

Agricultural Education at the University of Arizona

Agricultural education has been part of the curriculum offered at The University of Arizona for some sixty-nine years. It has not always been in the same form or substance during this period of time. Agricultural education started in the College of Education in the fall semester of 1917. At that time, the curriculum consisted of two professional courses taught by faculty members with other responsibilities and teaching assignments. The passage by Congress and signing by President Wilson on February 23, 1917 of the Smith-Hughes Act undoubtedly provided the stimulus for initiating agricultural education at the University of Arizona. The fact that the Smith-Hughes Act provided funds for teacher training in the fields of agriculture, trades and industry, and in homemaking was probably further motivation to initiate the agricultural education courses.

Agricultural education courses continued to be offered in the College of Education from 1917 to 1927. During this period of time, several people were involved in providing instruction. Included in this group of faculty were: J.W. Clarson, Jr., who later became Dean of the College of Education, H.H. Gibson, Albert Bennett, George C. Mann, Ralph H. Roberts and Ian A. Briggs. The number of students who took the courses and who became "Smith-Hughes" teachers during this period of time is not known for certain. The first student to graduate as an agricultural education major was Lawrence Parker Sherwood in 1922. During the first ten years (1917-1927) that agricultural education was part of the University curriculum five students completed the major.

In the summer of 1927 two significant changes were made in agricultural education which have continued to the present. The first of these changes was an administrative change. The program was moved from the College of Education to the College of Agriculture. As a part of the administrative move, the Department of Agricultural Education was created. Lynn D. Klemmedson was appointed Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education and served as the first Head of the Department of Agricultural and Home Economics Education. Klemmedson continued to serve in that capacity for ten years. The period of tenure included the era of the Great Depression. This might explain the small number of majors in agricultural education. Between 1927-1937 five students completed the agricultural education major and graduated with bachelor's degrees from The University of Arizona. Thus, in the first twenty years that agricultural education was offered at the University ten students were graduated. The largest class of agricultural education majors was the 1923 class which had two students. No majors were graduated with the classes of 1935-1939.

In 1937 Dr. R. W. Cline was appointed Head of the Agricultural and Home Economics Education. Dr. Cline served in that capacity for some 29 years. Dr. Cline devoted his entire life to agricultural education. He was nationally known and respected for his writing and research expertise. Dr. Cline received his Ph.D. degree from Ohio State University in 1939 two years after his appointment as Department Head at The University of Arizona. During Dr. Cline's

tenure at the University several program changes were made. A graduate degree program at the master's level was developed and initiated. Actually, two different master's programs were approved. The first was a Master of Agricultural Education Degree and the second a Master of Science Degree in agricultural education. The first master's degree (M. Ag ED) earned in the Department was awarded to Henry Burr Gray, Jr. in 1949. Mr. Gray had received his bachelor's degree from The University of Arizona in 1940 in agricultural education and subsequently served for some forty plus years as a vocational agricultural teacher at Mesa High School in Mesa, Arizona. The first Master of Science Degree in agricultural education was awarded to Bob Taylor in 1953. Mr. Taylor served as the State Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture in Arizona for a few years before earning his doctoral degree at Ohio State University. Dr. Taylor is the founder and current director of the National Center for Vocational Education in Columbus, Ohio.

A total of forty-five master's degrees were awarded in agricultural education during Dr. Cline's tenure at the University. Undergraduate majors also increased, particularly after World War II. However, the number of graduates was never large and varied somewhat from year to year. The largest class prior to the end of World War II was four in 1940. The largest number of majors awarded bachelor's degrees in agricultural education in any one year was during Dr. Cline's tenure was nine in 1962 and 1966.

The staff within the Department has, since 1939, devoted a portion of its time to instruction in the Department of Agricultural Engineering or in the Department of Soils, Water, and Engineering as it was designated for some years. The intent of such instructional time was to develop competencies in agricultural mechanization. Mr. J.R. Cullison (1939-1946), Mr. W.A. Schafer (1947-1955), and Dr. John Williams (1955-1966) served on Dr. Cline's staff and provided instruction in agricultural mechanics. Mr. Cullison later became the State Supervisor and Director of Vocational Education for the state of Arizona.

A second major change in the Department occurred in 1956 when the Department was split, and Home Economics Education was transferred to the School of Home Economics within the College of Agriculture. To this day the two programs concerned with the professional preparation of vocational educators remain in the College of Agriculture under separate department heads.

Following Dr. Cline's sudden and unexpected death, due to heart failure, in 1966 a national search was conducted to pick his successor. During this brief period of approximately eight months Dr. Vincent Salmon served as Acting Head of the Department. Actually during this period the Department was nearly completely decimated (Dr. John Williams died of cancer in early 1966) except for faculty on courtesy appointments in the Department, a few graduate students and the Department Secretary. Dr. Salmon was, at the time, a graduate student in the College of Education completing his doctoral degree. Mr. Jim Claridge had been appointed to a graduate assistantship approximately one month prior to Dr. Cline's death and actually taught several undergraduate courses during this interim period.

Dr. Floyd G. McCormick was selected and appointed Head of the Department of Agricultural Education in 1967. Dr. McCormick, a native of Colorado, had obtained his Ph.D. at Ohio State University. Prior to his selection as Department Head he was employed on the staff in Agricultural Education at Ohio State University. In 1967, Dr. James B Hamilton was appointed to the staff along with Dr. C.O. Jacobs in 1968. Dr. Jacobs' primary responsibility was to provide direction in the area of agricultural mechanics. In 1971, Dr. Phillip R. Zurbirck, a 1965 Master's degree graduate of the Department, was appointed to replace Dr. Hamilton who had moved to the University of Missouri. Also, in 1971 Dr. Ronald Stoller, from the University of Nebraska, was appointed to the staff to provide direction and leadership in developing a cooperative extension education program. This effort was continued by Dr. Arlene Etling, from the University of Massachusetts, who replaced Dr. Stoller in 1975 and continued in that capacity until January 1, 1979.

During Dr. McCormick's tenure as Head of the Department, several significant changes of a programmatic nature have been initiated. One of the first such changes was the development of a competency-based program. The entire undergraduate program was restructured and built around 92 professional competencies determined to be essential for a beginning vocational agriculture teacher. This approach was recognized nationally as progressive and a positive method of providing a coordinated articulated instructional program. The curricular approach apparently appealed to students. The number of majors graduated annually has increased considerably. The largest graduating class of agricultural education majors was twenty-two in the classes of 1978 and 1979. On the average, 13.3 majors have annually completed the agricultural education program during the period of 1968-1982.

A second major change in agricultural education occurring after Dr. McCormick's appointment was the strengthening of the program of agricultural mechanics, which was recognized as weak prior to Dr. C.O. Jacobs appointment. The Program has been improved through additions to the curriculum, improved equipment and facilities, and the direction and inspiration of Dr. Jacobs. Extensive improvement to the agricultural mechanics facilities at the University Farm on Campbell Avenue have been made under the leadership and direction of Dr. McCormick and Dr. Jacobs. In 1984 the agricultural mechanics program was moved to the Department of Agricultural Education and the associated courses (6 courses) carried the agricultural education designation.

A third major program change was an attempt to develop and implement a competency-based extension education program at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The lack of resources and the propensity to require and select extension agents with master's degrees prevented the full development of this program effort at the undergraduate level. In 1984 the undergraduate extension program was officially terminated.

In 1983 Dr. Christopher Kalangi was employed in the Department to direct a computer software development project funded through the Arizona State Department of Education. Dr. Kalangi's background and experience in international agriculture and educational program were utilized to develop plans for an international extension education program. The program was

significantly enhanced by funding of a three-year proposal prepared by Dr. Kalangi and funded by the federal government.

In addition to the Department's primary charge for professional development of agricultural educators, research and service have also been addressed. Faculty members in the Department all have research projects funded thru the Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station. The first agricultural education project funded through the Experiment Station was awarded to Dr. John B. Williams in 1965-66. In 1967-68 all faculty members were funded for research projects in the Experiment Station. Since that time projects dealing with instructional materials and equipment; occupational opportunities in agriculture; and occupational component analysis (a form of job analysis) have been funded and conducted by faculty members.

The Department has developed and utilized a Long Range Research Plan to provide direction to the research effort. In addition to the funds provided through the Agricultural Experiment Station, studies have also been funded through the Arizona Department of Education.

The total time devoted to research by the faculty was never greater than .35 F.T.E. until 1984. This relatively small amount of time devoted to research hasn't prevented the staff from completing studies which have received national recognition and have assisted vocational agriculture in the State of Arizona to conduct better vocational agriculture education programs. Research results have been and are continuing to be used by teachers in planning programs and in teaching various agricultural subjects.

A major service project administered through the Department of Agricultural Education has been the New Teacher Program. This in-service project provides instruction, assistance and clinical observation to new vocational educators in agriculture in Arizona. The project serves the entire state from Red Mesa to Yuma and from Douglas to Kingman. The New Teacher Program was initiated as a formal program in 1967 by Dr. Floyd G. McCormick. Nearly every high school offering a program of vocational agriculture in the State of Arizona has been served through this program. In 1973 funds were provided by the Arizona State Department of Education to expand the New Teacher Program by Hiring Ismael (Miley) Gonzales as in-service teacher educator. Mr. Gonzalez served in this capacity from 1973 to 1976. After Mr. Gonzalez moved to the Office of Resident Instruction in the College of Agriculture, Mr. David E. Cox was hired to direct the professional development project. After completing his doctoral degree in 1980, Dr. Cox left Arizona in December 1980 to initiate a teacher education program in agriculture at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. Mr. Glen Miller, vocational agriculture teacher in Mayer, Arizona, was hired in July 1981 to conduct the New Teacher Program. Mr. Miller resigned in June 1984 to pursue a Doctor's degree at Mississippi State University. Mr. Tom Jones, former National President of the NVATA and vocational agriculture teacher at Marana, Arizona, was hired in July 1984 to conduct the New Teacher Program.

The New Teacher Program has been hailed by teachers and administrators alike as a very worthwhile and useful effort. A typical comment from high school administrators often heard is, "Why don't other areas of education provide this service for their graduates?"

Recognizing the fact that a student's college education is not limited to the experiences gained in the classroom, the Department included a student organization as part of its effort. Beginning in 1951, under the advisorship of Dr. Cline, the Phi Chapter of Alpha Tau Alpha was chartered at the University of Arizona. Alpha Tau Alpha is a national professional honorary organization with local chapters located on college campuses across the country. A conclave is held annually in Kansas City in conjunction with the National FFA Convention. The Phi Chapter has been a very active organization and well supported by agricultural education majors. Nearly every vocational agriculture teacher in Arizona is a former active member of the Phi Chapter.

The Phi Chapter was selected as the Outstanding College Organization in 1977. Many service activities are conducted and supported by Alpha Tau Alpha. These include such events as the State FFA Field Day and Cotton Judging Contest. In addition, the chapter was instrumental in developing a parliamentary procedure contest adopted by the Arizona FFA Association. The chapter has conducted a state-wide Parliamentary Procedure Contest and has assisted in judging many others.

The National Alpha Tau Alpha Organization is staffed and operated by national officers who serve as advisors to local chapters. During the thirty plus years that the Phi Chapter has been chartered on the University campus, two men have served as national officers. Dr. John R. Williams served as Secretary-Treasurer from 1957-1961. Dr. Phillip Zurbrick served as Second Vice President from 1974-1978. Dr. Zurbrick was advisor to the Phi Chapter from 1971 until August 1984 at which time the advisory duties were assumed by Dr. David E. Cox, B.S.; M.S., Ph.D. – University of Arizona, who returned to the University as an assistant professor in Agricultural Education.

Dr. Cox's appointment in August 1984 and Dr. Kalangi's appointment as an Associate Professor in July 1985 enhanced the Department's ability to provide expanded programmatic and research activities. Thus, in the fall of 1985 the staff in the Department of Agricultural Education at the University of Arizona consisted of five full-time faculty members, one full-time project director, and two secretaries.

In addition to the international extension education program and the agricultural mechanics program, the Department implemented in 1984 a field based graduate education program involving three new courses. The field based graduate program was designed to accommodate agricultural educators employed full-time who were required to complete a master's degree program.

While it is difficult to accurately quantify the contributions, an academic program has upon the people and the agriculture of a state or region, it is very obvious that the Department of

Agricultural Education has contributed to both. A sizable number of vocational agriculture students taught by the University of Arizona agricultural education majors have enrolled and graduated from the University of Arizona in the College of Agriculture. Many other students served by vocational agriculture teachers prepared by the Department have been and continue to be involved in the important agricultural industry in the State of Arizona. So long as there is a need for food and fiber and for people to produce, process and distribute such products, agricultural education graduates will be prepared and ready to meet this challenge.

Department Name		Department Head	
1920	No department (courses in School of Education)	Lynn D. Klemmenson	1927 -37
1930	Ag and Home Economics Education	R.W. Cline	1937 - 66
1940	Agricultural Education		
1950	Ag & Extension Education		
1960	Agricultural Education	Vincent Salmon, Acting	1966 - 67
		Floyd McCormick	1967 - 89
1970	Agricultural Education		
1980	Agricultural Education		
1990	Agricultural Education	Roger Huber	1990 - 89
2000	Agricultural Education	James Knight	2001 - 05
		Jack Elliot	2005 - 08
		David Cox, Interim	2008
		James Knight, Acting	2009
2010	Agricultural Education	Robert M. Torres	2010 - Present
2019	Agricultural Education, Technology & Innovation		