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## Here's How We Look

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# Here's How We Look

"Is that how I really look?"

"That's not *my* voice!"

People are amazed that the camera and the tape recorder are accurate reproductions of appearance and sound. Sometimes, though, these devices are the inspiration for changes which will improve undesirable features in a personality.

Not being able to photograph or tape what a home economist is — and wanting to know what she looks and acts like — a committee of Iowa home economists set out to find a way to see the "image." Florence Fallgetter, Julia Faltinson, Dorothea Gienger, Candace Hurley, and Thelma McMillen, all Iowa State home economics faculty members, are among the committee of fifteen who are trying to discover just how the profession stands in the eyes of the public. They are working under the Iowa Home Economics Association.

Their long-range plan is to conduct and tabulate the results of three surveys which will be completed in the near future.

The first survey is finished and was conducted among the co-workers of home economists. A ques-

tionnaire, written under the direction of George Beal, professor of sociology, was distributed to 900 people. The recipients of the questionnaire were employees in colleges, high schools, hospitals, extension, and business. Home economists were employed in these areas also.

The survey consisted of two open-end questions asking what a home economist was. Following these queries were sets of "polar adjectives," a section in which the person filling out the form rated home economists somewhere between "specialized" and "non-specialized," for example.

The third section listed 50 areas of occupation which people normally follow. The person answering the questionnaire checked areas of employment which he felt were entered by home economists.

Although this survey alone does not give all the answers, it did seem to indicate that the reason people don't know about home economics is that they do not come in contact with it. The employees who knew the most about the profession were those who either worked closely with home economists or had backgrounds similar to home economists.

A second survey, which is now nearing completion, utilized an improved questionnaire. This part of the study is to find out what home economists think about themselves. The only question which was added to the original form was one on the age, marital status, family status, current employment and degree possessed by the person filling out the form.

Charlene Lucken, working toward a masters degree in technical journalism, assumed this project for her research. She distributed the questionnaires to 1500 of the 3000 home economists in 21 Iowa counties.

A final survey will be done among a random sample of the general public.

The purpose of this experiment is to show where the "image" of the home economist is less than the desirable one which each member of the profession hopes to create. Perhaps it will indicate how to make the view which America holds of the home economist socially, psychologically, and academically accurate.

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