

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS IN THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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The community college is a distinctly American institution. It is based on the worth and importance of the individual. It is designed to provide an opportunity for personal accomplishment. It serves people and in serving people, it serves the community.

The community college is a new institution. It derives its character from diversity and its capacity for change, yet these qualities make agonizing its search for identity. It must constantly resist the temptation to be all things to all people for in so doing it could become nothing.

Despite its problems, or perhaps because of them, the community college has a vitality that is refreshing. There is strength in its constant search for effectiveness. There is dynamic energy to it. There is enthusiasm. And it is making solid accomplishments in education.

As the concept has evolved in Washington, the community college is essentially a two-year institution that offers a broad array of post-high school educational programs, both job-related and academic.

Its admissions policy is symbolized by the "Open Door"--open to all who seek its services regardless of their educational attainment, economic background, social standing or age.

Its orientation is strongly local. It tailors its offerings to the needs of the people within its district, it reaches out to take education to them, it is attuned to the manpower needs of the local economy.

Community colleges are mandated by law to offer comprehensive programs including:

1. Transfer programs providing the first two years of liberal arts and pre-professional studies; the graduate can transfer to a four-year college to complete the baccalaureate degree.
2. Occupational programs of varying length and kind; the graduate can find employment in the area of his training.

3. General education; a contribution to the education of all students that is relevant to their lives as citizens, parents and individuals.
4. Remedial or foundation programs, providing the opportunity for students who initially are not equipped to start transfer or occupational programs to prepare themselves for this goal.
5. Continuing or adult education primarily on an evening or part-time basis, related to vocational, avocational or cultural objectives.
6. Community services providing lectures, concerts and other activities for the community; making the facilities and staff of the college available to the community.
7. Guidance and counseling to help individuals make personal occupational and educational decisions.

Today we are concerned solely with the occupational programs and more specifically with the agri-business and agricultural technician programs offered in this State and continuing or adult education as it applies to agriculture.

Any occupational programs should (1) provide the graduate with employability in the field for which he has been trained, with only a minimum of additional on-the-job training. It should (2) provide the graduate with the potential to adapt to forthcoming technological change and to advance in his field and (3) it should make a contribution to the general education of the individual.

Vocational programs cost money and utilize tax dollars. True we have involvement of federal funds, still tax dollars, but this source represents less than 10% of the total cost. As a result, any program must be supported by tax dollars and tuition or fee charges made of the students.

In establishing any new programs there must be a firm documentation of placement opportunities for those completing the designed curriculum. To further assure the success of any program a lay advisory committee is involved in documenting the existing need, in developing the curriculum, in following up graduates and evaluating the program.

At the present time, about one-third of the community college effort is directed toward occupational programs. This vocational effort included in 1968-69, 639 full time preparatory students in agriculture and 1263 supplementary or part time students. In considering the place of

agriculture in the economy of the State of Washington, perhaps one should question the adequacy of such an enrollment. It seems to me that it should be much higher. May I conclude this portion by saying that any member of the State Staff or the administrators of any of the colleges are ready and willing to consider establishment of programs with a documented need for graduates in any phase of agriculture whether it be in production, processing or service areas. Such programs may be either preparatory for entry employment or supplementary training for upgrading individuals already employed.

What are the types of agricultural programs that are being offered in the community colleges throughout the state? Time doesn't allow a full discussion of each so with no regard to relative importance I will discuss a few in some detail, make a few comments about others and merely list the remainder. This is with the exception of the Adult Farm Management program which is a continuing education program that will be discussed in some detail later.

In the summer of 1965 the Northwest Implement Dealers contacted the Vocational Agriculture office in Olympia expressing a need for individuals trained in Farm Machinery and Equipment Service. Such a program was established at Yakima Valley College in the fall of 1966. This is a program designed to prepare students for a position in operating, servicing or repairing farm equipment. In addition to basic training in mechanics, students receive training in new and specialized farm equipment. About half of the training is in the classroom and half in the laboratory or in the field. Students are placed with local implement dealers during the summer between the first and second years of training to gain practical experience and become acquainted with the sales aspect of farm implements. Current enrollment includes 21 first-year students and 12 second year-students. There were 8 completions in 1968 and 10 in 1969.

Columbia Basin College has had an Agri-Chemical Business program in operation for the past 3-1/2 years. This is a 2-1/2 year program with options in Fertilizer-Farm Chemical Supply, Food Quality Control or Technical Farming. Along with six quarters of on-campus study, students are required to fulfill a full year of on-the-job training which is accomplished in two separate spring and summer sessions.

In the 3-1/2 years since establishment, 47 freshmen have enrolled for full-time training. Six students have been graduated and 23 are currently enrolled. Of those leaving the program, 4 have entered the Armed Forces, 5 have transferred to 4-year institutions and 6 have been employed by the industry. This means that only three of the entering

47 have actually abandoned the program.

Spokane Community College started an Agri-business program in 1968 with options of Grain, Feed and Seed or Fertilizer. A training pattern similar to that at Lower Columbia is followed. It is interesting to note that there are more training stations available with industry than there are of students to take the positions. Twelve students completed this placement experience last summer. Similar types of Agri-business programs are also offered at Big Bend and Wenatchee Valley College.

Fort Steilacoom Community College started an Animal Technician program last fall. This is a program designed to prepare students for work with practicing veterinarians. It was planned with an advisory committee of practicing veterinarians, is operating under the auspices of the Washington Veterinary Association and will be accredited by the American Veterinary Association.

Programs in Ornamental Horticulture are offered at Bellevue, Clark, Edmonds and Seattle Community Colleges.

Forestry programs are offered at Centralia, Green River, Lower Columbia, Peninsula, Shoreline and Wenatchee.

Grays Harbor and Peninsula Colleges offer programs in Fisheries and Game Management.

Farm Management and Record Analysis Program

In most industries, at least those dealing with the production of products as contrasted to those dealing in services, the personnel are organized into the areas of management, production and sales. The work of the farmer encompasses these three same areas except that the farmer himself is management, is in charge of production and is responsible for sales. Over the years agricultural research has emphasized production. Training programs through both the Cooperative Extension Service and Vocational Education have emphasized production. As a result, the need for assistance to the production farmer has become more acute in the area of farm business management, records and farm organization.

Farm Management and Record Analysis is a program in continuing education for farmers. Credit for the origination and development of the type of program currently offered in six areas of this state rightfully rests with the State of Minnesota. It is a program designed to help the farmer in his decision-making management problems. It aids the farmer in securing information and records about the farm business and in analyzing and interpreting this information for sound management decisions

The objectives of this program are to improve the income of farm operators in a given area by (1) instruction in the keeping and analysis of complete farm records to secure basic facts about individual farm businesses, and (2) instruction in the application of business management principles to the organizations and operation of the farm business using the basic data provided by farm records. As a result of the program the individual should have (1) a complete farm record book, (2) a report each year analyzing records in areas of efficiency, (3) aid in interpreting these records toward reaching family goals, and (4) improvements in financial progress of the farm.

The program is addressed primarily to farm families. The very nature of farm management and the farms involved determine the content, methods and procedures of the program.

Enrollment is on a per farm family basis, including both husband and wife. Formal classes are usually scheduled one night per month for a three hour session. On-the-farm consultant visits are scheduled monthly by the instructor for the first-year enrollees. The number of on-the-farm visits are reduced slightly each year as the need decreases. Originally the program was scheduled for a three-year program but experience has indicated that farm families involved were not willing to be shunted to a seminar group after that period of time. As a consequence,

the program is now organized on the following basis:

- I Benefits and methods of record keeping and analysis
- II Interpretation of records and improvement in farm efficiency
- III Interpretation of records and a study of general agricultural economic trends
- IV Interpretation of accumulated records, along with other available information, as a basis for making long-range plans and studying alternatives for farm organization.

After the fourth year, those interested will be placed in a seminar group with the opportunity to be included in the analysis summary and interpretation.

To be able to reach the maximum number of farm families, we are still hopeful of reverting to the original plans of a three-year formalized program followed by the seminar group. In fact, one of the instructors is moving in this direction in enrolling families for 1970.

In establishing programs, an effort has been made to enroll farms in any given area with the greatest possible degree of commonality in enterprises. This serves to increase the value of the analysis summary by giving a larger number of enterprise data for averages and comparisons.

This program was initiated, in its present form, with twenty farms in 1966. There are 275 farm families enrolled for 1969 and this should increase to about 350 for 1970. All farm records are held confidential by the instructor and the record books are seen by only the farmer and the instructor. The information from each farm record is transferred to coded computer data sheets which are processed in Wisconsin. Tables in the analysis summary are expressed as averages or on a per head or per acre basis to further protect individual record identity.