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PROVIDENCE COLLEGE
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Comments regarding the Army Specialized Training Program.

I - CURRICULUM

A study of the Army Specialized Training Reserve Program in the light of our experiences with the Army Specialized Training Program reveals the fact that the chief points of difficulty in the A.S.T.P. curricula have been appreciated and have been adjusted in the curricula of the A.S.T.F.P.

The following points may be mentioned as especially significant:

1. The sixth course in the A.S.T.P. curriculum seemed to make the program too heavy and to prevent sufficient time for the adequate treatment of the other courses. This has been remedied in the B-60 curriculum by the five-course program of the first and second terms, and by a further focusing of effort in the four-course program of the third term, as also in N-10 and N-20.
2. Chemistry in the first term of the A.S.T.P. was without a laboratory period. Students found it extremely difficult to grasp the significance of theoretic material without personal laboratory experience, even though demonstration and visual aid were employed as a part of instructional method. The B-60 curriculum solves this problem by including a laboratory period in each of the terms in which chemistry is taught.
3. The relation of mathematics to physics and chemistry required planning in the A.S.T.P., as certain phases of mathematics are prerequisite for a proper understanding of instruction in the sciences. We solved the problem by teaching algebra and trigonometry simultaneously throughout the first term and by giving a coordinate treatment of mathematical and scientific materials. The B-60 curriculum adjusts these difficulties in the same manner.

The problem of those who were insufficiently prepared in mathematics is also cared for through the N-10 and N-20 curricula.

4. In American history the A.S.T.P seemed rather ambitious in its endeavor to include within restricted limits of instruction all phases of history, such as military, political, economic, cultural, as found in all periods, and this together with American government. In the A.S.T.R. curricula the scope is reduced and the objective clarified.

5. The series of courses in geography offered difficulties, especially in reference to geopolitics. In planning out the details of this series, our department consulted both with Clarke University and with the Military Academy at West Point. The A.S.T.P. gave a necessary stimulus to the field of geography that has led to the publication of materials which should prove very helpful in the A.S.T.R.P.

6. In English our department had assigned military correspondence to the third term, that is, after general work in composition. The Army examinations included it from the first term, and therefore the scores on these examinations were a little lower than they would have otherwise been. The matter was rectified in the last session, but the program was interrupted before examinations could register results.

The additional hours allowed for English in the A.S.T.R. curricula are very desirable.

II - OTHER POINTS OF COMMENT

1. The operation of the program was controlled from a master-plan which incorporated the solution of practical problems and systematized the whole work. Schedules of sections were taken from this plan, and each trainee received a copy of his schedule. Thus on the first day of a term everything went into immediate and complete operation.

2. Departments worked out syllabi on a day-unit or week-unit basis so as to insure coverage of subject matter within restrictions of time.

3. Quizzes and examinations were departmental, except for a certain latitude in English and history. In the second session, when it became permissible, the final examinations of the Army were used in whole or in part as final examinations of the College. This proved successful. It

likewise simplified the dual system of final examinations, and allowed extra time for instruction at the close of the term.

4. Detailed records of grades and remarks were kept throughout the terms by a monthly system of reports and information was made available at more frequent intervals for use by the Classification Board. Final grades for a term were composite marks for all work of the term, and were not merely those of final examinations. Records were kept in duplicate, one copy in the files of Local Headquarters, the other in the files of the College.

5. In regard to the teaching load, our experience indicates that the fifteen-hours a week standard set by national and regional associations is really well founded, especially with classes of approximately thirty students. When courses require a constant correction of assignments and quizzes, twelve hours becomes a full load, for there is a continual turnover of 120 papers. Such paper work seems unavoidable if the professor is to be helpful to the individual and if the student is to be apprized of his difficulties and of the true status of his progress. Our experience confirms our prewar norm of twelve hours as full time for teaching academic courses.

6. In regard to Army-College relations, our experience shows that the two elements can be harmoniously united for smooth and efficient operation. The mutual spirit, shared equally by Major Howard B. Smith, Commandant, and his officers and by the College, made the work of the A.S.T.P. one of highly unified cooperation.

7. The College deeply appreciates the cordial relations which it has always enjoyed with Headquarters First Service Command, Major General Sherman Miles, Commanding, and Colonel Morton Smith, Director of A.S.T. Division.

8. Our experience with the A.S.T.P. may be summed up by saying that, although the work was intense and stream-lined, we have all been most happy to participate in it.

For the President:

Arthur H. Chandler, O.P.
Dean

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