

## FRESHMAN TRAINING

ANY college which registers each year at least one hundred and fifty new students, fresh from homes widely scattered geographically, socially, and economically, needs some definite means whereby it can quickly amalgamate this "crowd" into a responsible freshman class. Since this responsibility is based upon a knowledge of governing rules and college customs, some effort must be made toward training. Most organizations proceed gradually in the matter of changes, thus slowly evolving the best method for specific conditions. This is true of Freshman Training, unless, of course, the chosen method definitely proves inadequate. Leaders in charge find themselves year after year using the old method with only such changes as meet the current needs. Nor does the author consider this unwise, for unless the leader is a member of the faculty whose work it is, year after year, to do this thing, it is a student, who must get her help from experienced predecessors. This paper does not, therefore, pretend to offer revolutionary methods in new-girl training, but attempts to show, for the benefit of future student leaders of training classes, ways in which leaders in southern colleges have met their difficulties.

In choosing colleges from which to compile data, consideration was given to conditions most nearly paralleling those of the college at which this paper was written. This college, State Teachers College, at Harrisonburg, Virginia, has a student body of seven hundred and fifty and a working system of Student Self-Government.

There are two main types of new-girl, or freshman training. The leaders of one type are faculty-members. The other type is fostered by Student Government. The latter is the chief concern of this paper, but mention will be made of several forms of faculty training.

Colleges which maintain a system of

training for Freshmen entirely under the supervision of faculty purpose to aid the student in her selection of a vocation and to orient her to the new surroundings. Here the rules of Student Government form only one item of the new environment. These classes, when not offered with college credit, are almost always held during the regular chapel period for the first two or three weeks of college and consist of talks which link college with "prep" school and explain credits, academic standards, and records. In such a system Student Government enters as the subject of one day's lecture.<sup>1</sup> In colleges where the teaching staff is not large enough to provide a member whose full time is devoted to problems of vocational guidance, there is much time devoted to it in these lectures.

Other colleges offer in their curricula courses in orientation which cover both the field of vocational guidance and college adjustments. These are compulsory and carry college credit. An outline of such a course follows:<sup>2</sup>

- I. Some of the Simple Adjustments Necessary to College Life.
  - II. Consideration of Student Government Rules.
  - III. What Can the Freshman Get out of College?
  - IV. How the College Helps the Freshman.
  - V. The Importance of Making a Choice of Studies.
  - VI. How to Study.
  - VII. The Use of the Library and its Value.
  - VIII. How to Spend Leisure Hours.
  - IX. The Importance of a Balanced Program.
  - V. How to Prepare for Examinations.
- Miami University in September, 1926, required its freshmen to arrive one week

<sup>1</sup>The State Teachers College, Radford, Virginia, used such a method in September, 1926.

<sup>2</sup>Mabelle Babcock Blake: "Guidance for College Women," pp. 135-138.

early. The group was organized into classes according to their intended courses. Each of these classes was led by a faculty member who endeavored during the week to guide his new students in their choice of courses and to prepare them for the more complex student life which begins with the return of old students.

The classes in new-girl training as offered by students is, of course, much more limited in scope. The major emphasis is placed on the rules of Student Government. While the Student Executive Committee in most instances is held responsible for the training, a great diversity in method of approach is to be found.

Half of the southern colleges used in making this study require new students to arrive early, the other half do not. In all instances those colleges whose new girls do arrive early state that it is an advantage in that much may be accomplished in the way of registering, getting acquainted, and starting training classes. All add, however, that much *must* be done to entertain these new citizens lest some decide before they give real college a try-out that home life has more advantages than an education can possibly balance.

The "Big Sister" scheme is strongly recommended by those colleges whose students, old and new, arrive at the same time. Each new girl has a "Big Sister" chosen either from the entire student body or from the Junior (Big Sister) Class. She is meant to be an ever-present help in time of trouble in everything from class schedules to roommates. Most new girls can thank their college Y. W. C. A. for this "convenience."

Whether new students arrive early or late, there remains the question of the organization and procedure of the training course.

The ten colleges from which first-hand information was gained agree that a small group discussion led by an old student is the most complete and satisfactory method of handling the rules of Student Govern-

ment. But several interesting ways of choosing group leaders were found.

Mississippi State College for Women at Columbus uses the Freshman Commission. "The Commission" is composed of 35 girls. From the present and past officers of Student Government and Y. W. C. A., the dean of the college and a representative from the faculty choose this group of girls at the end of school because of their Student Government records, their scholastic records, and their initiative and personality. "These girls will hold group meetings at the beginning of school and will discuss and explain Student Government regulations and will try to create the proper attitude toward this organization, the Y. W. C. A., the Civic League, and other organizations on the campus. At the end of the discussion, which will last about three weeks, there will be examinations on the handbook and the discussions that took place. Every Freshman will be required to pass this examination."<sup>3</sup>

William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia, follows the same system with the addition to the Commission of one Student Council member who acts in the capacity of advisor.

New girls entering Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, Virginia, receive their training at the hands of the Executive Committee, which is composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Association, and the House Presidents.

Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, chooses for leaders, "Juniors and Seniors, preferably those who have served on the Student Committee."

"Student Advisors" at the State Teachers College, Harrisonburg, Virginia, are chosen by the Executive Committee of the Student Council from leaders in the two upper classes irrespective of their connection with the Council.

The State Teachers College, Fredericks-

<sup>3</sup>Handbook of Mississippi State College for Women, 926-27, p. 34.

burg, Virginia, uses members of the Student Council as group leaders.

Groups vary in size from ten to twelve students in the different colleges.

The programs for group discussions are planned by a single committee, preferably the Executive Committee, in order that the meetings may approach uniformity. At least one meeting of group leaders is held to discuss these plans. For each night a topic is assigned covering the training period. This period varies with the different colleges from ten days to three weeks, depending on the frequency of the meetings and the intervention of social affairs.

Randolph-Macon Woman's College in September, 1926, covered the course in five meetings. The following is a skeleton outline of their course:

#### I. First Meeting

##### A. Theory of Student Government

1. The purpose
2. The necessity
3. The Honor System
4. The punishments

#### II. Second Meeting

- A. Constitution and By-Laws
- B. Dormitory Regulations

#### III. Third Meeting

- A. Social Policy
  1. When, where, and how of "dates"
- B. Miscellaneous
  1. How to study
  2. Busy signs
  3. Postoffice

#### IV. Fourth Meeting

A group meeting in which all freshmen met to hear a talk by the President of the College on the Honor System.

#### V. Fifth Meeting

A written examination on the rules of Student Government.

One should not make the mistake of thinking that student-conducted courses which give major consideration to rules of Student Government disregard other phases of adjustment. There are many other for-

ces so closely connected with Student Government that they share with it in importance. Regulations which pertain to the offices of the Dean of Women, Director of Dormitories, College Physician, and Dietitian all come in for a share. Various student organizations need explanation. School songs and yells are taught, for the sooner a new girl can join in the singing of "Alma Mater" the sooner she feels that she "belongs."

Many colleges combine this "group meeting" scheme with the "Mass Meeting" method used by colleges with a smaller enrollment of new girls. Such a combination permits a closer co-operation of faculty and student workers. An example of this method is shown in the following program.<sup>4</sup>

#### I. Mass Meeting

- A. Cheer leaders taught freshmen one verse of "Alma Mater."
- B. President of Student Government introduced President of Y. W. C. A. and other officers of Student Government.
- C. President assigned girls to groups.

#### II. Mass Meeting

- A. Cheer leaders led songs.
- B. College Physician explained physical examination.
- C. President read the By-Laws.

#### III. Group Meeting.

- A. The groups discussed By-Laws.

#### IV. Mass Meeting.

- A. Cheer leaders led songs and yells
- B. The Dean of Women explained her register, and told of traditions and customs of the school.
- C. The President introduced officers of other organizations.

#### V. Mass Meeting

- A. The Dietitian explained phases of her work.

<sup>4</sup>Plan followed by State Teachers College, Harrisonburg, Virginia, September, 1926.

- B. The Physician gave a talk on personal hygiene.
- C. The Nurse demonstrated the proper method of making a bed.

VI. Group Meeting

- A. Leaders answered girls' questions.

VII. Group Meeting.

- A. Leaders gave the examination previously made out by the Executive Committee.

VIII. Group Meeting.

- A. Leaders gave the pledge to those members of the group who had passed the examination.

All colleges used in making this study require a written examination from their Freshman Training "graduates." In one instance<sup>5</sup> the test papers serve as permanent records, while in several other cases written pledges are required.

Thus far in the discussion, all mention of the social side of early freshman life has been omitted. It is perfectly evident from all replies that each leader tries to make her classes as informal as possible, giving the new girl every chance to learn her group-mates. The leader probably receives more help in this matter than any other. Chief among her helpers is the Y. W. C. A. Many new girls can thank the "Blue Triangle" for relief from the first wave of homesickness or embarrassment. In many colleges the "Y" party is the first one given. Early in the first week comes the faculty reception. Not a small part is played by the simple custom of "calling on the new-comers." Where separate dormitories are used by the four classes this becomes a very important item on the social calendar.

Mention must be made here of one phase of the training which is of a very informal nature, but according to all old girls, particularly sophomores, is essential to every new girl's well being. Shall it be added to the social side?

Most woman's colleges have initiation

centering around a particular stunt day or night when rules are laid down as guides for freshman actions and for the remainder of the year. One college<sup>6</sup> organized for use during the first few weeks of school a court which tries by jury (for the pleasure of the old girls) all cases of infringement on these rules. Punishment takes the form of "more green color" or "fewer privileges."

The tendency is toward a shorter, snappier initiation which culminates on a day which marks the time when "new girls" and "old girls" become the "student body." This is an event which definitely ends Freshman Training, formal and informal, and completes athletic contests between the two groups. Since the resulting spirit is the chief concern, much thought should be given to the planning of such a celebration.

Several colleges follow the formal practice of receiving the new girls at a mass meeting presided over by the President of the Senior Class. The President of the Student Government vouches for new students who have ably finished training and sportingly complied with initiation requests. They are then voted in by the old students. Adaptations of this form occur when the Junior Class plays a conspicuous part in training. In this event the President of the Junior Class recommends her "Little Sisters" to the President of Student Government.

As an example of the semi-formal type the New-girl—Old-girl wedding may be cited. A New-girl bride promises to love, honor and respect an Old-girl groom whose duty it is to cherish and protect her. While it may begin formally enough, it inevitably ends in a well-mixed, rice-throwing, student body.

No time spent in planning the course in Freshman Training is wasted. Students are suspended from most colleges for violation of the honor system. They are punished by less drastic measures for violation

<sup>5</sup>Randolph-Macon Woman's College, 1926.

<sup>6</sup>Ballow: The Campus Blue Book.

of By-Laws. They often suffer four years as the result of a foolish social blunder. Therefore, someone — faculty, Student Council, Big Sister Class, or Freshman Commission—owes the new girl the information and entertainment necessary to start her on the right path. After that it is largely a matter of individual responsibility. The best system of Freshman Training would not forestall all problems of discipline. After all,

“Ships sail east and ships sail west  
By the self-same winds that blow.  
It's the set of the sail,  
Not the strength of the gale,  
Which determines the way they go.”

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ballow: “The College Blue Book.”  
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Good, Carter V., “Freshman Week at Miami University,” *School and Society*, November 13, 1926. pp. 614-615.

## CORRESPONDENTS

Presidents of Student Government of:

1. Duke University, Durham, N. C.
2. Mississippi State Woman's College, Columbus, Miss.
3. Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Va.
4. Sophia Newcomb College, New Orleans, La.
5. State Teachers College, Farmville, Va.
6. State Teachers College, Fredericksburg, Va.
7. State Teachers College, Harrisonburg, Va.
8. State Teachers College, Radford, Va.
9. Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, Va.
10. William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Va.

ELIZABETH ELLMORE

It is a false principle that because we are entirely occupied with ourselves, we must entirely occupy the thoughts of others. The contrary inference is the fair one.

—Hazlitt.

When all is summed up, a man never speaks of himself without loss. His accusations of himself are always believed; his praise never.

—Montaigne.

## A SECOND-GRADE LANGUAGE PLAN

## Part One. Preliminary Data

Grade: IIA

Minor Unit: Vocabulary Building

Time Allowance: Thirty minutes

Material:

1. Original poem read to class to introduce the lesson.

*The Cunning Artist*

Jack Frost is such a cunning elf  
Who paints for you and me,  
Such lovely scenes of fairyland  
Just where we best can see.

I see a fairy, wee and light,  
And dainty as a feather,  
And here I see so many more  
A-frolicking together.

And when he's painted everything  
As pretty as can be,  
This cherry little elfman turns  
And starts to painting me!

2. Original story printed on the board

*The Clever Painter*

With *nimble* fingers a *little painter* that I know paints *lovely* pictures on my window pane. He uses *dainty* strokes and *wee* fairies *swinging* on *feathery* clouds that seem to float across a *beautiful* sky of crystal, *glistening* in the sunshine.

He sometimes paints trees and flowers such as fairies have in fairyland and little children see in dreams. Oh, he does think of such *pretty* pictures for me!

This painter sometimes wears an *azure* suit with wings *gauzy* as a butterfly's. A *tiny* cap is on his head and *wee pointed* shoes are on his feet. I cannot see him with my eyes, but I can find the pretty pictures that he paints to make me *happy*, and I can feel him when he is having a *frollic* and touches me with his *icy* brush on my nose or finger tips.