

The point to be made is that many students have certain defects at the time of their entrance to college and others acquire defects during college but, unless the condition affects the student's ability to do college work to the point that he may be forced to withdraw from college, or his condition is a menace to other students, there is no regular effort made to see that his defects are corrected or remedied. The colleges have not insisted upon the student's rehabilitation in this matter of defectiveness.

The colleges need accept only a small part of the blame for this circumstance. College requirements for their degrees do not include the presentation by the student of a record of corrected or remedied defects. Society has given no mandate to the colleges to proceed to the rehabilitation of students with physical defects. As a matter of fact, society has opposed such acts by colleges as infringements upon the rights of private institutions and practitioners.

If one considers the traditional attitude of college administrations regarding the nature of the educational experience and the attitude of the public at large regarding the responsibility of the college for the correction of defects, one can understand why more has not been done to lower the rate of defectiveness among college men.

A new and unusual situation confronts the colleges now. Colleges are being asked to modify their efforts where they can to meet in a better fashion the needs of a nation at war. Certainly the overcoming wherever possible of the physical defectiveness of the individual is a goal worthy of attainment now.

The nature of the program by which this goal may be reached is common knowledge among professional health and physical education people. For at least 70 years some colleges and universities have been conducting, in some part, this program.

To bring about a lowering of the number of persons having remediable defects, the college needs to conduct a thorough physical examination for each student at the time of his entrance to the college. This examination should take into account the standards set by the Army, Navy, Air Forces, and Marine Corps for admission to their services.

In conjunction with the physical examination the college should institute a program of referring those students with remediable defects to some rehabilitation agency. The referral procedure should be airtight. The follow-up on each case should continue until the defect has been corrected or remedied. The college must accept the responsibility for enforcing the rehabilitation program.

The colleges have established the precedent of giving physical examinations to the entering students. This practice is carried on with the sanction of the medical profession. To meet the present demand the colleges, in some instances, may have to raise the quality of their examinations. They may have to enlarge the examination to meet the standards of the medical examination for the various branches of military service. These changes the colleges can make now.

The success of the rehabilitation program lies, however, in the strictness with which it is enforced. This task belongs to the college. How can the responsibility be met? There are several ways.

The college can make the remedying of defects a requirement for continuance of the student in good standing. The college may insist that students with remediable defects have them corrected by a certain date if they wish to remain in college. In taking this position the college is expanding the meaning of a higher education to include fuller preparation of the individual for service to his community as well as to himself.