

University of Virginia  
Extension Division

*Progress Report*  
of the  
*Northern Virginia University*  
*Center*

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## FOREWORD

For a period of something over thirty-five years the University of Virginia has been conducting an organized program of off-campus or extension instruction. The program has embraced formal courses offering credit toward University degrees, informal non-credit courses, conferences and institutes, an art and drama service, a service to local groups in assessing community needs and resources and related activities. Throughout this period, work with individuals and communities within a radius of one hundred miles of Charlottesville, the seat of the University, has been extensive and mutually rewarding. But work with more distant centers and areas of the state has been limited. In a renewed effort to make its services state-wide in scope, the University has been setting up in strategic localities throughout the state administrative units called "University Centers". For some years such centers have been maintained in the larger cities of Virginia. More recently centers have been established in Marion in Southwest Virginia and in Arlington in Northern Virginia, the better to serve these areas.

The report that follows is a progress report on the Northern Virginia University Center since its beginnings in 1949 by its Local Director, Professor J. N. G. Finley. It records achievements of some note that may be of special interest to residents of the area. Furthermore, it suggests possibilities of greater educational services from their State University to the people of a populous and rapidly developing section of Virginia.

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## Progress Report

The Northern Virginia University Center was established by the University of Virginia Extension Division, in response to numerous requests of individual citizens, voluntary organizations, and official agencies, to make the various services of the University of Virginia more readily available in Alexandria, Falls Church, and the Counties of Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Frederick, Loudoun, Prince William, and Warren.

After a year's exploratory work, done jointly by a committee of citizens in northern Virginia and representatives of the University, the University Center opened, on October 1, 1949, an office provided by the Arlington County School Board in the Vocational Building of the Washington-Lee High School. From that date until February 1, 1950, the Center's staff consisted of a part-time secretary and an acting director, who came from Charlottesville for two or three days each week. During this period of four months the efforts of the part-time staff were devoted primarily to getting a better working knowledge of the area, appearing at meetings of various organizations to explain the Center's purposes, accumulating necessary mailing lists, and acquiring necessary supplies and equipment.

Something of the staff's effort during this first period went, inevitably, into the organization of several informal and formal educational activities the occasion for which had become ripe and the demand insistent. One of these activities was a class in *Speech for Teachers*, for twenty-five members of the staffs of Arlington County schools. One was a class on *The Far East in World Affairs*, for fifteen teachers in the Alexandria schools. Another was a meeting on the *County Manager Plan*, for twenty members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and the Intergovernmental Committee of the Fairfax Federation of Civic Associations, and representatives from Fairfax in the General Assembly. The fourth activity was a day-and-a-half *Conference on State and Local Fiscal Relations*, in which one hundred ninety-six persons were enrolled. The Conference was sponsored jointly

by the Center and six Arlington organizations: The AAUW, Civic Federation, Council of PTAs, Better Government League, Citizens Committee for School Improvement, and League of Women Voters.

From February 1 to June 15, 1950, the Local Director devoted full time during the week to the work of the Center, and commuted to Charlottesville on the week-ends. The provision for a staff secretary continued to be a part-time arrangement, as was true until after the middle of January, 1952. During this semester, the Center organized twenty informal (non-credit) or formal (credit) activities in which 478 persons were enrolled. The informal undertakings included shorter courses in *Basic Public Speaking* (2), *Conference Leadership* (2), *Public Speaking and Conference Leadership* (2), brief in-service training of supervisors in one school division, of teachers in another, *Rapid Reading Courses* (3), and an orientation program with the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Arlington County Planning Commission. The formal courses conducted were: *Government in the Far East*, *Introduction to International Politics*, *English Composition*, *Principles of Economics*, *Mathematical Analysis*, *Introduction to Mathematical Statistics* (2), and *Principles and Methods of Lip Reading*.

During the summer of 1950, the Local Director was in residence, but the whole staff was still small, and otherwise restricted, and no large effort was made to organize a summer program. Instead energies were directed towards the development of the program in the fall. Nevertheless, four activities were undertaken, two of them formal, two informal, the total enrollments in them numbering 188. The credit-course efforts were a *Problems Course in Education*, for Fairfax County supervisors, principals, and teachers, which met all day, every day for two weeks, and a similar course for teachers, principals, and supervisors in the Arlington County system. The informal activities were two week-long *Institutes for Custodians* which involved nearly every school custodian in Arlington.

In the two semesters of the academic year 1950-1951, from October first to May thirty-first, the Center organized 44 formal classes. The registration in these courses totalled

665. The classes were in Accounting (2), Commercial Law, Economics (2), Education (13), English Composition (2), Foreign Affairs, French (3), Mathematics (5), Physics (2), Psychology (4), Social Work, Sociology (2), and Speech (2). Besides, two courses were organized for refreshing persons intending to take the registration examinations for architects in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland. Also, the Center undertook with the Arlington County Police Department an in-service accident-prevention program in which 86 officers were enrolled.

In 1951, the requests for opportunities to do formal course work during the summer became more insistent. In response to this demand, a full (sixteen-weeks) summer program was planned. It was expected that enrollments would not be too numerous, but, in fact, 26 classes were organized, three more than in the best previous semester, and registrations totalled 368. Classes were organized in all the subjects in which courses had been provided during the previous fall and spring and, besides, in Naval Science, Russian, Spanish, and a review of pre-college mathematics. In addition, the Center sponsored, with the Community Chests and Councils of Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax, a day-long Regional Conference on Health, Welfare and Recreation for which over a hundred persons registered.

During the fall and spring semesters of the year 1951-1952, the total number of classes organized was 89, one more than twice the number conducted during the two corresponding semesters of the previous year, and registrations totalled 1,192, an increase of 79%. Advanced, as well as beginning, courses were conducted in many subjects in which only beginning courses had been given before, and some new subjects were added: Alternating Current Circuits and Alternating Current Measurements; Botany; Calculus; Creative Writing; Direct Current Circuits and Direct Current Measurements; English Literature; Public Administration; Shorthand; Statics; Tax Accounting; and Typing. In addition, the Center organized two week-long accident-prevention training courses conducted in Richmond, one for industrial accident supervisors, the other for motor vehicle fleet supervisors, in which 68 persons were enrolled; and

sponsored, along with the Community Chests and Councils of Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax, and District VI, Virginia Conference of Social Work, a Regional Conference on Health and Welfare, in which there were 86 enrollments.

It has happened that between the time its office door was first unlocked, on October 1, 1949, and April 30, 1952, a period of thirty months, the Center organized 193 informal and formal classes and institutes, the registrations in which numbered 3,458.

It has come about rather naturally that more of the formal classes organized by the Center have been conducted in the Washington-Lee High School, in Arlington, than in any other one spot, and it deserves to be said again that from the start office space, and also office equipment, has been provided by the Arlington County School Board. The next larger number has been held in the Alexandria Schools; but numerous classes have been held at various schools in the systems of Fairfax and Prince William; at churches of various denominations; at the Virginia Theological Seminary; in different federal buildings south of the Potomac; on the Marine Base at Quantico; in neighborhood houses; and in private homes. With rare exceptions (not more than three, and those involving co-sponsoring agencies), the use of the different premises, including light, heat, and custodial care, has been provided without any charge, as a contribution to the work of the Center and, through it, to the citizens of the area.

Further contributions to the work of the Center have been made by school authorities in all the divisions within the Center's area of operations; by federal, state, city, and county officials and organizations in great number; by private enterprises of different kinds; and by a host of individuals. Any success which the Center may be thought to have experienced must be credited to these people in northern Virginia.

J. N. G. Finley, Local Director  
Northern Virginia University Center