President: 

1) The release may be amplified after meeting this weekend & Monday.

2) The other statement of the Employment Committee meeting Monday - a 2nd draft of a statement prepared by Prof. Garde

For your information & reactions

Benedict

Brooklyn College
Received
Office of The President
Jan 29 1943
THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE LABOR PLAN.

Brooklyn College, during the summer of 1942, became unexpectedly involved in a farm labor project comprising three camp groups and totaling 99 student workers, 67 of which were enrolled at Brooklyn. After a spring enlistment during which 189 applicants were enlisted for placement through a federal agency, it finally became necessary for the College to negotiate camp sites and working opportunities, and eventually, to provide most of the supervisory staff. Despite this improvisation, these camps served neighborhoods as valuable reservoirs of much needed harvest labor. "We who used the young college men and women from this labor camp were very well pleased" is a small part of a favorable statement by the farmer–chairman of the local committee with which one of our camp projects was arranged.

With the 1942 experiment as a background, a Brooklyn College faculty committee, considerably augmented by other interested staff members, has been working since early October to formulate an effective program for 1943. We believe we shall be able to multiply our 1942 corps of student workers several times. In consultation with State and Federal agencies concerned with planning for emergency farm labor, we expect to provide adequate preliminary orientation to interested students, and to make careful selection among applicants so as to provide a force of physically fit, and serious minded workers. From our staff, we expect to enlist a group of men and women well qualified to serve as camp directors and as interpreters who will be able to effect the adjustments necessary in adapting green city youth to the strangeness of the very different rural work situations.
One primary objective in all this planning is kept to the fore: to provide as large a number as possible of able-bodied volunteers to serve in this present crisis on the food production front. Toward this goal, two conclusions were early reached (See report on "A college farm labor experiment". October 1942. Brooklyn College distribution. Also, as Appendix B, Annual Report of President Harry D. Gideonse.)

1) Our students can, for the most part, serve best as emergency workers in fruit and vegetable regions. N. Y. City is within short distance of many thousands of productive acres devoted to this type of farming. For peak harvest needs, such farming requires the recruiting of much larger numbers of transient workers than general, dairy farming. Moreover, most of the harvest tasks can be performed fairly effectively by green city youth.

2) The College should maintain a continuous connection as sponsor and administrator of such work camps, both to guard the interests and well-being of the student workers, and to make this summer experience as educationally valuable as possible. To this end, our plan contains certain distinctive educational features, which, in effect, are designed to provide in each work camp opportunities for summer school class work and credit on college level. During these war years, the purpose of the educational features is ancillary to that of providing food production labor; the educational features are part of the camp set-up by which more effective group living and farm work as well can be effected. We believe, however, that on a long-term view for postwar planning, these educational features will prove to have permanent value in themselves.

Educational features for orientation and for summer work.

Federal agencies planning for the use of students as emergency farm workers
recommend that careful attention to preliminary orientation be given, both in the way of informational preparation to provide advance adjustment to country living, and in actual toughening, practical work. In advance of any announced program along these lines, we are projecting three lines of advance orientation.

Recruiting and selection. By meetings, by special assignments in Speech, English, Art. class topics for essays, talks, and posters, and by individual interviews, together with reference to College personnel files, we hope to interest a wide range of informed and patriotic recruits.

Orientation meetings. Through a special course of about 15 lecture and discussion periods, conducted by staff members with country and farm background, we plan to prepare our volunteers in a general way for the kind work they will be doing and the environment, social and otherwise, under which they will be living.

Practical field experience. It will be highly desirable if provision can be made for at least one actual weekend under camp conditions, either at some agricultural college or at a camp in a farm community. In advance of anything definite along this line, we shall be able with our campus facilities to give some city substitute through practical work in our experimental garden, and through visits to our animal rooms which now house a number of farm animals. All three of these just described are designed for orientation, not to develop skills. Each farmer is likely to have his own particular methods of doing things which he will wish to have used. It was one of the advantages of our student group last summer that they did not have their own ways of doing things in advance but that they were more than usually intelligent and teachable as beginners.
Summer School Credit Courses.

In the report of our 1942 experience above referred to, a general sketch was given of the possibilities of such work camps for the presentation of planned college-course work. From our experience, and from general analysis, it was pointed out that enough spare time could be found to provide a respectable semester’s work, and that our students were definitely not too fatigued, even to work more than one evening per week. Two types of course work are indicated as specially adapted for such presentation: (1) standard credit courses in such fields as mathematics, foreign language, literature, and others which do not demand extensive libraries or equipment for effective presentation; (2) special courses devised to correlate with the daily experience of life and work in rural communities. For the first type, two pre-conditions would be necessary: the enrollment of camp groups of the same college grade, and the staffing of such camps by teachers qualified both in the subject and also, not less important, in group leadership. Such camp groups would be, in effect, regular summer school classes, transplanted to the country to do farm work, but given the opportunity to advance their educational training at the same time.

For the second type of course, also for college credit, we have at present two specific fields of work in mind, Rural Sociology, and Farm Biology. The syllabus for the first is being worked up cooperatively by representatives of several departments. Under the heading of sociology, it is planned to present the course as an interpretation of daily experiences in the fields of sociology, history, economics, government, and American literature. Offered as a course without pre-requisite, this can be given to camp groups comprising a wide range of student grades.
Farm Biology is designed to furnish a similar correlation of the daily work experience in the fields and of group living having to do with foods. Every hour of work will provide 'laboratory' experience to the observing student, as in soils, kinds of crop plants, weeds, plant culture and nutrition, insect enemies, and fungal diseases. Every farm will be rich in animal material involving invertebrates, and vertebrates, in the breeds of farm animals and their genetics, their feeding and nutrition, parasites and pathology, etc. For the scientific interpretation, the development of "systematized, positive knowledge", from the daily experience, a wealth of good textbook material can be obtained in the form of free or low-cost government farm bulletins.

Compared to the standard laboratory and classroom biology course, such a "farm biology" will differ chiefly in two respects: its observational material will comprise a series of common, living, economic forms instead of the usual classic, often preserved specimens which must be used in the laboratory conditions. Equipment can be kept to a minimum; a hand lens and kitchen utensils, plus a few easily improvised items.

The rural sociology is designed for presentation only under the rural scene, but a preliminary try-out of an adaptation of the farm biology is scheduled as a war service course during the spring term at Brooklyn College. While the extensive and intensive exposure to country biological material is of course out of the question, the syllabus planned will provide for the use of the same kinds of common everyday biological material and for the acquisition of biologic knowledge about them through simple but accurate methods of examination and experimentation. For example, in our animal rooms, we have at present a sheep, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice, not to forget one "wild animal", an oppossum. With a pen of chickens added and a pair of small pigs, students will be able to acquire some familiarity with the behavior and feeding practices of farm
animals. In our greenhouse, we shall first raise a variety of crop plant seedlings and larger plants, as well as concomitant weeds. When spring advances, there will be sessions of actual digging, soil fertilizing, planting, weeding, and cultivating. For special animal studies, market chickens will furnish us dissecting material, while live chickens, pigeons, rats, will give us ample opportunity for nutrition experiments.