

5901 - 18th Street, N.
Arlington, Virginia
April 4, 1949

Mr. Colgate W. Darden, Jr., President
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Dear President Darden,

For some time many of our citizens have believed that there is a pressing need for the location in this area of an extension center of the University of Virginia to serve Northern Virginia. Recently this sentiment was translated into action when a request was sent to the University for assistance in making plans for the project. This action has resulted in three conferences between interested citizens of this area and representatives of the Extension Division of the University.

At the second meeting, held March 8, an exploratory committee, the membership of which is listed on the attached sheet, was designated to conduct further negotiations with the University. This committee met with Mr. George B. Zehmer and Professor John N. G. Finley, of the Extension Division, on March 28. At that time it was decided that a formal request would be made at once for consideration by the University of the possibility of establishing an extension office in Arlington this year to serve Northern Virginia. This letter constitutes that request.

The exploratory committee has found what it regards as ample evidence of diversified interests that will justify and support a reasonably broad extension program in this area. These include:

1. The desire of public-school teachers to take university credit courses which will either aid them in obtaining permanent certification, or a higher college degree;
2. The desire of present high-school seniors and employed recent high-school graduates, who have the wish but not the funds to enter Virginia colleges at present, to begin work toward their degrees and thereby reduce the future residence time required to obtain them; and
3. The desire of many of our newly arrived citizens to learn more about Virginia's geography, economic and sociological characteristics, her people, and her government -- State, county and local.

These are only examples, not a complete listing, of the interests that have been expressed, and which, the members of our committee believe, are not being adequately served by the institutions of higher learning located in this area. As indicated above, it is our belief that an extension center located in Arlington could serve a considerable portion of the area of Northern Virginia, and a considerably greater portion of the population of this section of the State. The area to be served would most certainly include Arlington and Fairfax counties and Alexandria city, and probably some or all sections of the nearby counties of Loudon, Prince William, Fauquier, and Stafford. As we see it, extension classes could be held in any other location within the area to be served where the local demand would be sufficient, as well as in Arlington.

Our proposal for action by the University is as follows:

1. If you conclude that further study of the desirability of opening an extension center in this area is needed, or if you do not have immediately available a qualified individual whom you could assign as director of extension work in this area, we suggest that as soon as possible you send a representative of the University here to study the situation from the University's point of view -- to meet with interested groups; to inspect possible quarters for offices and classrooms; and to estimate the demand for various types of courses through the use of questionnaires and interviews with teachers, high-school seniors, civic associations, and other groups.

2. If you are satisfied without further study that an extension center can profitably be located in this area, and you can readily obtain the services of a qualified individual to serve as director of this office, we suggest that arrangements be made at once to open the office as soon as possible with a full-time director in charge.

3. If the extension program for Northern Virginia is to function effectively in time for the beginning of the Fall terms of the University and other institutions of higher learning in the State, we believe that contact should be made before June with at least two of the major groups from which prospective extension students could be expected to come: The public-school teachers and the present high-school seniors.

As its immediate contribution toward the success of the project this committee will undertake the following activities:

1. Attempt to find suitable quarters to house the permanent extension office, and canvass the availability of suitable classrooms for extension classes;

2. Work with representatives of the University in making contact with local groups in ascertaining their interests in extension service;

3. Obtain local publicity for the project via the press, radio, etc., when such becomes desirable.

If you believe it desirable arrangements can be made for representatives of this committee to meet with you or any one you may designate in Charlottesville at your convenience for a discussion of this project.

We hope that we may be favored with an early answer to our request.

Yours very truly,

Temporary chairman,
Exploratory committee

This letter has been approved by the following members of the Committee:

- Mr. John J. Corson
- Mr. Christopher B. Garnett
- Mrs. Charles S. Goode
- Dr. Joseph B. Johnson
- Mr. C. Harrison Mann
- Mr. Philip M. Talbott
- Mrs. J. P. Yoder