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Open Letter to Science Teachers: U.S. Army-Iowa Science, Engineering, and Humanities Symposium

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Open Letter to Science Teachers

U.S. Army-Iowa Science, Engineering, and Humanities Symposium

In September, 1969, letters announcing this year's symposium and preliminary applications were sent to high school principals in Iowa and western Illinois. This year through the cooperation of the Iowa Academy of Science, initial letters and applications were also sent directly to the science teachers whose names were on the academy's mailing list. Included in the letter was a brief sketch of symposium activities and goals. The science teacher applications included nominations for student research papers and nominations for student symposium participants other than those applying to give papers.

This year the number of applications to present student research papers increased to thirty-two from ten applications for the 1969 symposium. Fourteen student research abstracts were initially accepted to be competitively presented at the 1970 symposium. Because of illness and other conflicts, only twelve students actually presented papers in concurrent sessions.

Two hundred twenty students (excluding those commuting from Iowa City schools) were nominated to attend the 1970 symposium along with forty-nine teachers. Because of the limitations in housing facilities, only 155 students and 41 teachers were selected to attend as guests of the symposium. Three Iowa City science teachers and nine of their students were also invited to attend the sessions and meals. Science teachers and student participants representing schools from all parts of Iowa and western Illinois drove through ice and snow to arrive Thursday afternoon, March 19, 1970, for the symposium registration.

Again this year The University of Iowa faculty members demonstrated their interest and dedication to this type of endeavor by donating their time and opening their laboratories and offices to these bright, science-oriented young people. It seems the busiest, most-renowned researchers and administrators are the ones most willing to take the time to interact with these young future leaders. The interest and effort expended on these impressionable high school students is bound to have a positive effect toward motivating and influencing their future careers.

As stated before, this year's student research papers improved both in total numbers and in the number of high-quality reports. Twelve students presented reports of original research they conducted during the previous year in six concurrent sessions. Students, teachers, and university faculty members were given rating sheets to evaluate the reports presented in the session which they attended. This comparative measure helped not only to evaluate the student researcher's ability to conduct and analyze original research, but his or her ability to communicate research results in an understandable way to other science students.

Each student participant visited two laboratory facilities on The University of Iowa campus. Well-planned tours and programs by the laboratory personnel were reported by the symposium students in glowing terms. These visits again drew praise as one of the most valuable parts of the symposium.

Small groups (3-7) of student participants visited with university faculty members in their offices on Saturday morning during the symposium. Possible student research projects and career requirements and opportunities in specific fields of interest were discussed. These interviews, initiated last year, were ranked second only to the laboratory visits in terms of value to the students. The counsel of professionals, working in specific fields, is most valuable to these young people in their search for a career.

Success of the 1970 U.S. Army-Iowa Science, Engineering, and Humanities Symposium was due to the excellent support and cooperation of The University of Iowa administrators, faculty members and staff, members of the Advisory Committee, the listed sponsors, and Mr. Brooks Booker and his fine staff at the Conference Center. Without the combined efforts of these people, a successful symposium to counsel, guide, and motivate concerned young people toward an improved future is impossible.

RONALD D. TOWNSEND

*Director, Iowa Science,
Engineering, and Humanities Symposium*

Unusual Ph.D. Program Supported

Support of an unusual graduate program in science and mathematics education is provided by a National Science Foundation grant of \$29,700 awarded today to the University of California at Berkeley.

Known as "SESAME" (Search for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Education), the recently established program leads to a Ph.D. Its aim is to offer students the opportunity to combine advanced training in one of the natural sciences or mathematics with the pursuit of central interests in science education.

It also seeks to encourage work in the area of science education by faculty members of the regular science departments.

Project Director is Dr. Frederick Reif of the Department of Physics. The program is sponsored by the Departments of Physics, Mathematics, Botany, Zoology, and Physiology. Although outside the School of Education, it includes as active participants several faculty members from that school.

It is planned that a student receiving his Ph.D. in science (or mathematics) education through the SESAME program will be well qualified not only to teach at the college level, but also to carry on significant research in the area of educational improvement and innovation.

NSF funds will be used for faculty-released time, educational research assistantships, and related expenses, and will supplement support from the university.