

*Jack Dalton - you should be all
you make the report on it*

9-71

January 5, 1954

Zehner letter

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

Dear Mr. Darden:

This is a brief report on a meeting last evening with a group of citizens of Northern Virginia who were invited to hear our reports on developments in connection with our Northern Virginia University Center.

Mr. Jack Dalton of our Extension Committee was kind enough to accept my invitation to go with me. Besides Mr. Finley and his two assistants, we met with a group of approximately fifteen people representing the political divisions of Arlington County, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax County. No representatives were present, I believe, from King William and Loudoun, although plans were made by the group to invite representatives from these divisions to meet with them hereafter.

First Mr. Finley reported on the fall work. Approximately 700 students representing approximately 900 course registrations have been recorded. He estimates from the way the work is going that he will have an equally large enrollment for the spring semester. He anticipates an income from tuition and library fees of \$65,000 for the twelve-month period, and he feels that this will cover all expenses including those of administration.

Next I reviewed our interest in and developments in the Northern Virginia work of several years and pointed up the continuing interest in a daytime, two-year college in Northern Virginia. I emphasized the fact that we felt that we could continue to enlarge and develop the afternoon and evening extension class program, including the informal non-credit courses. Then I called particular attention to the fact that two or three circumstances called for a careful weighing on the part of the people of the Northern Virginia area the idea of a two-year college. First I emphasized the fact that as I understood your position it was that we would not take the initiative in the development of such an institution under University of Virginia auspices unless that was the clearly expressed wish of a responsible group of people of the area concerned. Next I called attention to the recent action of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools which would limit the work that can be completed toward the Bachelor's degree through extension classes to one year unless the parent institution established a branch in a physical plant, the essential

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features of which are described by the Southern Association together with other specifications; and I explained that the physical facilities and other conditions now existing in Northern Virginia did not meet fully the specifications prescribed by the Southern Association. Thirdly I called attention to the fact that a statement in the present budget act would prevent the University from establishing such a branch unless it had the consent of the State Board of Education and of the Governor of the Commonwealth.

I then explained that as I saw it, there were three alternatives: (1) Limit our offerings in Northern Virginia primarily to afternoon and evening programs of extension classes, which we felt we could develop and expand; (2) proceed independently of the University to establish a local college in cooperation with some other institution of higher education, or under their own jurisdiction; (3) through a responsible and representative group from Northern Virginia formally request the University to cooperate with them in the establishment of a branch through which day, afternoon and evening classes could be offered, some of which would be designed to enable students to complete two years of college work (in this branch), after which, if they so desired, they could transfer either to the University of Virginia or to some other college or institution of their choice.

The above alternatives were discussed at some length. The consensus was that there is a need for and a desire for a collegiate institution in the area that would provide at least two years of college work. There was equal unanimity on the proposal that such an institution should be developed under the auspices of the University of Virginia. There was warm approval of what the University has done thus far and seemingly a deep appreciation of the need for the type of work that we are now offering in extension. The feeling was that this was not enough.

The group felt, however, that the question needed further study and that several other people should be invited to join in the deliberations. The group formally organized into what they decided to call the Advisory Council to the Northern Virginia University Center and elected Mr. Clarence A. Steele as chairman. They made tentative plans to have a meeting shortly after the forthcoming session of the General Assembly.

Rather detailed minutes on the meetings were kept, and I think that these will be available for your review later. If in the meantime I can

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furnish any additional information, or if there are comments on the
above report, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

George B. Zehmer
Director

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cc: Mr. Jack Dalton
✓ Mr. J. N. G. Finley