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AC 0296

BOX 1 FOLDER 11

Report for the April 1882 Meeting of the Women's Educational Association
(Re: history of women's laboratory and progress)

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1882

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Report for the April meeting of
the Woman's Education Association.

It is now just six years since this association pledged itself to the project of a woman's laboratory in connection with the Inst. of Technology. The circular which stated the case and asked for funds was issued about the first of May, ¹⁸⁷⁶ and within three weeks the sum asked for \$2000. was obtained. The change of plan consequent upon the erection of the new building for the Mechanic Arts School required an outlay of \$500. more which soon was given through the efforts of the association in winter of 1876-7.

The Laboratory has been open for the instruction of women in Chemistry, Mineralogy, Botany and allied subjects for six winters. During this period 85 women
— see over —

The laboratory has 16 desks

The smallest number in any one year
was 17

the largest 29

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have availed themselves of its advantages.

20 of these have done very little work being prevented by illness or other causes from working as much as ~~one~~ day a week for three months -

The instruction attempted in these cases has of course been unsatisfactory.

But there remain 63 women who have been aided - 19 of these ^{were} ~~have been~~

~~former~~ teachers at the time of their connection with the Laboratory and they ^{have} carried the instruction so received to perhaps 2000 pupils already.

10 students have taken an extended course remaining 3 years or more.

2 have died

4 have been medical students -

8 have put their knowledge to some real and practical use other than teaching

9 are new students this year -
 This leaves 11 of the 65 students
 who have taken instruction for at least
 1 day a week for 4 months or more
 for various reasons ~~largely~~ they have
 wished to supplement their previous
 Education or have looked forward
 to a possible use in the future.

Six years ago the most sanguine of
 us would not have dared to predict
 these results - and yet as is often
 the case the success has not come
 wholly in the line in which we
 looked for it.

The service which has been done to
 the country through the teachers is
 probably the greatest which the
 Laboratory has rendered.

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Its influence has been in the line of true scientific teaching, not of popular showy experiments. It has been in the line of hand work governed by head knowledge. The Endeavor has been so to train the young girls that they may become more capable, reasonable and logical women ^{by reason of their science} and we have good reason to know that missionary work of this kind was needed from the evidence of the teachers themselves as to the manner in which science has often been taught.

The result in this direction alone would have justified the outlay of \$2500.

we must not forget to consider ~~the~~ the work of the Laboratory from another stand-point - in its relation to the Higher Education

of women - and this is in one 5-
sense the most important relation
for the Committee under whose
care the institution was organized.

As a committee we may well be
satisfied - for without any public
discussion - in fact without the
knowledge of the general public and
without any undue pushing from outside
or inside the doors of the Institute
have opened year by year as the young
women showed themselves trustworthy and
capable - until now there is very
little doubt but that a large majority
of all connected with the administration
are in favor of giving women every
advantage of the school provided space
can be found for suitable accommodations
Even in the present crowded

condition of the building ~~is~~ there is ⁶
~~any~~ separation of the sexes ~~and that~~
only in Laboratory work.

I believe it to be a fact that no other
Scientific School in the world can
say as much. While great advances
have been made in England and on
the continent since 1876 when Miss
Copen and I were refused the
privilege of visiting some laboratories
and were quietly smuggled through
others.

I do not think that any of the
Professional or Technical Schools of
a high grade have as yet opened
their doors. ^{He had known} Would not have come if

This is surely a great gain in
the way of really higher education
In the Institute course necessitates
at least two years study after

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graduation at a College -
and the whole four years course
means a kind of work of which
women have frequently been declared
incapable - It may not be out of
the way to say here that all the
young women who have taken the
regular courses have more than held
their own. Beside the question
of mental ability lies that of physical
power - and here also we are proud
of our facts - 2 young women graduated
last June 2 will graduate next month
These four have been steadily at work
for at least three years 2 of them for
~~more~~ nearly four six days in the
week during the 8 months of the
School year with only one week vacation
in the whole 8 months -

3 of the 4 I believe have not lost

one day in the whole time on 8
account of illness - the other one
lost one day only on account of a
cold and ear ache -

Beside the 8 months school work
they have worked each summer on
professional work at least 2 months

The success of the work in one
relation and that the one of all others
perhaps the most dear to the heart
of the original Committee - that
of practical professional work by
women has not been startlingly -

We have at the present time only
8 women who are sufficiently trained
to be able to do good professional
work - and yet when we consider
that 3 years at least is required

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for such training and that the
Laboratory has been open not quite
six years we ought not to be
discouraged -

There is an absence of prejudice on
the part of business men which augurs
well for the future employment of
skilled women -

We know of no one who has refused
to have investigations continued when
he found that the work was done by
women - One manufacturer from the
Western part of the state asked to be
taken through the Laboratory as he wished
to see how a woman chemist looked -
He afterward remarked that he didn't
see that they looked any different
from any other women.

The greatest obstacle to fitting women for
distinct professions is the fact that is -

has not yet become a recognized
 necessity to spend three or four years in
 training - we can not expect to have many
 graduates until public opinion has advanced
 another stage - again many women who
 would gladly fit themselves have not the
 means - and they can not borrow money
 as readily as young men do Miss Britton

This much we can say - none of the students
 are out of employment - of the two who
 graduated last June one was retained
 as an assistant in the Institute the
 other has obtained a very nice situation
 in Brooklyn her home - as chemist
 with Dr Squibb a large manufacturer
 of pharmaceutical chemicals -

So far for results of the past six years
 but before we consider what may be the
 future we must take a look at the
 financial part of it:

This has not changed materially from

Year to year. There have been from ¹¹
3 to 6 young women each year who have
earned their tuition either by assisting
in the Laboratory or in the Library
thus saving to the Inst. - about \$600
Each year or the tuition for three students.

The amount ~~for~~ received by the Inst.
from paying students has been \$1000
or \$1100 each year this has gone into
the general account to pay for gas
water and heat for the building.

I presume that this amount about
covers it - although the buildings
are so connected that it is
difficult to form an estimate -

The Inst. has not paid out any
thing for the support of the Laboratory
it has given the tuition to one
student - for work done there -

But it will be seen that the income

from the 20 students of each year is only that received from 15 young men - and is not sufficient to pay an instructor hence it becomes a serious question. what is the best policy for the future - shall a special Laboratory be maintained or shall special men students be admitted to the same Laboratory. Elderly people & those who can not come at regular hours or shall the doors be closed to all who can not come at stated times.

If the Laboratory is given up then all the past schemes of Household Chemistry - investigations - and the present head quarters of supply for teaching by the Poor

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in private schools - will be without
a home -

An income of $\$800$ ^{or 1000} a year ought
to secure a good instructor who
could eke out the salary by some
analytical work - but unless this
can be secured it - is doubtful
if it is best to keep the open house
for the past years

We can hardly raise the fee - to
the terms for private tuition which
much of our work amounts to for now
we have to favor the students all we
can by loaning to them apparatus which
the men are required to buy - by loaning
books and in every way we can lessening
the money expense for them -