

May 11, 1942.

Dean Mario Cosenza, Chairman  
Curriculum Committee  
Brooklyn College

Dear Dean Cosenza:

In the course of nearly two years' experience in the problems of employment for Brooklyn College graduates and undergraduates, the Faculty Committee on Employment has repeatedly had presented to it questions relating to the College curriculum. Not infrequently we are told that in certain fields employment opportunities would be enhanced if students were able to add some particular course, regularly offered in other institutions, and of definitely liberal arts character. Again, it is reported that in institutions of high standing in the liberal arts field, courses of semi-vocational character are accorded a recognized position. In such specific ways and in more general ways our committee is faced with the problem of clarifying and more exactly defining what students in a liberal arts college have a right to expect as a result of four years.

Certain conventional answers are probably in the background of the thinking of most college teachers, and in the criteria upon which accrediting agencies base their recognition of any given institution. When, however, the Employment Committee has sought in its discussions to arrive at some clear-cut program which might be recommended to the Faculty Council for adoption as a means of promoting the placement of our students, it has come up against what have seemed to be rather vague inhibitions against the frank consideration of employment as an aim in a liberal arts college. Perhaps the vagueness is chiefly in my thinking, but a little preliminary enquiry outside our Committee has not so far served to disperse the confusion. For that reason may I turn to the Curriculum Committee and ask its advice on the general problem and on certain specific phases? Some of the questions that come to mind are given below.

- 1) How can the problem be resolved into subdivisions susceptible of more exact study.
- 2) What sources may be available in the literature both for the analysis of the problem and for the pursuit of its separate phases? So far I have been given three titles as relevant: Foster, The Liberal Arts Colleges; Maclean, Scholars, Workers, and Gentlemen; and Butts, The College charts its Course.
- 3) In what respects if any is Brooklyn College faced with problems different from those of liberal arts colleges the country over? Is it a fact that our curriculum is more conservatively governed with respect to possibly utilitarian courses than the curricula of many colleges of high liberal arts tradition?
- 4) Is it possible to set up criteria by which the admissibility of any given course to a liberal arts curriculum may be established regardless of any local or other limiting factors?

With thanks for anticipated clarification,

Sincerely,

(I am making the same request  
to Prof. Cohen of the other  
Curriculum Committee.)

Ralph C. Benedict, Chairman  
Com. Employment & Fin. Aid