



A STUDY OF THE MALE GRADUATES OF THE VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY: THEIR PRE-INSTITUTE EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Ralph A. Benton

Associate Professor
Agricultural Industries
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois

It is an established fact that each succeeding year sees an increasing number of high school graduates entering college. Many enter college with no specific goal, lose interest and drop out. Others do not have the ability or are poorly prepared and become scholastic casualties. Still others do not begin college at all. Of these, some are capable of doing college work but are not interested and others, who would like to attend, cannot finance four years of college for a Bachelor's Degree. However, most of these young people recognize the need for additional training beyond high school in some specific field or work to obtain employment or more suitable employment at better pay.

Both state and national studies have shown the need for and recommend the immediate establishment of area vocational and technical schools throughout the country for two-year post high school programs.

One such type of educational program and physical plant has been in operation for more than ten years at Southern Illinois University. A two-year degree of Associate in Business or Associate in Technology is obtainable. A certificate is awarded to those students successfully completing a one-year vocational or technical course.

The purpose of this study was to gather and analyze data on the male graduates of the Southern Illinois University Vocational-Technical Institute in all curricula covering the six year period of 1955-60. The data included certain pre-institute experiences and the achievement of each boy in high school and also in the V.T.I.

The information gathered from this study might be helpful in counseling high school seniors on vocational choices, particularly those who want additional training but choose to take a four-year college curriculum.

Furthermore, information was desired specifically on farm boys who had completed work in the Vocational-Technical Institute. Since there are no agricultural courses of any kind offered by the V.T.I. at this time, this study also may provide evidence regarding the need for developing curricula in agriculture and in agriculturally-related businesses.

The records of 575 male graduates were usable for this study. They came from seventy-two counties in Illinois as well as from out of state. Fifty-four percent of them came from within a fifty-mile radius of the campus. Thirty-eight

percent of the graduates came from high schools with less than 400 enrollment, and 41.7 percent were from high schools with an enrollment of 600 and over.

There are seventeen different curricula in the Vocational-Technical Institute, and of these the Electronics curriculum was the most popular followed by Machine Tool and then Automotive. Boys from the smaller high schools appeared to prefer the Automotive curriculum. Only in Machine Drafting and in Retailing did the larger number come from the larger high schools.

All of the V.T.I. graduates had taken English in high school to the amount of 6.78 semesters. Likewise 98.8 percent had taken Mathematics for an average of four semesters. Of the science courses 65.9 percent had taken Biology in high school; 64.2 percent, General Science; 27.9 percent, Physics; and 25.0 percent, Chemistry. Rank in their graduating class in high school was available for 74.0 percent of the group and it was the 58.1 percentile from the top, or more precisely, the third quartile.

In the area of vocational subjects taken in high school, 61.7 percent of the V.T.I. graduates had

taken Industrial Arts, 24.8 per cent had vocational agriculture, and 70.1 per cent had taken some commercial subjects.

Of the 575 V.T.I. graduates studied, 181 lived on farms. Of this number 131, or 72.4 percent, had taken one or more semesters of vocational agriculture in high school. Slightly over one-half of the farm boys graduated from high schools with an enrollment of less than 400. They ranked at the 57.1 percentile from the top of their high school graduating class.

English was the only high school subject all the farm boys had taken, averaging 6.84 semesters each. They averaged 4.20 semesters in the sciences, 3.97 semesters in vocational agriculture, and 3.82 semesters of mathematics.

The Electronics curriculum in the V.T.I. was most popular with the farm-reared boys. Automotive was second, and the Machine Tool curriculum third in number enrolled.

The records of the farm boys who did not take vocational agriculture in high school showed that they had taken a relatively large amount of Industrial Arts and Mechanics instead. Their choice of curriculum in the V.T.I. reflected this interest.

In comparing the grades earned in general education subjects and in technical subjects in both high school and at the V.T.I., it was found that the graduates did not do quite as well in college as in high school. The average grade in the general subjects in high school was a straight "C" and at the V.T.I. it was a "C-."

In the technical subjects it was a "B-" at the high school level and a "C" in college. The overall high school average was a "C+" and a straight "C" at the Vocational-Technical Institute.

NEWS and NOTES

Mr. M. Van Elswyk, Jr. is on leave from Fresno State College during the 1962-63 school year doing graduate work at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

Dr. Burton W. DeVeau of Ohio University recently completed a study for the Southeastern Ohio Regional Council to determine the functions of the Council. The purpose of the study was to determine how the Council can fit into the pattern of groups currently engaged in activities to encourage the economic development of the eight county area represented by the Council. Included in the study were recommendations as to what functions will aid the Council in becoming more effective in achieving its goals.

The Council gave a grant of \$2600 to Ohio University for conducting this project.

Ohio University was given a \$70,000 technical assistance grant by the Area Redevelopment Administration to provide opportunities for employment in a seven county area of Southeastern Ohio. Dr. Burton W. DeVeau, Chairman of the Department of Agriculture, was named director of the project.

The project has three primary purposes:

- a. Provide employment by:
 1. Identifying products suitable for production in the area.
 2. Guiding the creation of new companies or the expansion of existing companies for production of these products.

- b. Experiment with the utilization of a university's resources in cooperation with an industrial consultant in creating employment in a depressed area.
- c. To develop a nucleus of talent among the faculty who will be available to continue the guidance of longer range economic development plans.

Fresno State College is planning a regional meeting of NACTA members sometime during this year.

Dr. E. B. Knight has consented to serve as Business Manager for the NACTA Journal. Please give him your full cooperation.

Mr. Clyde Lewis is a new staff member at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky. Clyde is in the Animal Science Department.

Dr. John Wright, NACTA Journal Editor, made surprise visits with agriculture staffs at several of the colleges on a vacation trip this summer. A "traveling ambassador" for NACTA could do a marvelous job selling the organization and increasing its services to its members.

Two men are on leave from the Louisiana Tech School of Agriculture to work on doctoral degrees. James Ziegler from the Forestry Department is at Duke and Ernie Bryant from Animal Industry is at Louisiana State University.

Ray Wells, a new staff member of the Tech Forestry Department has his doctorate almost finished at Duke University.