

THE NEW

AMERICAN COLLEGE

THE FOUR-YEAR JUNIOR COLLEGE
GRADES 11 TO 14 INCLUSIVE
iO ORGANIZED AND ADMINISTERED
AS A SINGLE INSTITUTION

JOHN A. SEXSON, M.A., Ed.D.

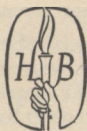
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With a Foreword by
LEONARD V. KOOS



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THE NEW AMERICAN COLLEGE

The Four-Year Junior College

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FIRST EDITION

A-V



FOREWORD

LEONARD V. KOOS

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It was my privilege on a Monday evening in April, 1928, to be in Pasadena at a meeting of the Board of Education and to share in deliberations of the members of the board and the administrative officers of the school system. Among the officers present were the two authors of this book. The deliberations concerned the pros and cons of committing the system to the final steps toward the six-four-four plan of organization of schools, among them the shift of pupils in Grade X to the junior high schools. Discussion was both of the feasibility in the local situation and of the desirability on basic educational grounds.

On the score of feasibility, because of previous preparation for the plan, there were many factors of encouragement and no obstacle of note. For instance, there were ample accommodations for pupils of Grade X in the junior high schools of the system, which were at the time housing the usual grades 7, 8, and 9; qualifications of teachers in later high school and junior college years were such as to permit wide vertical assignment of instruction to them; and administrators and teachers were imbued with a spirit of adventure sufficient to assure alertness to the numerous problems that would be certain to emerge in working out such a reorganization. Much was said concerning the desirability of the new organization, but in the total lack of experience elsewhere with the six-four-four plan, most of this discussion, except where it could draw on prototypes in junior colleges associated with high schools, had to be theoretical rather than empirical. Commitment to the final steps was urged because the promise of the organization seemed great not only for the individual local system but also for the country at large. In view of the interest and discernment shown during the deliberations by both board members and administrators, I was not

surprised to learn later that, at the next regular meeting of the board, it had been decided to proceed with arrangements for inaugurating the plan the following September.

On various occasions since the date of that commitment, I have had opportunities for contact with the system, for observation of the development, and for conference with teachers and administrators. Each succeeding contact and conference showed the plan to be growing in conception and execution. In connection with these contacts, I was permitted to gather objective evidence which has yielded support for the confidence in the anticipated superiority of the organization. I have been impressed with the effort being made, at the same time that everyone was striving to give Pasadena the best possible school system, to avoid provincialism by keeping in mind the relation of the program of reorganization to the educational needs in the nation at large.

One does not read more than a few pages into *The New American College* before noting that it is much more than a record of experience with the four-year junior college in Pasadena. While the discussion is rooted in extensive firsthand experience in establishing and developing this particular college, the treatment uses the local situation chiefly as a point of departure for the consideration of major issues, policies, and practices as they relate to the larger scene. The larger view is apparent in the story of the emergence of the new college, consideration of its philosophy and purposes, the relationship to it of experimentation in "standard" colleges and universities, the new college as a community institution, its administrative organization, its curriculum—in short, it is apparent throughout the treatise. This has been so comprehensively done that a book of substantial size has been made without major explication of the lower of the two secondary school units which is an almost inevitable consort of the four-year junior college. It may be said in passing that the promise and realization of this lower unit make it also deserving of a more extensive exposition than it has so far enjoyed.

While a book on the subject has been needed for some years, publication at this juncture in world, national, and in consequence, educational affairs gives it a special timeliness. The rise of the junior college is almost entirely a phenomenon of the twentieth century. With its first examples emerging around the start of the nineteenth hundreds, the movement got under really great headway in the twenties and thirties and was on the way to pronounced acceleration

when it was seriously slowed down by the demands for young manpower during the war period. All indications are for an unprecedented growth during postwar years. To date, the junior college units in public school systems have been mainly of two types: the larger number have been "associations" of junior college with high school years, for the most part on a three-two or a four-two basis (junior college years housed with three-year or four-year high schools), and a somewhat smaller proportion have been operating as two-year units in plants separate from the high school.

Contemporaneously with the rise of the junior college, junior high school reorganization, up to our entering World War II, was continuing its rapid spread. In order to indicate the current extent of acceptance of the junior high school idea without taking space to report at length the status and growth of this reorganization for the entire country, I draw briefly on a study made recently by a superintendent friend who heads a school system in a city of about thirty thousand.¹ The study was made to aid in arriving at a policy concerning reorganization in the superintendent's local situation and involved inquiry concerning type of organization, date of reorganization, and attitudes toward the reorganized schools in more than seventy cities of comparable size (20,000 to 40,000 population) distributed to thirty-six states. All but a few of these systems are operating on a reorganized basis, most of them on the six-three-three pattern. Almost all, as could be guessed without inquiry, had shifted to the present arrangement from the eight-four or seven-four plans, although a scattered few had shifted from the six-two-four or other plans. The dates of effecting reorganization range from 1913 to 1940. The years of reorganization for fifteen, or almost a fourth, of the systems for which answers on the point were reported, were from 1936 to 1940. This proportion is proof that junior high school reorganization was still going on at a steady rate up to the clamping down of priorities on materials needed for building construction, shortly before the opening of hostilities. The inquiry after attitudes asked whether the following groups were "favorable," "somewhat divided," or "definitely opposed" to the organization in operation: administrative and supervisory officers, senior high school faculty, junior high school faculty, elementary school faculty, and patrons. Of all indications of attitude in the reorganized systems that were reported, about six-sevenths were "favorable," fewer than a seventh were "somewhat divided," and fewer than one per cent

¹ Dr. Zed L. Foy, superintendent of schools, Boise, Idaho.

were "definitely opposed." The variation of proportions from group to group is too small to provoke comment. The general inference from returns of this inquiry is that junior high school reorganization is still a dynamic movement and must and will be taken into account in any planning of future development of the nation's schools.

To return to the comment on timeliness of publication of this book: this timeliness arises from the general conjunction of the junior high school and junior college movements and also from the expectation of continued extension of junior high school reorganization and of unprecedented growth of the junior college in the postwar period. Questions have often been raised about the administrative clumsiness of a needlessly interrupted succession of lower schools, including elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, and junior colleges, one or more of which are too short to be maximally effective units. Facing this issue, a number of systems besides that of Pasadena, as is reported by the authors in the body of this book, have already been committed to and are working out what recommends itself as the most acceptable pattern of organization—the six-four-four plan. Preferences of administrative officers in systems with junior colleges, obtained by interview, lean predominantly to this plan. The idea of this plan emerged with notable frequency, even though not mentioned in the questionnaire, in the study of junior high school reorganization drawn upon in the foregoing paragraph: a dozen of the respondents reported the six-four-four plan as being in actual operation (one system), as "preferred" (three systems), and as being or having been "considered" (eight systems). All indications are that commitments to this pattern will pile up in postwar years, and that systems with six-year elementary schools, four-year junior high schools, and four-year junior colleges (the "new American colleges") will multiply at an accelerated rate.

In making such a prediction, one would be rather foolhardy to assume that this country will ever see a single universal organizational pattern in operation—even the six-four-four pattern. We have never had universality in this regard, and universality may not even be desirable in a rapidly changing society. However, we have had *dominant* patterns, the latest of which—dominant in educational thought and almost so in practice—has been the six-three-three organization. In view of the increasing frequency of upward extension of the basic school system to include the junior college years, it is altogether likely that within a quarter century the six-four-four plan will be dominant,

or rapidly approaching dominance, in both educational thought and practice. It is surely not too soon now to have at hand treatises on the issues and procedures involved in working out the plan.

This book will serve well the needs of at least two main groups of readers. One of these groups includes persons who seek only an understanding of the significance of this innovation in organization at the upper high school and junior college levels, about which to date there have been in educational literature many brief and scattered allusions and discussions, but on which we have had no substantial treatise. The other group includes administrators and teachers who seek the same understanding and want also concrete guidance on how to put this reorganization into effect.



PREFACE

This volume, dealing with the basic philosophy, organization and administration of the New American College or the four-year junior college, is written from the public school point of view. It rests the case of the four-year unit on three fundamental educational principles: (a) the junior college years (grades 13 and 14) are distinctly secondary in character. They carry to completion the program of secondary education started in the junior and senior high schools. Their purposes and objectives are in no sense different from those of the lower levels; (b) being secondary in character they belong in connection with the public school system rather than with the standard college and university. The 12th grade does not constitute a logical stopping place; (c) the most logical, educationally sound, and economical manner in which to unite these grades to the public school span is through a union with the upper two high school years, thus comprising a New American College, embracing grades 11 to 14 inclusive, organized as a single institution and constituting the upper unit of what is popularly termed the 6-4-4 plan of public school organization.

There is no inclination on the part of the authors to assume that the four-year junior college is impossible as a private organization. In fact, some of the most efficient four-year units are now organized on private foundations. The position of the authors is that this New American College constitutes the most favorable setting thus far devised for the universal expansion of junior college education in the public schools, and in this volume an attempt has been made to set forth the most feasible methods of organization and administration of such a unit.

The authors apologize for the frequent reference made to the Pasadena situation over which they preside as superintendent and principal, respectively. There are two reasons, however, why this could not be avoided. First, it is the organization with which they are most familiar. They had charge of the organization when it was set up on the 6-3-3-2 basis. They have had experience with the institution both as a two-year and as a four-year organization. They have watched its development from the beginning and the vast majority of conclusions set

forth in this volume are the direct results of experimentation within the Pasadena Junior College. Secondly, the city of Pasadena was the first community of considerable size to organize on the 6-4-4 plan and to demonstrate its feasibility. It has experimented with the four-year unit for sixteen years. It has been surveyed by experts under public and private auspices. Their reports are available to the public and without exception place the stamp of approval upon the organization. The Pasadena Junior College, therefore, constitutes the most available source of data regarding the four-year organization.

There is no thought on our part to condemn the two-year junior college. For the time being at least there are situations in which the two-year unit, even with all its handicaps, constitutes the most feasible form of junior college organization. Instead of putting one form of junior college organization against the other in a series of competitive comparisons, the authors prefer to present the four-year organization solely upon its own merits. It has been impossible to avoid comparisons entirely but the approach of the authors has been constructive throughout.

It will be observed that many of the characteristics and procedures described for the four-year unit would work equally well with the two. The aim in this volume has been to describe the most efficient organization and practices for the four-year unit without regard to their bearing on other forms of organization.

The authors wish to extend due recognition to those members of their staff who have co-operated with them in the preparation of this volume. Recognition is particularly made of much valuable work in the compilation of the bibliographies on the part of Dr. Georgia May Sachs of the superintendent's staff. Much credit must also be given to members of the secretarial staff for many painstaking contributions. The work of Miss Pauline Novak and Miss Irene Strickler merits special recognition.

The authors express their mutual delight at the privilege of co-operating in this fascinating educational experience. It is their sincere hope that this volume may prove of some value to those who are giving their time and effort to the cause of junior college education.

JOHN A. SEXSON, Superintendent of Schools

JOHN W. HARBESON, Principal of the
Pasadena Junior College

Pasadena, California
August, 1945



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PART I. GENERAL OVERVIEW



Chapter 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEW AMERICAN COLLEGE

THE NEW AMERICAN COLLEGE DEFINED

THE term "New American College," or "four-year junior college," is descriptive rather than definitive. It has been used to identify an organization characteristic of a few school systems rather than to call up a definite image of an institutional pattern. Attempts to define the traditional four-year college have been but partially successful. The nearest approach to such a definition is the one made by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which attempts definition in terms of number of professors, length of courses in arts and sciences, and admission requirements. But, after defining this well-known institution objectively by inventorying easily identified characteristics, the foundation found that some 75 per cent of the institutions calling themselves "colleges" could not qualify by its definition. If this situation exists with respect to the standard college, the situation with respect to the far less standardized four-year junior college is obviously more confused.

The best that can be done at present is to describe a structural pattern and to orient it with respect to the well-recognized present structure of American public and private education. In such terms, the New American College, or the four-year junior college, is an educational institution constituting an integral part of the American secondary school system, admitting students upon the completion of the tenth year of the public schools. It provides them with a full four-year course in general and occupational education, requiring the completion of a standard number of units with satisfactory standards of achievement, and operating with a professionally qualified faculty within an

adequately equipped plant. Structurally, the unit is the upper, or capstone, unit of a public school system, following the tenth year of the public school and reaching to the mid-area of the standard college. It is misleading to say that it "terminates at the end of the sophomore year of the standard college" in that as an institution the four-year junior college may not have, and in practice often does not have, the curricula or the objectives of the freshman and sophomore years of the standard college. Its significance as an innovation in our practice in educational organization lies in the fact that it provides a secondary school with larger areas of knowledge suitable for students of this age group, and provides for them a greater continuity of educational experience and with experiences of vastly greater social significance.

Structurally, the institution belongs to the public, or common, school system and not to the college. It caps our system of universally free public education and in no sense dangles below our system, if such it is, of higher education. The structure of the public school system that supports it may be of a wide variety of types, such as a kindergarten or nursery school followed by a six-year elementary school and a four-year junior high school, or any other of the many possible and wholly practicable organizations of the nine, ten, eleven, and twelve years of educational experience which a given community may elect to provide in its preschool, kindergarten, primary, elementary, and junior high schools.

Its four classes or years are designated as freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. The relationships between these years or grades are such as will provide a continuous, unbroken, and uninterrupted educational experience for the student. The content of the curricula of the freshman and sophomore years is planned in the light of student needs for the entire four years. They do not justify a graduation, a diploma, or a break at the end of the twelfth, or sophomore, year as might be inferred by one who thinks of these years as the terminal years of the traditional secondary school. The eleventh-year student (freshman) identifies himself immediately with an institution, with a planned and continuous program, with activities and experiences designed to meet his needs, with a student body government which serves his social extracurricular needs and provides him with opportunities for citizenship duties and responsibilities. In short, the student finds himself in "college"—an institution that differs sufficiently from the one he has left to provide interest and novelty, but enough like it