

## The N. S. F. Institute of Biology for College Teachers

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Summer institutes, created and financed by the National Science Foundation, constitute one type of educational stimulus provided by that organization. They are directed by Dr. E. W. Palmquist and fall under the division of Scientific Personnel and Education.

Summer institutes have been held in several scientific fields. In 1955, biology institutes were offered to different combinations of personnel, such as to research workers and biology teachers, to high school and college teachers, to high school teachers and administrators, and to college teachers and administrators. Some were based on dispersion of information and on conferences and others involved research projects by the participants.

The 1955 Institute of Biology for Teachers of College Biology was held at the University of Wyoming. Its announced purpose was threefold: 1) to present the recent developments in the fields of biology, in order to inspire teachers to develop talent among students, 2) to allow college biology teachers to exchange ideas on newer methods and techniques of teaching, and 3) to emphasize the social and economic importance of biology. It consisted of three weeks of lectures, laboratory exercises, study groups and conferences on the University campus, followed by two weeks of field work at the University of Wyoming Science Camp in the Medicine Bow Mountains.

In promoting the Institute, the National Science Foundation offered 25 stipends of \$250 each. There were many more applications than could be filled. It was publicized through 775 brochures to colleges and departments, through letters to college presidents and through advertising in *Science* and in the *A. I. B. S. Bulletin*. Thirty-five college biology teachers attended the full five weeks of the Institute, a total of 52 were registered and there were, in addition, more than 55 visitors. Twenty-three States were represented by the registrants.

The program at the University of Wyoming consisted of lectures by 12 outstanding visiting authorities, of demonstrations of laboratory procedures, and of study groups and conferences to pool and summarize the group discussions. The study groups were more than usually effective because they were small and were guided by questions which had been sent in previously by the registrants and had been organized by the directors. To the weekly conferences were presented the most controversial of these questions, followed by a general summary by the chairman of each group. No small part of the success of the entire program was the vast amount of mimeographed material made available, consisting of abstracts of lectures and conference conclusions written by the registrants.

The work at the Science Camp was handled by three field experts taking out small rotating groups for plant ecology, animal ecology, and limnology studies. This provided not only demonstrations of field methods and instruments, but also knowledge of the biology of the area.

One of the fine features of the Institute was the efficiency and thoughtfulness of the director, Dr. William B. Owen, Professor of Zoology, University of Wyoming, of his wife, and of the Associate Director, Dr. Harry V. Truman, Associate Professor, Denison University. The University of Wyoming campus with its attractive buildings, western hospitality, fine summer climate, and nearby Science Camp, made an excellent location. Every care was exercised in providing comfort in dormitory and cabin (Science Camp) living. Extracurricular activities were so numerous and well planned that an acquaintance with the area could be obtained by all.

As a registrant at the 1955 Wyoming Institute of Biology, the author would like to note the following benefits derived. The opportunity to hear

and to know top-ranking authorities in various biological fields and to receive the latest research developments is of first importance. Such men as G. W. Beadle, Ernst Mayr, Robert Emerson, George S. Avery, Jr. and A. E. Emerson are not only outstanding leaders in their fields but personalities who make lasting impressions. The discussion of common problems with others in similar positions is of great value to teachers. New ideas and techniques, new friends and other invaluable experiences result from such contacts. It should be noted here that a summary of the conference conclusions has been made by the author and is available upon request.

Since it is understood that the National Science Foundation will continue to sponsor summer institutes it is recommended that as many teachers avail themselves of this opportunity as possible.

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