1945

Related Science Opens New Fields to Women

Ruth Marie Gaessler
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker

Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol25/iss3/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Related Science Opens New Fields to Women

Ruth Marie Gaessler discusses a major designed for college women interested in industrial research

In the past few years girls in increasing numbers have said, "I would like a technical education, but I don't want to go into pure theoretical science and give up the advantages of the home economics courses." Or again, "Although I would like a technical education, I would prefer working in a field which is not considered primarily for men and which is not subject to too much male competition."

Science today is no longer a field dominated by men. Industry in general has acknowledged the contribution of women in its scientific laboratories. And the food industry especially offers an area suited to the abilities and interests of the scientific woman.

Research in different phases of foods has made great progress in recent years. Laboratories throughout the country are busily engaged in studying the nutritive value of foods and the principles involved in food preparation, food preservation and other processing for home and commercial use. There is an increased appreciation of the need to know the vitamin content of food under different conditions of production and with various treatments before and after it reaches the consumer. New and improved methods are being devised for the freezing and drying of foods. New uses for processed products are constantly being tried. Finding the various constituents which give foods their health insuring properties has led to many interesting discoveries. These are only a few of the problems claiming the attention of many laboratories, not only of the colleges and universities of the country, but also many large industries.

A woman with the proper education can become an invaluable part of these research programs. Her interests and understanding of foods may lead to the solution of problems which might not be appreciated by men. She will know best how to make her results be of practical value to the homemakers of the country. With adequate training in chemistry, physics, and mathematics, she can become an important employee in this scientific work. And with the additional training in foods she attains an advantage over most men.

In 1931 Dr. P. Mable Nelson, at that time head of the Department of Foods and Nutrition, appreciated the need of a major within the Division of Home Economics which would give students the training necessary for research work of the type desired. She hoped that the subsequently established major, designated as Related Science in the curriculum of Foods and Nutrition, would interest a number of women in graduate work preparatory for college teaching. Recently, however, opportunities for employment in food technology have attracted a large number of the graduates, and they have gone directly from the four-year curriculum into these positions.

This major has been set up on a flexible basis. The courses studied are those which seem best suited for the particular position for which the student wishes to prepare. As a general rule, the student takes between eight and ten quarters of the chemistry offered the science students and two quarters of the chemistry given the students in the division of Home Economics. A certain amount of mathematics as taught in the division of science, and a year of physics also is required. German and French are optional, but are a necessity for anyone who will be working later toward an advanced degree, or for one who plans to go into extensive research work. Since, as a rule, the students who select this major expect to do some type of analytical work in foods, six to eight quarters of foods courses are required. The remainder of the courses taken to complete the required number of credits depends largely on the major interests of the student. Such subjects as journalism, education, bacteriology, languages, clothing and others may be included by arrangement with the senior college counsellor.

Twenty-one students have been graduated with this major on their diplomas. It is also interesting to note that, of the fourteen of this group who have since been married, there is none who regrets having taken this technical course. We may thus assume that and that the general home economics courses included in this curriculum have given them a good background for homemaking.

Women with related science majors have filled a variety of laboratory positions.

The Iowa Homemakers