TO THE TRUSTEES OF COLBY COLLEGE:

We, the undersigned, members of the Class of 1892, believing that the future policy of our college should be clearly and conclusively defined; that that policy should be to become a strong, so-called, minor college for men; that a continuation of our present system of education will not only prevent the accomplishment of such policy, but is rapidly transforming Colby into a college for women; and believing that the best interests of the college call for the adoption of such policy as soon as possible, but with justice to all now concerned, respectfully petition your honorable board to declare that after the graduation of the Class of 1905, men only shall be admitted to Colby.
Your Committee, appointed to consider the future policy of Colby as regards men and women students, have endeavored to investigate and consider all the facts bearing upon this important matter and to reach conclusions rational, honorable and for the highest interest of the College.

We would recognize first that the prime object of the college is educational under Christian influences and, second, that we should make this as far reaching as possible.

We find that for thirty years the doors of Colby have been open to women as well as men,

That the extending of its influences for the higher education of women has not been done at an additional expense but that it has increased the income of the college and its power for good,

That the money invested in the accommodations for women has been well invested,

That provisions by will have been made for a woman's dormitory which will increase the efficiency of the women's division,

That the largest portion of the income producing endowment of Colby has been received during the last thirty years and that the men, who gave the largest sums, were members of the Board of Trustees and in sympathy with the higher education of men and women,

We find further that the opinion favorable to co-education and co-ordination is very general and yet the desire exists among many young men to go to a man's college and among many young women to go
a woman's college and that the opinion is quite common among graduates and parents that there should be men's colleges and women's colleges.

We find also that with the progress of the times increased facilities are demanded for the higher education of both men and women and that a large majority of American colleges are open to both sexes.

We are of the opinion that Colby should continue to use its equipment for the higher education of men and women,

That the number of each should be limited only by the means of the college to provide suitable accommodations and perform its work in the best possible way,

That the system of co-ordination should be continued, viz—that there should be a man's division and a woman's division,

That, as the conditions of the college will allow, the students of each division should become separated in chapel exercises, recitations, lectures, public and Commencement exercises,

That every effort be made to secure this end as soon as possible.
Waterville, Me., June 24, 1901.

To the Trustees of Colby College:

The undersigned, a minority of the committee appointed at the midwinter meeting of the Board "to consider the future policy of the college in relation to men and women students," begs leave to report that he cannot agree with the majority of the committee and submits the following brief statement of his reasons without elaboration:

1. The views of the individuals composing the committee have not changed since their appointment. At that time, two were in favor of the present system and one was opposed. We remain the same today.

2. We all realize the importance of the question and are equally anxious to do what is for the best interests of the college, not merely today but in the future.

3. It is admitted that the number of women applicants for admission is increasing much faster than the number of men, so much so that it will not be many years before the women will outnumber the men. There are fewer men in college today than during any time within the past ten years and there are more women with the exception of the year 1896, when the same number were there. In 1891, there were 137 men; today 123. In 1891 there were 47 women; today 80, and the last entering class contained 37 of each sex.
4. When the time comes that the women outnumber the men, the men will feel that they are going to a woman’s college and in my judgment such a condition will have a tendency to lessen still further the number of men. It is a fact not to be winked out of sight that many young men who would otherwise naturally come to Colby and who are just the kind that we need as students and as alumni, are kept from Colby because of the large number of women here today and I believe that that difficulty will increase in the future.

5. Whatever the result of coeducation in institutions may be, it has never been satisfactory at Colby. The policy was adopted in 1871 and during the first decade only 23 women applied for admission. The numbers then began to increase rapidly and the situation became such that during President Small’s administration the policy of coordination was adopted by this board. This, like most other compromises, was satisfactory to neither party. It did not meet the views of those who were anxious to see a strong minor college for men alone here in central Maine and it met with a vigorous protest from the alumnae, who presented their views to this board in no uncertain terms. From that day to this, neither party has been satisfied with existing conditions.

6. The financial side of the question I consider a minor one. My own opinion however on that point is that by the sale of the property now used for ladies' halls and the turning of the proceeds into the general fund of the college, the reduction of the teaching force in some directions and a combination in others
if necessary, a college for men alone could be maintained with less deficit than at present. The total number of students would not be as great as now, at least for many years; but we would have as many men as we have now and in all probability more, and that number ought naturally to increase, so that a college might be built up after the plan of Bowdoin or Dartmouth or Williams or Amherst.

7. I see no force to the claim that because large gifts were made to the college by Gov. Coburn and Mr. Colby at a time when they were both trustees of the institution and after the policy of coeducation had been adopted, therefore there was an implied condition that that policy should be continued for all time. The gifts were unconditional and without restriction. Had they desired to make such condition, they would undoubtedly have done so. The gifts were made with the ordinary and necessary implication that the trustees should in the future as in the past manage the affairs of the college and adopt new policies or change old ones as they might see fit. With much better reason could the claim have been made in 1871 that the trustees had no power to open the doors to women. The institution was chartered as a literary and theological institution for the "education of youth," and I think any court would give that word its ordinary signification, of young men. All the gifts during the 50 years prior to 1871 had been made when the policy adopted and the only one thought of was that embraced in the charter, the building up of a college for men. With much greater force could it then have been argued that those funds could not be diverted to any other use. Without any change in the charter, however, this has been done. It must have been
upon the assumption that all unconditional gifts should be used by the trustees as in their judgment should seem best.

That same principle applies now and the question is now to be met by the trustees unhampered and that question is, what shall Colby do?

8. The objection is made that funds have been specifically contributed towards a woman's dormitory within the past few years. According to the treasurer's report those contributions amount to $5,394., are deposited safely and separately, constitute no part of the fund we are using today and can be readily returned to the donors.

9. Another objection is the hoped for woman's dormitory that has been promised by will, by some party we know not whom.

This in no way complicates the present situation. Had the funds already come into our possession it would be different. If our policy is now changed, those funds would not come.

10. The suggested plan of making an effort to establish two practically distinct institutions like Radcliffe in its connection with Harvard, or Pembroke in its connection with Brown, seems to me futile.

(1). In the first place this suggestion admits the unwisdom of the present system. If the present is good, why not extend rather than change it?

(2). In the second place, such a plan is the merest fancy.
We have been and still are struggling at Colby to secure money enough to run one college and the result has been a deficit of $54,000 during the past ten years and that notwithstanding we have kept a paid agent in the field for the past five years whose sole business is to solicit funds. If we have so great difficulty in maintaining one college it is useless to think of creating another and maintaining two: at least within the lifetime of any member of this board. I see no force, therefore, in the passage of resolutions looking to that scheme: such resolutions will not and cannot solve the problem.

11. Four possible courses have been suggested:

(1). First, to create two separate institutions in fact. This is out of the question for financial reasons.

(2). Second, to turn the institution into a woman's college, pure and simple.

I think no one seriously contemplates this.

(3). Third, to allow the present policy to continue.

This in my judgment will itself in time turn it practically into a woman's college, and hence to me is objectionable.

(4). Fourth, to make it what its founders intended and what for the first half century of its life it was, a college for men only.

I honestly believe that in twenty-five years from this time,
Colby would stand higher and would do a greater work if it could be a strong minor college for men than if the present policy is continued, and therefore it is that I respectfully dissent from the report of the majority and wish to put myself on record as in favor of the proposed change, namely, of announcing that beginning with the academic year of 1905-6, Colby will be a college for men only.

12. In what I have said I do not wish to be understood as opposed to the higher education of women. On the contrary I am in favor of it, but I am also in favor of sending our youth to a college for men and our women to a college for women.

Leslie C. Conners