

Home economics students are facing a new "crossroads" over a somewhat time-worn (in other fields) controversy. — do we need a more specialized or a more general curriculum?

"Our problem," says Dean LeBaron "is that home economics, a relatively new profession, has grown so there is a great wealth of information in every department. How is the student to learn enough in her own major if the curriculum is more liberalized? A Farm Journal editor says, "I'm not interested in a woman with a degree in home economics — I want to know what specific field that degree is in." Yet, many companies demand women with a good general background; the company will train them in specifics. And each year women continue to take jobs in fields outside their major. Two faculty members point out a few intricacies of this problem.

CROSSROADS

Miss Nelle Thompson, associate professor, Foods and Nutrition:

To provide the specialized training needed for a profession in a field of home economics and at the same time take care of the student who plans to be a homemaker and prefers a more generalized curriculum, is our problem. I'm sure there is no answer which wouldn't mean a loss one way while gaining another. The present core encourages a general education, both in the areas of home economics and some sciences and social sciences, while the requirements for a major is pointed to specialization. We have tended to increase the electives in recent years which allows the student more choice and more opportunity to generalize or liberalize her education. As an advisor, however, I know students are often tempted to use their electives on subjects which happen to fit into a convenient hour. Merely granting the student more electives, then, may not be the answer.

Miss Neva Petersen, associate professor, Applied Art:

To live successfully in the world today, you need to know about many things — philosophy, languages, music, art as well as science, mathematics and the more technical subjects.

The home economics course now gives a woman a liberal education and as time goes on it will grow more liberal. Just this year the AA department has combined two courses (AA 260, 2 credits, and AA 264, 3 credits) to make one course (AA 261, 4 credits). In doing this, one credit has been released from the core curriculum to give the student a chance for more electives. This is also happening in other departments.

Now, it is up to the student to choose her electives wisely in order to obtain a more liberal education along with her professional training. One course in some field totally new to a student will not make her an expert, but it will, at least, introduce her to a subject area which she can explore further on her own.