Although the final conclusions regarding the question proposed for discussion probably could be quickly drawn, the question does deserve attention and debate. It is not always the conclusion which is the most important aspect of a problem; sometimes it is the philosophy upon which the conclusion is based. An examination of the implications of the question should provide the key to the philosophy upon which the conclusion is based as well as the key to the conclusion itself.

Before I begin, I would like to comment briefly on an aspect of the question proposed for discussion that needs clarification. Is the question being discussed that of whether boys who eventually go to college should take vocational agriculture or whether vocational agriculture should somehow be redesigned to make it more valuable to the boys who do go to college? I am assuming that our concern here is more for the question of whether boys who go to college should take vocational agriculture although the other question has some intriguing possibilities for debate.

As stated before, the question we are to discuss implies that certain things are true. I will now discuss these implications:

1. That we know what a good college preparatory program is and that following it will lead to success in college.

There is much evidence to indicate that we do not know what a good college preparatory program is. The variation in requirements for admission to college gives us ample evidence of the confusion existing with regard to what should be required. Examination of the high school programs of successful college students reveals all kinds of variations. Aiken's report on the eight-year study dealing with curriculum problems on the secondary level indicated that students meeting the traditional college entrance requirements were not more successful in college than were students who did not meet the traditional requirements. There have been many studies which show that boys taking vocational agriculture can and do achieve well in college. A recent unpublished study at the University of Illinois of the effect of high school physics on grades in the first physics course in college revealed that it had no effect.

It is doubtful if there is much basis for college entrance requirements, in terms of courses, which go beyond skill in communications and skill in the use of mathematical symbols.

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2. That we can determine who is and who is not capable of succeeding in college.

That boys with ability to succeed in college can be identified with some success is not to be denied. However, the means available for identifying boys with high scholastic aptitude are still too inaccurate to be used for more than just a taking off point in guidance concerning college attendance. In addition there are many other factors affecting college success which must be considered and which often outweigh scholastic aptitude in determining the success of any particular individual.

Then, too, colleges adjust their standards regarding level of ability required for admission to the student supply. Are we to encourage many students to take the college preparatory program who we really feel are not capable of college work just to make certain that the colleges can be filled? What should be the cutting point, and who should determine it?

3. That it is possible to make the high ability student go to college and keep the low ability student out of college.

Although we can exert an influence in this regard, it is obvious that we can not force either enrollment or nonenrollment in college. Furthermore, persons forced to attend college do not make the best students.

4. That colleges will provide the proper vocational preparation for all who attend.

To indicate that colleges can and will provide all necessary vocational preparation needed for those who attend is to disregard such facts as the number of college graduates who enter occupations for which they did not prepare, the number of students who do not graduate, and the many training programs provided by businesses for the college graduates they employ. It may well be that vocational agriculture is equally as important to success in some occupations as is a college degree even when a college degree is required.

5. That students capable of doing college work will remain in high school obediently and peacefully following the program of courses prescribed for college admission.

It is still a matter of history that both students and parents are interested in vocational preparation at the high school level. Not to provide vocational preparation would, I believe, lead some capable students to drop out of school and their parents to withdraw their support from the schools.

6. That we need not concern ourselves with the welfare of those students we direct through a college preparatory program who do not quite make the grade or who decide not to go to college.

It is necessary to provide for each student a program which will enable him to have some flexibility of choice. Vocational agriculture provides some of that flexibility for those who choose to take it.

7. That there will be no completely free-choice electives in the college preparatory program.
To treat vocational agriculture as a completely terminal program presumes that students who have the ability to succeed in college will not be permitted to enroll even on an elective basis. This means no free electives for the student, a situation which does not appear to be enforceable.

8. That the public wants and will accept the kind of authoritarianism in education necessary to make certain that all boys capable of college success follow the prescribed program.

Studies of the public attitude toward vocational education indicates that a high value is placed on students being prepared for something in high school—and not just for further formal education. Any attempt to legislate otherwise is doomed to failure.

Some persons may feel that the position represented by the above implications is rather extreme and, as such, is not indicative of the true situation. However, if the position to be taken is not clear cut with definite boundaries, then there is no need for debate. Each person would be free to make his own interpretations regarding the issue. My own opinion is that we have but one conclusion we can draw regarding the original question proposed—that enrollment in vocational agriculture must neither be denied the college-bound nor make admission to college impossible; that vocational agriculture will be for some a terminal program and for others an intermediate step in a program of formal education in agriculture.