Division of Rehabilitation

"The Division of Rehabilitation was established by the University of Delaware as a result of a request from the Veterans' Bureau for assistance in training disabled soldiers and sailors. Many former soldiers and sailors of the World War were incapacitated by gunshot wounds, shell shock, gas, amputations, and functional disorders. In many cases these disabilities were such as would prevent the men from following a trade or occupation. The United States Government is endeavoring to prepare these men for occupations in which their disability will be overcome by training, that they may 'carry on' in life on an equality with their more fortunate comrades. In April, 1920, the University was asked to assist in the work of rehabilitation by throwing open its doors to ex-service men for training in agriculture. A plan was arranged by which agricultural training could be given Rehabilitation students without adding financial burden to the University. This plan was approved by the University trustees, and the Rehabilitation Division of the School of Agriculture was opened May 3, 1920. Owing to the fact that the University offers no two-year course in Agriculture, and that a large proportion of the men received for training had but limited educational advantages, it was deemed best to establish separate courses with a special corps of instructors."

(Bulletin of the University, 1921-22)

But this plain statement of facts does not even suggest the magnitude of the work undertaken and accomplished. At first there was no conception of the greatness of the task before the University, when it offered to perform such after-war work as it could. Not only were embarrassing material and financial difficulties on every side, but the entirely new problem of rehabilitation, itself, had to be met with no precedence to guide these pioneers.

The plan of the United States Government for rehabilitation was more generous, more ambitious, and more difficult than anything that had been attempted for any wounded of any former wars, anywhere. The Government's plan was to educate and train the men under its care, so that they could return to the normal life of a self-supporting citizen, fearlessly and safely. Better far was this plan than that of moneyed pensions, and no helping hand of rehabilitation. And what this University, together with others, prepared to face was the tremendous task of restoring shattered lives to a wholesome, normal usefulness, to a capacity for the fuller enjoyment of the happiness in life, and to a renewed ability of self support, as a needed, honored citizen. These men did not need any emotional sentimentality poured over them by well-meaning sympathizers; but they did ask for a chance to recover lost ground and receive help that would lead ultimately to a condition of self-responsibility.

This, then, was the task which the University of Delaware accepted. And in spite of the seemingly unsurmountable difficulties met in the work of the division itself, in spite of the upheaval in the lives of the men, themselves, in the change from former conditions to the routine of school life, in spite of the strain of the
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adjustment, in spite of the seeming failure and lasting discouragements, in spite of the handicaps, misunderstandings, and mistakes the Rehabilitation student has proved himself to be worthy of the efforts and devotion of those who have had a share in the work of his rehabilitation.

The Rehabilitation Division was started with thirteen ex-service men as students. The first few weeks were devoted to preparations for starting the school, and the forking up, by hand, of the three-quarter acre lot given to the Division for their agricultural work. Class and working schedules had to be planned, changed, and revised as occasion demanded. By the month of September there were forty men in the Division. Money enough to equip the school was provided, and plans were then made for the regular two-year course. Opportunities for entrance to college were offered from the beginning.

From the condition of the first few months of 1920 the Division has reached a high standard of efficiency, and is today recognized as the first to make a workable system of preliminary training. This Division was the first to plan and install a thorough, comprehensive two-year course for the Rehabilitation student.

The path to the present appreciation and hearty co-operation of Town, University, and Rehabilitation student was not a smooth one. Today, however, all former difficulties and thorny paths are forgotten, and the heartiest good-feeling exists on all sides. The various ex-service men’s societies have associated themselves with the progress of events, and have been of real service on many occasions. The Rehabilitation Men’s Club has been an active organization. Several get-together banquets have been given. The opening of the new Rehabilitation building, known as the “Dug-out,” was the occasion for a meeting of the combined faculty and student body. The Dug-out provides four large class rooms, and two offices for the necessary administration work.

The course of training given prepares men to start farming, for themselves or for others, and also opens a wide field in occupations closely allied to agriculture. With this end in view the students’ work has been made more vocational than academic, more practical than theoretical, but opportunities are offered for entrance to college.

One Hundred and Sixty-three
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At least forty different classes are provided to meet the needs of all the students. These classes range from English to Livestock Management, from Poultry Farm Management to Commercial Vegetable Gardening, from Farm Machinery to Plant Diseases. The students have built up the large poultry farm, which is one of the most up-to-date places in the State. The students have also built and improved Pomona Gardens, where all of the Horticultural work is done.

At present there are one hundred and thirty-five students in the Rehabilitation Division. Twelve men are now regular college students. Several have left here for replacement training. Three men have worked on local newspapers. One man has a column in the “Review.” Others have assisted in the work of the Footlights Club of the University, and one Rehabilitation student was elected President of the Literary Society. Almost all of the men now in college have made high marks in their various classes. In a recent State Corn-judging contest, the Rehabilitation students averaged a score of sixty-seven, while the University Agricultural students averaged sixty-eight. The men of the Rehabilitation Division turned out one hundred per cent in the parade in Wilmington during the Memorial Library Campaign, and subscribed three thousand dollars to the fund. The Division has its own baseball, tennis, and basketball teams; and weekly athletic meets are held.

Shall it not be said, as the past two years are reviewed, that the Rehabilitation student is an asset, here in Delaware? Is it not true that the work of the Veterans’ Bureau, together with the cooperation of the University of Delaware, has repaid its pioneer workers a thousand-fold? And is it not proven by the success of this Rehabilitation Division alone, by the new life, by the awakened energy, and by the realized ambitions of the men themselves, that Delaware does not forget?
Faculty for the Division of Rehabilitation

Charles Andrew McCue, S. B. . . . . Dean of Agriculture
Raymond Melville Upton, S. B. ..................
...........Director of Rehabilitation, Farm Economics
Charles Raymond Runk, S. B. ..................Soils
Claude E. Phillips, S. B. ..................Crops
Roland Handy, S. B. ..................Instructor Foreman
A. E. Tomhave, S. B. ..................Animal Husbandry
R. M. Koon, S. B. ..................Horticulture
A. E. Schaffle, S. B. ..................Poultry
Phineas Morris, Ph. B. ..................Academic Department
Herman G. Dimmick, A. B. ..................Academic Department
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Winifred S. Bach, A. B. ..................Secretary
Rehabilitation

Men in Action

Rehabilitation
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