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Graduates Benefit from Home Economics Placement Office

Mary Elva Sather

Iowa State College

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GRADUATES BENEFIT FROM

Home Economics Placement Office

The question of whether or not the Home Economics Association should establish a national placement office is being discussed. In a reprint from the December Journal of Home Economics, Mrs. Mary Elva Sather, in charge of home economics placement at Iowa State, advocates college placement offices rather than a national office.

"WE FELT so sure of your judgment of Miss B—— that we dispensed with the usual procedure of interviews and asked her to come as soon as possible," wrote one employer, who had asked the Iowa State College Placement Service to help him fill a vacancy. Another recently said, "Each report from your college placement office is so very complete that one has an excellent idea of the ability of the applicant.

One reason that a college can build and maintain the confidence of employers is that its placement office need not rely wholly upon formal recommendations and scholastic records. The officer in charge of placements personally knows each applicant, her appearance and personality. Through personal interviews, she can get human interest information which would never be put down on an application form, but which, conveyed in a letter, can convince the employer that the applicant is the person for the job better than could a formal set of credentials sent by a national employment service. The college knows not only its seniors but also its graduates because an important part of any college program is following its alumnae. Counselors, department heads and deans supply data for fairly accurate, up-to-date records.

Because of the close relationship between placement service and teacher training, the college is surely the best agency to place its graduates in high school teaching positions. It has closer association with its State Department of Education than any national agency could have and knows more intimately the demands of the different schools of the state. In many colleges and universities, the placement of high school teachers is handled by the Vocational Education Department working with the Home Economics Department. This is a desirable practice.

But college placement work is not limited to teaching. In fact, it is becoming so broad that one person should not attempt to handle it alone. For the placing of candidates other than high school teachers, contact with employers is easily established through alumnae, who keep the college informed of conditions, salaries and openings in their respective fields. They can talk to groups of students about their experiences and help seniors secure employment. This service ties alumnae closer to the college and makes them feel that they have a part in its administration.

Every college has on its staff persons who are specialists in their fields and who have valuable contacts with employers. Their cooperation and the help of department heads and deans makes for the most effective placement in home economics work.

Another function of the college placement office is to serve as a bureau of information to students in training. It helps them select electives, reports on supply and demand in various fields, and advises students about extra-curricular and summer activities which employers consider desirable. It helps them get summer employment in fields of their major training. Information from this office can be helpful in guidance programs. It also can help the curriculum committee adapt training programs to meet changing conditions in business and the professions.

A graduate placed by her college does not have to give a percentage of her first year's salary for the privilege of getting a job, as is necessary in the case of a national service. A small fee covers the cost of typing credentials and no commission is required.

The college placement bureau can serve the graduate who is seeking promotion without her being an active candidate for another position. It has an obligation to see that its graduates have opportunities to advance professionally. Through close contact, the college knows which graduates should be encouraged to study for an advanced degree, which should move on to a better or a different job.

Some administrators believe that the salary of the placement officer should be charged to public relations, for nothing furnishes better publicity for a college than placement of the right person in the right job.

The service of the college placement office, then, is threefold: It serves the student or graduate by helping her find the position where she can become a happy, well-adjusted person and make a contribution to society. It serves society by aiding business, industry, and the professions to find those who are best prepared for positions to be filled. It serves the college by furnishing the information necessary to adapt training programs to changing conditions.

A college placement office can accomplish all three services much better than could any state or national employment agency.