4 CITY COLLEGES MAP FARM TRAINING

Active Program to Recruit Students for Summer Work Gets Under Way

To answer in part the manpower shortage on the nation’s farms, the four city colleges have already begun an active program for recruiting and training their students for Summer farm work.

Taking the lead in planning for a student farm labor program is Brooklyn College, which seeks to establish work camps at which students will combine their planting, cultivating and harvesting with regular Summer school classes.

City College is stressing the need for orientation of city students to the way of farm life. Professor Bernard Ostronok of the Economics Department is conducting a non-credit course for those who are planning to work on farms.

At Queen’s College, Dr. Harold Lenz, registrar, reported that seventeen women had gone to the farm of the Volunteer Land Corps at Farmingdale, L. I., during semesters.

The students were so enthusiastic upon their return that the Student Council is now planning to work on a Summer farm program through the Farmingdale unit or through the Newtown High School Agricultural Annex which has a farm adjoining the grounds.

The Hunter College program is being developed by the students themselves. The agricultural committee of the Student Council plans to sponsor a series of lectures and movies by way of preparation. Formerly recruiting under the Volunteer Land Corps, the Hunter College women will this year gear their program directly to any plans the Federal or State Governments may announce.

Under the Brooklyn College program it is proposed to enlist students in class groups, recruit teacher-leaders for each group and schedule for each class unit an appropriate lesson program leading toward regular college credits.

Professor Ralph C. Benedict, chairman of the Department of Biology, who has directed the Brooklyn College farm program since its beginning last Spring, reported that one of the major problems remaining to be resolved in the plan is the negotiation for each group appropriate housing and living conditions in regions where the students’ services as farm workers are needed and where they can earn something more than subsistence wages.

The Summer school curriculum which Brooklyn authorities hope to offer at the camps will include three types of courses: the standard subjects like mathematics or foreign languages, which require no elaborate laboratory equipment or library facilities; special courses correlated with rural surroundings in farm biology, and rural sociology and, finally, emergency “war service” courses like military mapping.

The Brooklyn College plan is based on its experiment last Summer with three farm labor camps near Red Hook, N. Y. Together with several students from Queens and Hunter College, the camps housed over one hundred students who contributed materially to the harvest and cultivation of the fruit and vegetable crops in the section of Dutchess County.

Although actual recruiting will begin in March, Brooklyn has publicized its program via the campus public address system during airraid drills and is offering preliminary orientation in the farm biology course of which two sections with some sixty students were established this semester.

Professor Benedict plans to give prospective farm laborers “the feel of the soil” later on in the semester by assigning to them plots on the college’s experimental garden and sending them for week-end farm work before the Summer.

- The Board of Higher Education this week passed a resolution endorsing “the plans now being formulated in the colleges on the basis of our experiences during the Summer of 1942” and promising “to give all possible aid in solving the needs of agriculture for supplementary labor during the 1943 crop season.”

A farm labor program is being discussed by a faculty subcommittee at Barnard.