SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Brooklyn College in the summer of 1943, in collaboration with the N. Y. State Agricultural and Technical Institute of Morrisville, N. Y., carried on successfully a special summer session program as a food production, work-study unit at the Morrisville institution. Under this cooperative management, the Project established itself as the most successful of the thirty Farm Cadet Victory Corps units set up under the auspices of the State War Service Council. Undertaken as a response to the urgent call for help on the farm labor front, the College enrolled over 150 of its students in regular college courses, and enlisted from its teaching staff eight faculty members who presented the courses and served, also, in many non-teaching capacities including supervision of farm work and dormitory administration. The Morrisville Institute maintained its administrative functions relating to the provision of food and the basic house-keeping of the dormitories, and in addition contributed many invaluable services toward the educational and recreational parts of the whole program.

Various aspects of the program of the past summer, details of its operation and the many problems involved have been discussed at length in other pages. Descriptions of each of the different phases and of the difficulties involved have carried in train suggestions for appropriate amendments and new features by which improvements might be effected. As preparation for any 1944 program it will be necessary for these to be most carefully studied as a basis for the formulation of detailed blueprints for a second Brooklyn-Morrisville program. It remains here merely to list in summary form the specific results attained in the past summer, and to sketch in broad outlines the general form of the new structure which we may hope to build.

Achievements in 1943

1. Harvested 22,000 bushels of peas and beans which otherwise would not have been harvested. In round numbers this figure totals close to 700,000 pounds; in pods 15,000,000. Figured at four portions to a pound, our production provided enough peas and beans for 2,800,000 portions as
some realization of our slogan of "Feed a fighter in forty-three."

2. Established for a second time (Cf. 1942 Report) the worth of Brooklyn College students working under appropriate organization as valuable food producers for the emergency. While only one grower was willing to take a chance on our students in the spring of 1943, many applied for their services after the project was under way; many were ready to sign for a 1944 group.

3. Served as an experimental demonstration of the practicability of the Brooklyn College plan whereby an educational institution may accept responsibility for making it possible for its students to volunteer in this emergency while at the same time continuing their regular college studies. The success of the plan was shown, not only by the food production, but also in the maintenance of registration during the summer. Of the 150 who started work at Morrisville in June, only two left in the first five weeks due to war-related factors. At the end of five weeks, provisions were made for the withdrawal of about a score more, giving an average registration for the ten weeks of 140.

4. Demonstrated the possibilities of using otherwise seasonably idle State educational facilities.

5. Made friends for Brooklyn College and its students among people most of whom had never heard of the institution before. As the summer wore on, more and more residents of Morrisville and vicinity came forward to say that, while they had viewed the influx of our group with serious misgivings, they now had nothing but praise for them. Individuals, and official agencies (Appendix) united in formal and informal invitation for our return.

6. Made outstanding contributions to the health and strength of practically everyone of the group. Stoutist members lost up to 25 pounds; others gained in weight. Almost all gained in depth of color, in clearer skins, in stored vitamins, in muscular strength, and in reserves of endurance.

7. Made it possible for city students to earn college credits in courses for which the daily living and working experiences offered many vivid correlations never met with in the city. While class and study routines were sometimes interrupted by the work schedule, the course records show that in distribution of grades the Morrisville students were at least average for the college.

8. Gave to this group of 150 students from one of the N. Y. City "subway" colleges the experience of residence college life with all the values accruing from such group living. For most of these students this was made possible only through the opportunity for the work in the harvest fields.

9. Introduced many to work experience and added to the general work background of all. Many had never done continuous work before. Few had ever carried on hard, manual labor.

10. Gave new insights and appreciations into ways of living and working which had been almost completely outside the imagination as well as the
experience of most of the group; showed farm work as skilled labor, and as requiring teamwork; the farmer as one who loves his independence as well as his work; country people as friendly, cordial, and cooperative.

11. Gave to students and staff together the opportunity to participate consciously in a challenging educational adventure. President Gideon in one of the first assemblies had made clear the experimental significance of the program upon which the group was embarking. Most if not all the features which have been listed here as achievements were envisioned in advance as goals toward which staff and students were invited to bend their efforts.

12. Established a possible pattern for a postwar educational program in which the State and city educational systems might cooperate to promote more and more collaboration between urban and rural communities. The recently announced plans for a great expansion of the State program for practical institutes offers an opportunity for the special summer utilization of the rural public institutions of higher education for city youth. Such use might well be paralleled by the corresponding opening of public city colleges for use by rural young people. Chairman Wheeler Milmore of the State Assembly Educational Committee made a specific proposal along these lines in an address at one of our Brooklyn-Morrisville Assemblies in August.

13. Presented to our students and to the Morrisville community through a series of assembly-forums a wide range of significant topics by able speakers from many parts of the State.

14. Enlisted for its planning during some eight months in 1942 and 1943 and for its operation during the summer close to one hundred collaborators from Brooklyn College and from other walks of life; from Brooklyn, Albany, Utica, Ithaca, Pratt's Hollow, Morrisville, Buffalo, and Hollywood et al.

15. "One of the many gratifying effects of the farm labor project of Brooklyn College at Morrisville in the summer of 1943 was the opportunity it afforded rural people to become better acquainted with those from the city. Not only did city workers have the opportunity through the Brooklyn College project to learn about rural life and food production, but rural people had an opportunity to learn about city people and their problems. I believe the long-time value of such mutually beneficial programs cannot be overestimated." The foregoing was specially contributed by Farm Manpower Director T. M. Hurd to supplement the list of achievements preceding it. Dr. Hurd has been good enough to read the entire report and to make valuable suggestions regarding it.
Commentary

The citation of such a series of fifteen outcomes as the achievements of this production-study project immediately raises questions as to the validity of the supporting evidence, and the relative success of this project in comparison with others. The attainments of any educational program are necessarily relative, with standards themselves derived from the distribution curves which record the results of a large number of tests. No such basis of appraisal is available here although it seems probable that studies of the training of beginners in industrial production would discover many suggestive analogies. The fifteen specified results divide naturally into two groups: (1) those which relate to the project as a whole and are to be appraised best on the basis of external evidence; (2) those which have to do with the effects of the program on the participating students and for which internal evidence is needed.

For the first type, the brief statements contain indications of their own supporting data. 22,000 bushels is such a datum for which the best appraisal is found in the request of the agricultural community for a 1944 Project. For the second type of result, while some quantitative evidence can be found, the most significant educational increments are not subject to any exact measurement. The maintenance of an average record of 140 out of a total of 160 can be translated into a 93% score. The academic success of the students who finished their courses was summed up in a grade distribution of 14.8% A, 37.4% B, 20.6% C, 5% D, and 1.7% F. The curve of production results offers data for appraising success and failure in the work experience of the summer; approximately 67% "Passed" so far as earning bare living expenses are involved, but the extremely adverse weather factors offer strong extenuation for those less successful. For the accruals in the many intangible educational products of the summer, estimates of gains will have to be left to unstandardized opinions. That major gains are represented for many students admits of no doubt in the minds of the staff.
Recommendations

If the foregoing list of achievements is accepted as a fair summary of the results actually attained by the 1943 Farm Labor Project, the desirability of repeating the program in 1944 and subsequently would seem to be beyond dispute. Our problem would be to plan to add as many improvements for the second venture as practicable while avoiding the deficiencies and mistakes of the first try.

Many advantageous factors can be cited for the planning and mounting of a second work-study program: factors of time, of experience, of an increased number of friendly participants and collaborators. In 1943 it was not certain that our Brooklyn College plan was to have a try-out until after the middle of April; now, the welcome reception of a second project has been assured for months past. We can begin enlistment and other preparations early in February. We can also start with veterans from 1943, students and staff, whose experience last summer will make possible the drawing up of effective plans far in advance of the actual starting date.

We can now count on the active collaboration of the Morrisville Institute staff in the advance preparation, as well as in helpful participation during the summer. We can count also on support in the form of practical aid from the whole series of public and private agencies which are concerned with promoting increased food production. Brooklyn College has a large balance of good will on deposit up-State.

It is therefore strongly recommended that the College initiate plans for a second Farm Labor Project on the general program carried out during 1943. The following proposals are offered in the nature of "sketches" of a 1944 structure which can be useful in the drafting of detailed blueprints.

1. Work and Earnings. The entire group should be employed in the harvesting of peas and beans but with provisions to ensure against days of idleness such as were experienced by our 1943 group. While no one can guarantee weather conditions, students willing to work hard should be assured of the chance to earn at least board and room from the beginning. Last summer, if the Institute had not carried living accounts where necessary for the first few weeks, the 1943 project would have folded
up by mid-July. In the first three weeks, it was not the July rains which kept them from working and earning continuously but the bad weather of the spring which had prevented the planting and development of peas to pick. Even with that bad start, over two thirds of the 150 earned at least their board and room and most of the others, with additional effort could have reached this goal for the summer. However, if this kind of food production project is to succeed, city student workers should not be expected to shoulder such risks as were the lot of our group in the first part of last summer. Brooklyn College requires no tuition but many of its students have to earn enough each summer to cover textbook, laboratory fees, and often much more. It is certain that many of our best producers would have earned much more in the city than they did at Morrisville. This kind of project should not be one for which only the more affluent of our students can afford to volunteer.

Some diversification of country work should be sought, at least for those who have the aptitude and physical abilities. It is recommended that our students be employed in the cafeteria service, with a double squad alternating between field work and commissary service. It would be highly desirable if a second squad could be set up the members of which would alternate between the pea and bean fields and more general farm work in the immediate environs of Morrisville. If arrangements are made for such special groups, grants from State funds should be requested to provide at least a week’s free training in the work, along the lines carried out last year for high school boys and for others who were given two weeks training at State expense.

2. Curriculum and Assemblies. The 1943 program of courses and assemblies offers a pattern upon which some desirable amendments can easily be planned. While the actual courses presented will be determined finally by the staff available and by elections, the curriculum most ideal from the standpoint of the rural scene should be projected. To last summer’s selection of English composition and literature, rural sociology, geology, and political science, should be added some course in
economics, farm biology, and home economics. For algebra should be substituted trigonometry, with its better correlation with measurement of heights and areas. For the freshmen and sophomores, credit to the extent of one point for Hygiene activities could be more than justified both by the extent and value of the exercise involved in field work and in recreation and because such credit would be no more than fitting recognition of the volunteer spirit upon which this summer work depends. Limited modification of standard courses should be authorized to meet the peculiarly favorable situation of country life and work. An extension of the present maximum of 128 graduation credits is suggested as desirable, both as a special grant for war-related service, and to permit students to enroll who might not find in the available Morrisville curriculum some particular course needed in their regular concentration.

The curriculum and enlistment program should be designed to enroll a calculated distribution of student representation covering the four years of college life with perhaps a section or two of incoming freshmen. The latter, however, offer definite difficulties in the way of selection and of adaptability. In 1943, the proportion of unsuccessful student-workers was higher among the new entrants than with those who had been in college at least one term.

A program of assembly-forums should be planned to provide several correlating features: with appropriate aspects of the regular curriculum; with the food production parts of the program; with village and county interests; and with due provision for student participation. A bulletin of information describing the various phases of the 1944 Farm Labor Project should be prepared and printed as soon as possible.

3. Dormitory, Cafeteria, and Campus Programs. A recommendation that the cafeteria service be carried out by Brooklyn students has already been indicated. For the dormitory housekeeping services, outside the individual rooms, already the responsibility of the students, a similar arrangement should be made on some cooperative or paid basis. Nothing could go further toward promoting the over-all educational value of the whole experience. Such an addition to the work program, for which ad-
equate hours would have to be provided, would have its problems for a group predominately inexperienced in living away from home and inexperienced in cooperative housekeeping. By that very token, the values of successful management would be correspondingly greater.

Dormitory living involves more than the bare preparation and service of food and the housekeeping of living quarters. A degree of regulation in some respects freer than is customary at home, in other respects more restricting, is necessary. House and campus rules should be carefully formulated ahead of time to follow usual college practices, thoroughly understood, and agreed to by all applicants. As much freedom as is compatible with responsible management would be the objective sought. As much of this management should be carried on by students as can be made effective.

4. Cooperative Planning and Management. Underlying any successful program for 1944 will be the principle of student cooperation not only in management but also in the planning carried on ahead of time. Planning that will expand these sketches into detailed blueprints will require extended fact-finding, periods of discussion in subcommittees, the formulation of first and later drafts. It was with this point of view in mind that recommendations were made last December of the appointment of a Faculty-Student Committee on the Morrisville Project. With such a committee in action, cooperation in fact as well as in name can be built into the enlistment and selection process, into the planning of the best course of study, of the best management of the work program, into all phases of this city college educational experiment.