *The New Idea of a University* (Haven Books, London; 2001). B. Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Harvard, 1996).

⁵ C. Shinn, *Paying the Piper. The Development of the University Grants Committee, 1919 - 46* (Falmer Press, London; 1986). Shattock, *The UGC*. E. Hutchinson, ‘The Origins of the University Grants Committee’ *Minerva* 13 (1975): 583-620.

⁶ R. Simpson, *How the Ph.D. Came to Britain. A Century of Struggle for Postgraduate Education* (SRHE, Surrey; 1983), p. 152.

⁷ Anderson, *British Universities*. Silver, *Higher Education and Opinion Making*. Bargh et al., *University Leadership*. T. Becher and M. Kogan, *Process and Structure in Higher Education* (Routledge, London; 1992). Shinn, *Paying the Piper*.

⁸ G. C. Moodie and R. Eustace, *Power and Authority in British Universities* (McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal; 1974). M. Shattock, *Managing Good Governance in Higher Education* (Open University Press, Maidenhead; 2006). C. Bargh, P. Scott and D. Smith, *Governing Universities. Changing the Culture?* (Open University Press, Buckingham; 1996) Bargh et al, *University Leadership*. R. Middlehurst, *Leading Academics* (Open University Press, Buckingham; 1993).

⁹ R. O. Berdahl, *British Universities and the State* (Cambridge University Press; 1959).

¹⁰ H. Hetherington, *The British University System 1914-1954* (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; 1954).

¹¹ A. H. Halsey and M. A. Trow, *The British Academics* (Faber and Faber, London; 1971).

¹² E. Ashby, *Community of Universities. An Informal Portrait of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth 1913-1963* (Cambridge University Press; 1963).

¹³ CVCP records are held at the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick [Hereafter MRC]. These records cover several organisations, including the conference of vice-chancellors and principals, c.1884-1917, the Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals and the CVCP itself. It is also the best source for the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, whose archives were destroyed during the war.

¹⁴ Records of the Constituency groups of vice-chancellors consulted here are held at Manchester University archives [Hereafter MUA].

¹⁵ Simpson, *How the PhD came to Britain*, Ashby, *Community of Universities*

¹⁶ F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The University of London and the World of Learning 1836-1986* (Hambledon Press, London; 1990).

¹⁷ R. Symonds, *Oxford and Empire. The Last Lost Cause?* (Clarendon Press, Oxford; 1991).

T. Pietsch, 'Many Rhodes: travelling scholarships and imperial citizenship in the British academic world, 1880-1940' *History of Education* 40 (2011): 723-739.

¹⁸ Simpson, *How the PhD Came to Britain*. Ashby, *Community of Universities*.

¹⁹ A. Hill (ed.) *Congress of Universities of the Empire* (G. Bell & Sons, London; 1912).

²⁰ Simpson, *How the PhD came to Britain*.

²¹ *The Times* 9 Sept. 1918.

²² 'Universities and the League' *The Times* 26 July, 1927.

-
- ²³ Simpson, *How the PhD came to Britain*, p. 152.
- ²⁴ ‘The Universities Bureau of the British Empire Memorandum and Articles of Association, 1919.’ VCA/7/249 [MUA]. Ashby, *Community of Universities*.
- ²⁵ Simpson, *How the PhD came to Britain*, p. 155.
- ²⁶ Anderson, *British Universities*. M. Sanderson, *The Universities and British Industry 1850-1970* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London; 1972). Vernon, *Universities and the State*.
- ²⁷ D. R. Jones, *The Origins of Civic Universities* (Routledge, London; 1988). S. Rothblatt, ‘Historical and comparative remarks on the “Federal Principle” in higher education’ *History of Education* 16 (1987): 151-180.
- ²⁸ Minute Book. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC] It is recorded at the front of this book that meetings took place 1884 - 1889 without minutes being taken.
- ²⁹ Correspondence between Ramsey and Hicks. DM692 Bristol University Archives (photocopies of originals held at Sheffield University). As a shorthand the principals will be identified by the location of their institutions.
- ³⁰ Vernon, *Universities and the State*.
- ³¹ Minute Book. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ³² Jones, *Civic Universities*. Sanderson, *Universities and British Industry*.
- ³³ Minute Book. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC]. In his emphasis on the international dimension of the CVCP, Ashby is dismissive of this domestic group but rather unfairly. Ashby, *Community of Universities*.
- ³⁴ Minute book, 3 July 1899, 4 July, 1902. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ³⁵ J. B. Thomas, ‘Birmingham University and teacher training: day training college to Department of Education’ *History of Education* 21 (1992): 307-321. J. B. Thomas, ‘Mistresses of method: women academics in the day training colleges 1890-1919’ *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 29 (1997): 93-107.
- ³⁶ Minute Book, 16 December 1893, 20 December 1894, 3 July 1899. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ³⁷ Minute Book, 22 December 1897, 20 December 1898, 15 June 1901, 4 July 1902, 8 July 1904. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC] For the 1902 Education Act see: N. Daglish, *Education Policy-making in England and Wales. The Crucible Years, 1895-1911* (Woburn Press, London; 1996).
- ³⁸ Minute Book, 20 December 1894, 15 June 1901 MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ³⁹ Vernon, *Universities and the State*.

-
- ⁴⁰ *Report of the Treasury Advisory Committee* (182) (HMSO, London; 1909). Minute Book, 4 July 1905. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ⁴¹ Vernon, *Universities and the State*. Minute Book, 13 March 1909. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ⁴² Minute Book, 13 March 1909. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ⁴³ Minute Book, 8 July 1910, 29 April 1911. MSS.399/1/15/1. [MRC].
- ⁴⁴ Daghish, *Crucible Years*.
- ⁴⁵ Vernon, *Universities and the State*.
- ⁴⁶ Ashby, *Community of Universities*.
- ⁴⁷ ‘Notes of Proceedings at the Conference of Representatives of the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham, 12 May 1917’ VCA/7/248. [MUA].
- ⁴⁸ Memorandum from A. H. Kidd [Board of Education] to D. McCormick [Chairman Advisory Committee on University Grants] 13 March 1918. ED24/1964. National Archives. [NA].
- ⁴⁹ Lodge (Birmingham) to Fisher (Board of Education) 3 July 1918 UGC5/8 [NA].
- ⁵⁰ Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals [No date given, but 21 November 1918]. [Hereafter: Standing Committee minutes] MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ⁵¹ Vernon, *Universities and the State*.
- ⁵² Shinn, *Paying the Piper*. Shattock, *The University Grants Committee*.
- ⁵³ The first part of each meeting was usually devoted to Bureau business on international affairs, followed by consideration of domestic matters. Standing Committee Minutes, *passim* [MRC].
- ⁵⁴ ‘Abstract of Proceedings of a Special Meeting of the Conference of Universities which met and adjourned on 10 May 1918 held on 23 May 1919’. Standing Committee minutes. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ⁵⁵ Standing Committee minutes, 31 October 1919. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ⁵⁶ *Nature* 102 (1918), p. 209; *Nature* 110 (1922), p.792.
- ⁵⁷ Standing Committee minutes, 18 March 1922. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ⁵⁸ ‘Memorandum on the Universities Bureau of the British Empire’ ‘HFH’ 27 June 1929. VCA/7/249. [MUA]

-
- ⁵⁹ J. S. Meisel, 'A magnificent fungus on the political tree: the growth of university representation in the UK 1832 - 1950' *History of Universities* 23 (2008): 109 – 186.
- ⁶⁰ Jones, *Civic Universities*.
- ⁶¹ Copy of J. K. Jamieson to 'VC Bristol' 18 June 1924. VCA/7/126. [MUA].
- ⁶² Miers (Manchester) to Morison (Armstrong, Newcastle) 30 January 1924. VCA/7/126. [MUA].
- ⁶³ Standing Committee minutes, 15 December 1928. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁶⁴ Standing Committee minutes, 16 March 1929. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁶⁵ Registrar Leeds University to Acting Secretary Standing Committee, 23 March 1929, entered as Appendix I, Standing Committee minutes, 13 July 1929. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC]
- ⁶⁶ 'VC Liverpool' to Hetherington 29 July, 1929. VCA/7/127(i). [MUA].
- ⁶⁷ 'VC Manchester' 30 July 1929. VCA/7/127(i). [MUA].
- ⁶⁸ Standing Committee minutes, 7 December 1929; 1 February 1930. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁶⁹ Standing Committee minutes, 12 July 1930. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁷⁰ 'The Universities Bureau of the British Empire Memorandum and Articles of Association' 1929. VCA/7/249. [MUA].
- ⁷¹ Appendix II of Standing Committee minutes 7 December 1929. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁷² Shinn, *Paying the Piper*.
- ⁷³ Memo by A. H. Kidd, 13 March 1918, ED24/1964. D. McCormick (UGC) to Selby Bigge (Board of Education) 15 October 1919. Minute paper, 7 November, 1919. ED24/1981. [NA].
- ⁷⁴ Standing Committee minutes, 17 December 1927. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁷⁵ Standing Committee minutes, 19 March 1927. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁷⁶ Standing Committee minutes, 9 July 1927; 17 December 1927. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁷⁷ See the correspondence entered as appendices in Standing Committee minutes, 15 March 1930. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁷⁸ Thompson, *University of London*.
- ⁷⁹ *Final Report of the Royal Commission on University Education in London* [Cd.6717] (HMSO, London; 1913). *Report of the Departmental Committee on the University of London* [Cmd.2612] (HMSO, London; 1926).
- ⁸⁰ Standing Committee minutes, 1 February 1930; 15 March 1930. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].
- ⁸¹ CVCP minutes, 26 September 1931. MSS.399/1/1/1. [MRC].
- ⁸² Vernon, *Universities and the State*.

-
- ⁸³ Constituency meeting, 12 March 1927. VCA/7/188. [MUA].
- ⁸⁴ Constituency meeting, 27 May 1933. VCA/7/188. [MUA].
- ⁸⁵ Constituency meeting, 10 November 1934. VCA/7/188. [MUA].
- ⁸⁶ J. Goodman, 'International citizenship and the International Federation of University Women before 1939' *History of Education* 40 (2011): 701-721. Pietsch, 'Many Rhodes'.
- ⁸⁷ Simpson, *How the PhD came to Britain*.
- ⁸⁸ Standing Committee minutes, 31 October 1919; 18 March 1921. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ⁸⁹ A. Hill (ed.), *Second Congress of the Universities of the Empire* (G. Bell & Sons, London; 1921). A. Hill (ed.), *Third Congress of the Universities of the Empire* (G. Bell & Sons, London; 1926).
- ⁹⁰ 'A Tour of British Universities' *The Times* 16 August, 1921.
- ⁹¹ Ashby, *Community of Universities*.
- ⁹² Standing Committee minutes, 17 March 1923. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC]. Ashby, *Community of Universities*.
- ⁹³ Standing Committee minutes, 18 March 1922. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ⁹⁴ CVCP minutes, 24 June 1933; 7 March 1936. MSS.399/1/1/1. [MRC].
- ⁹⁵ Vernon, *Universities and the State*.
- ⁹⁶ Standing Committee minutes, 17 December 1921. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ⁹⁷ CVCP minutes, 26 September 1931; 28 November 1931. MSS.399/1/1/1. [MRC].
- ⁹⁸ UGC minutes 10 December 1919. UGC1/1; 26 March 1925. UGC2/7; 10 April 1930. UGC2/12; UGC5/13. [NA].
- ⁹⁹ Kidd to McCormick, 13 March 1918. ED24/1964. [NA]. *Report of the University Grants Committee 1921* [Cmd.1163].
- ¹⁰⁰ Standing Committee minutes, 30 September 1921. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ¹⁰¹ Hill (ed.), *Second Congress*.
- ¹⁰² *The Times* 17 May 1922.
- ¹⁰³ Standing Committee minutes, 8 July 1922. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ¹⁰⁴ Standing Committee minutes, 16 December 1922; 15 December 1923. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ¹⁰⁵ Standing Committee minutes, 29 September 1922, 16 December 1922, 17 March 1923. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].
- ¹⁰⁶ Standing Committee minutes, 21 November 1918; 24 January 1919, 14 March 1919. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC].

¹⁰⁷ Standing Committee minutes, 19 December 1925; 18 December 1926. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].

¹⁰⁸ P. H. J. H. Gosden, *The Evolution of a Profession. A Study of the Contribution of Teachers' Associations to the Development of School Teaching as a Professional Occupation* (Blackwell, Oxford; 1972).

¹⁰⁹ Standing Committee minutes, 31 October 1919. MSS.399/1/16/1. 21 March 1925. MSS.399/1/16/2. [MRC].

¹¹⁰ CVCP minutes, 9 March 1935; 13 July 1935; 10 July 1937, 5 March 1938. MSS.399/1/1/1. [MRC].

¹¹¹ Constituency meeting 27 June 1925; 15 February 1936. VCA/7/188. [MUA].

¹¹² Constituency meeting 5 November 1927; 5 November 1932; 4 February 1933. VCA/7/188. [MUA].

¹¹³ Standing Committee minutes, 17 December 1921. MSS.399/1/16/1. [MRC]. Constituency meeting 8 March 1930. VCA/7/188. [MUA].