

In New York State each teachers college is allowed a certain number of freshmen. This number is fixed on the basis of an estimate of the number of teachers that will be needed four years later. I cannot believe in the wisdom of such a system. Had we at our college selected freshmen on that basis in the fall of 1929, they would have graduated from the four-year course in June, 1933. If we had selected the correct number, about half of them would have been without positions when they graduated. Now if we had selected a fixed quota of freshmen in the fall of 1933, the chances are that there would be a great shortage of teachers in 1937. Our society is not static enough to select freshmen on a quota basis for a demand that will exist four years hence. I much prefer to make this selection on the quality basis. I do not say for my college that I want 500 freshmen in the fall of 1935; but I do say that I want those who have character, health, ability to do college work, and a desire to teach. This number may be less than 500 or it may be more, but I prefer to take those who meet the quality classification rather than a certain number to meet a fixed quota.

Furthermore, we must be much wiser that we are now before we can select intelligently for a quota. A common standard of selection that is used takes students from the upper twenty-five per cent according to academic marks. I think this is bad. It excludes from teaching a large, competent, socially-minded group that probably would make better teachers than the academic-minded, upper twenty-five per cent.

No quotas for me. We need many more teachers, and I am much in favor of the middle fifty per cent as compared with either extreme.

GEORGE WILLARD FRASIER

The best school of discipline in home-family life is God's own method of training the young; and homes are very much what women make them.—SAMUEL SMILES.

CO-ORDINATION IN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

*From the Point of View of the
Professional School*

JUDGED by the criterion of timeliness alone, the program committee of the Association of Virginia Colleges has chosen wisely in selecting for this conference the problem of coordination. Particularly is this so since the program covers the whole range from admission to college, through the problem of curriculum studies, to graduation.

Two questions naturally arise, the answers to which it is to be hoped will be found in the program as a whole: first, how the concept coordination is related to such other concepts as articulation, integration, unification, and standardization, and second, how coordination itself can actually be specifically furthered by the discussions of this gathering.

*Educational Evolution in Virginia Naturally
Leads to Isolation Rather Than
Coordination*

When Dewey wrote his little monograph, *School and Society*, in 1900, he took the position that "all waste is due to isolation." In his discussion he called attention to the application of the principle to aims in American education, to the curriculum which has in the main been made up of disintegrated subjects, and more particularly to various parts of the school system. It seems important to develop briefly at this point the historical background of our present Virginia situation with reference to the evolution of the various institutions that go to make up what may be called the Virginia school system.

Something over a hundred years ago the State university was first established, the capstone of the public school system. It was

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not until 1870 that the impulse for tax-supported public education brought about the establishment of the public elementary school system. For several decades following, the intermediate link between the State university and the elementary schools consisted of the private academy which by this time had come to be conceived as a college preparatory institution. Particularly through the stimulus of the May campaign of 1905, public high schools began to develop and soon dominated the secondary field, preparing pupils for work of college grade, and also serving a growing group of pupils who were not interested in a college education. The academy in many communities served as the nucleus of the new high school and in quite a number of other communities expanded its work to the college level so that several of our private and public higher institutions are indebted to the academy movement for their beginnings.

The other higher institutions in Virginia, both state and non-state, grew up quite independently of the three-step public school system and were made permanent through legislation. This steady growth has now resulted in our having in the state nine accredited state supported higher institutions for the education of whites. In addition to these there are twelve accredited non-state collegiate institutions and eleven non-state standard junior colleges, bringing the grand total of higher institutions for whites to thirty-two.

In this period of the last fifty years, and in part because of the way that the Virginia educational system had evolved, there naturally resulted a good deal of competition, some of which has been unfortunate. At times in the Virginia Legislature we have seen the advocates of support for the public elementary school system pitted against the advocates of support for the higher state institutions. At other times it has been evident that the non-state and state institutions of higher learning have been working

non-sympathetically, and more or less to the disadvantage of satisfactory service to the youth of the state. Perhaps the recent discussion concerning the creation of a public liberal arts college for women has had its influence in that direction.

In this period of economic strain, it seems particularly vital that the Virginia Association of Colleges has taken under consideration the study of the problem of desirable coordination and cooperation among the higher institutions. Certainly at no time has it been more important to present a common front against those who are unconcerned about, and even antagonistic toward, the cause of education.

In this connection, it is fine that Virginia has had the splendid example of such an educational statesman as Dr. Alderman, who some ten years ago at a meeting of the Virginia Education Association in Norfolk—as on other occasions—spoke most convincingly on the concept that all the educational institutions in the state, both private and public, are branches of the same organism and must therefore cooperate fully. Two years ago at the meeting of the Virginia Association of Colleges, Dr. Hall spoke of the matter of more complete articulation and integration of the three major units of the Virginia public school system—elementary, secondary, and high—showing how each depended upon the other. At the same conference Dr. Burruss called attention to the unnecessary overlapping of work and corresponding waste that was then characteristic of our higher institutions, and made reference to the fact that there were some experiments of helpful cooperation between state and non-state colleges going on at that time in Virginia. No doubt there are many such to be found by investigation, and no doubt there could be much closer cooperation than is at present the case.

*External and Compulsory Coordination vs.
Voluntary and Cooperative Coordination*

It is evident that when the term coordination is analyzed with reference to a state system there are two general types which come to mind. On the one hand external coordination may be brought about through the State Board of Education, through accrediting and examining agencies, Federal boards and departments, and so forth. On the other hand, institutions themselves may in large degree forestall much unnecessary external coordination by voluntary cooperation among themselves. These two phases of coordination will be discussed briefly with reference particularly to graduation and to the professional type of school.

If one turns to the three professions, law, medicine, and teaching, one finds a tendency in Virginia toward a period of two years of pre-professional training. Whereas formerly there were no requirements of collegiate work for law students in Virginia, we now find that one is not eligible to the bar examinations until one presents two years of work beyond the high school or its equivalent. Perhaps, for the time being, a good many substitutions will be found for this requirement, but undoubtedly it offers a beginning in the further increase of standards of both general and legal preparation. In the medical profession we find that the requirements include not less than two years of pre-medical work but not less than four years in a Class A medical college. In both of these professions, state examining bodies provide significant additional hurdles.

As regards teaching, we find that in the last ten years the State Board of Education has raised the standards for new members of the teaching profession so that those entering the elementary field must have the equivalent of two years of college work in a rather definitely prescribed curriculum. High school teachers must have not less than four years of college education, with the work so chosen that concentration in given fields permits a student to be certificated to teach specified subjects. The teach-

ing profession has not as yet felt it necessary to put up the final hurdle of examinations such as those now taken by applicants who wish to practice law and medicine. Nationally, however, as judged by the National Survey of Teacher Education, we find a tendency to consider the first certificate of a young teacher as a trial certificate or a provisional certificate to be made permanent only after successful experience. Also in Virginia, as elsewhere, there is persistent discussion of the desirability of a year of supervised apprenticeship following the four-year period of teacher education. In some states there is a very laudable tendency in the direction of such professionalization of the work in preparation for teaching that all certificated teachers will have had specialized education in the procedures and techniques of teaching, comparable with the professional training of the lawyer and physician, though somewhat less rigid.

With reference to teacher education and to the external control of standards, we find ourselves more fortunate in Virginia than in some neighboring states in that the details of the degree curricula have not been rigidly prescribed by the State Board of Education. This undoubtedly makes voluntary cooperation much more feasible and necessary. At the same time, it would be unwise to overlook the fact that various institutions of higher education in Virginia in part or in all of their work find their standards subject to review by the American Association of Teachers Colleges, the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the General Education Board, the State Board of Education, the Federal Board for Vocational Education, and so forth.

When one turns to the problem of voluntary or internal coordination, one finds a great dearth of available information about current practice. It is to be hoped that before another session of the Virginia Association of Colleges, data may be collected

which will indicate the actual extent of, and the possibility of extending, feasible and desirable cooperation.

When one peruses a considerable number of college catalogs, he finds that in the matter of grading, certain procedures have become fairly standard. The literal system has displaced the numerical system in most schools, although a few Virginia institutions still carry the older types of grading. Great numbers of schools throughout the nation, and a considerable number in Virginia, are now setting the standard for graduation as the equivalent of, or practically the equivalent of, a grade of C. In other words, there has been steady and valuable standardization in the direction of improving the product of our institutions through the effort to prevent the just-passing student from graduating.

Referring more specifically to the preparation of teachers, one finds that in the state of Maryland outside control is brought about: just as a standard is set for admission to teacher training institutions, so also a standard of certification is set whereby only the upper four-fifths of the graduating class may be certificated. A step in this direction prevents many of the weakest members of a group securing work before their stronger fellows on the basis of political preference. In some of our higher institutions in Virginia, student teaching is proving a means of elimination from graduation and entrance into the profession of some of those students who show a certain scholastic ability in the classroom but who lack teaching ability.

Gradually the comprehensive examination appears to be coming into vogue in many higher institutions. In some of them it has been used at the end of the junior college period, in others at or near the end of the senior college period. It is to be hoped that Virginia colleges will give serious consideration to this type of procedure, seeking data from institutions which have

used it long enough to have seen its effect upon the product.

In summary, one may say that as for graduation from professional schools in Virginia, there has been very little actual coordination in requirements, although there is some improvement of the standards of scholarship, at least as determined by the single item of grading. Much more may and should be done by the institutions themselves in emphasizing this item at the same time that other more important matters such as physical and mental health, professional outlook, and personality may, if not quantitatively, at least qualitatively, be set as standards for leaving college and entering the profession.

Constructive Recommendations

1. In order that the members of the Virginia Association of Colleges may be better informed about the work of all the institutions of the state, there should be prepared at once and made generally available, a brief, accurate, sketch of the evolution of the Virginia school system, including short sketches of the higher institutions and a statistical picture of the work of various institutions and of higher education as a whole.

2. An even more important service would be the setting up of a committee by the Association which would collect important data bearing upon all types of cooperation and coordination between the various elements of the Virginia school system, and make this the basis for a report at the next annual session.

WALTER J. GIFFORD

WHEN NOT TO CHANGE

Changes are worth making only if there is a reasonable prospect that students may be better advised and guided, professors more effective, and education better served. If these functions are performed satisfactorily, there is no point to making a change.

—WILLIAM F. RUSSELL.