

FROM FIRST REPORT TO BOARD - SEPTEMBER 15, 1908

PURPOSE AND SCOPE: In any first report it may not be out of place to begin by noting briefly what I consider to be the purpose and scope of the institution which we are establishing.

(1) It should train teachers for both graded and ungraded schools, but special effort should be made to train for rural schools. By making a specialty of this a distinctive character will be given to the work not only as regards our own state but also as regards the country at large.

(2) It should give special prominence to practical nature study and agriculture, and to domestic and manual arts. It should train specialists in these branches, who can go out into the schools of the state and fill the places, that are now waiting to be filled, with competent teachers. This would be another decidedly distinctive feature of our work in this state, as no Virginia school is now offering such training for white women, and teachers of these subjects have to be brought from other states.

(3) The school should run throughout the year, enabling teachers in service to attend, and helping students with limited means or limited time to complete their training under the best conditions. Such a plan would also use the plant to the best advantage, and would be another distinctive feature for this school so far as this state is concerned.

(4) The school should give "training school certificates" like the normal training departments of the high schools after two years work; but it should go farther and at the end of <sup>3</sup>third year give the "first grade teachers' certificate", and with the completion of a fourth year the "professional teachers' certificate".

(5) It should give education at the lowest possible cost, and should as far as possible enable every worthy person to complete one of its courses of study no matter how limited may be her means.

(6) It should be planned to eventually accommodate 1,000 students, with boarding accommodations for about 3/4 of that number.

CALENDAR: The school year should be divided into four "quarters" of twelve weeks each, as for example the following for the year 1909-10:

Oct. 1-Dec. 23; Autumn Quarter.  
Jan. 3-Mch. 26; Winter Quarter.  
Mch. 28-June 17; Spring Quarter  
June 20-July 28; First Term, Summer Quarter.  
July 29-Sept. 3; Second Term, Summer Quarter.

The fiscal year of the institution should be fixed from July 1st to June 30 of the following year.

COURSES OF STUDY: While I am not at this time fully prepared to suggest a definite course, or courses, of study, the following general statements and tentative schedule is offered for the purpose of setting the matter before us. Some of the considerations which should govern the formulation of our courses are:

(1) We must take graduates from the elementary schools with perhaps no high school training. While this is somewhat deplorable, it seems necessary at present, as is the case at most state normal schools.

(2) The students should be at least 16 years old for admission.

(3) Persons prepared for advanced standing should be allowed to enter the classes for which they are in the judgment of the faculty prepared, each case to be decided on its own merits.

(4) The work must be adapted to both persons with teaching experience and those without it.

(5) The work should prepare, (a) persons with no teachers' certificate for one, (b) teachers with a low grade teachers' certificate for a higher grade one, and (c) teachers with a first grade certificate for a professional certificate.

(6) Special courses should be offered for persons desiring to prepare themselves for teaching special subjects such as nature study, agriculture, domestic science, household and manual arts.

(7) The courses must contain sufficient subject-matter, but non-essential material must be carefully eliminated; and the normal, or "method", side must always be given prominence, since the school is to be primarily a training school for teachers, and an ordinary secondary school of the academic type.

(8) The courses must not be too long, each year should as far as possible be made a complete unit, leading to some sort of certificate.

While altogether tentative, the following is offered as a course of study in some degree meeting the above requirements; the numbers following the subjects indicating the number of fifty-minute periods per week to be given to the particular subject through the quarter (twelve weeks).

TRAINING SCHOOLS: Provision should be made for all students to observe the work of skilled teachers in all branches in both graded and ungraded schools, and to do practice teaching therein, under the direction of the skilled teachers and the instructor in pedagogy. For this feature of our work, it will be best to use existing schools as far as possible. The graded school of the town should be utilized, if possible, and also one or more ungraded schools in the county near the town. This is necessary in order to provide the proper environment and give the best results.

If satisfactory arrangements for this cannot be made with the local school authorities, it will become necessary to provide a training school on the school grounds, as a normal school cannot train teachers without the proper opportunities for observation and practice teaching.

EXPERIMENTAL FARM, GARDENS, ETC.: For the department of nature study and agriculture, a portion of the school properly should be set aside for use as a small experimental farm, to be conducted along the most modern and approved scientific lines, under the direction of the instructor in agriculture. Such a farm would serve for the observation not only of the students but also of the citizens of the surrounding country. Provision should be made for observational study, and also practice as far as may be practicable with women students, in agriculture, gardening, horticulture, floriculture, poultry-raising, bee-culture, and dairying.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS: Bed-rooms, dining-hall and laundry facilities must eventually be provided for about 800 students. Dormitory buildings, each accommodating about 50 persons, should be provided for about 500 of this number, and cottages, accommodating about 15 persons each, should be furnished for the remaining 300. A number of advantages are to be obtained by the "cottage system".

EXPENSES OF STUDENTS: The necessary expenses of students should be kept as low as possible. Tuition must be free to state students as provided by the act of legislature creating the school.

BUILDINGS: The following are some of the general considerations which should govern the planning of buildings:

- (1) Plans should be made for the ultimate accommodation of 1,000 students, about 3/4 of these boarding on the school grounds.
- (2) The group system of buildings rather than the large central building system is recommended as lending itself more readily to our conditions of expansion, and also as providing against fire loss.
- (3) With the possible exception of the "main" building, the buildings composing the group should be limited to two stories above the ground, and basements should not be included except where found necessary.
- (4) All of the buildings should be heated from one central heating plant, properly located, as a means of protection, economy and convenience.
- (5) The placing of the buildings on the grounds should be planned with care, and the grounds should be carefully laid out from the beginning with reference to the future growth of the school.
- (6) The buildings should be substantial and modern in all respects, but simple and appropriate in design, distinctive in type as far as practicable, and with due regard for economy in construction; and the same type of architecture must in all events be maintained throughout the group.

The following is a statement of the probable required space in a complete plant arranged to accommodate the above number of students; and a plan for the distribution of this space in the various buildings of the group is also suggested.