

University only school still operating jobs corps center

By CLAY EALS
Of the Emerald

"Early in 1965, the Job Corps began to set up its first centers. Young people from all over the country joined the new program. They came to learn things they missed in school. They came to learn skills that would help them get good jobs.

"And they came to work . . ."

So reads the first few lines of "Centers for Work and Training," one of the many booklets used in teaching reading to job corps women.

Job corps is a relatively new idea, having been in existence for a mere seven years. Job corps centers exist all over the United States, and are designed to provide vocational and educational training for high school and college-age disadvantaged men and women.

All job corps centers in the United States are funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. And all centers are administered by private corporations—all but one: the women's center located at the former Tongue Point naval air station near Astoria.

That center is administered by the University.

Tongue Point's 250 academic and classified staff are on the University's payroll, and the center comes under the jurisdiction of the University's College of Education.

700 corpswomen at Tongue Point

About 700 women from around the country—mostly from the southeastern portion of the United States—are enrolled in the center's various educational and vocational programs. About 85 per cent of the women are non-white.

Why is the University administering the Tongue Point center, and why did it initially seek the contract for administering it in 1965?

Ray Hawk, University vice president and an administrator under then-University President Arthur Flemming, says the reasons are two-fold.

"First, President Flemming felt a tremendous awareness and concern for the problems of minorities competing for jobs . . . and felt that the University should play a role in the matter of helping these young people prepare for jobs."

And second, "Schools have been failures in recruiting and continuing minority students . . . Tongue Point was a ready-made laboratory. We had the opportunity to study the implications of why youth who were disadvantaged did not make it into college," and how to correct that situation.

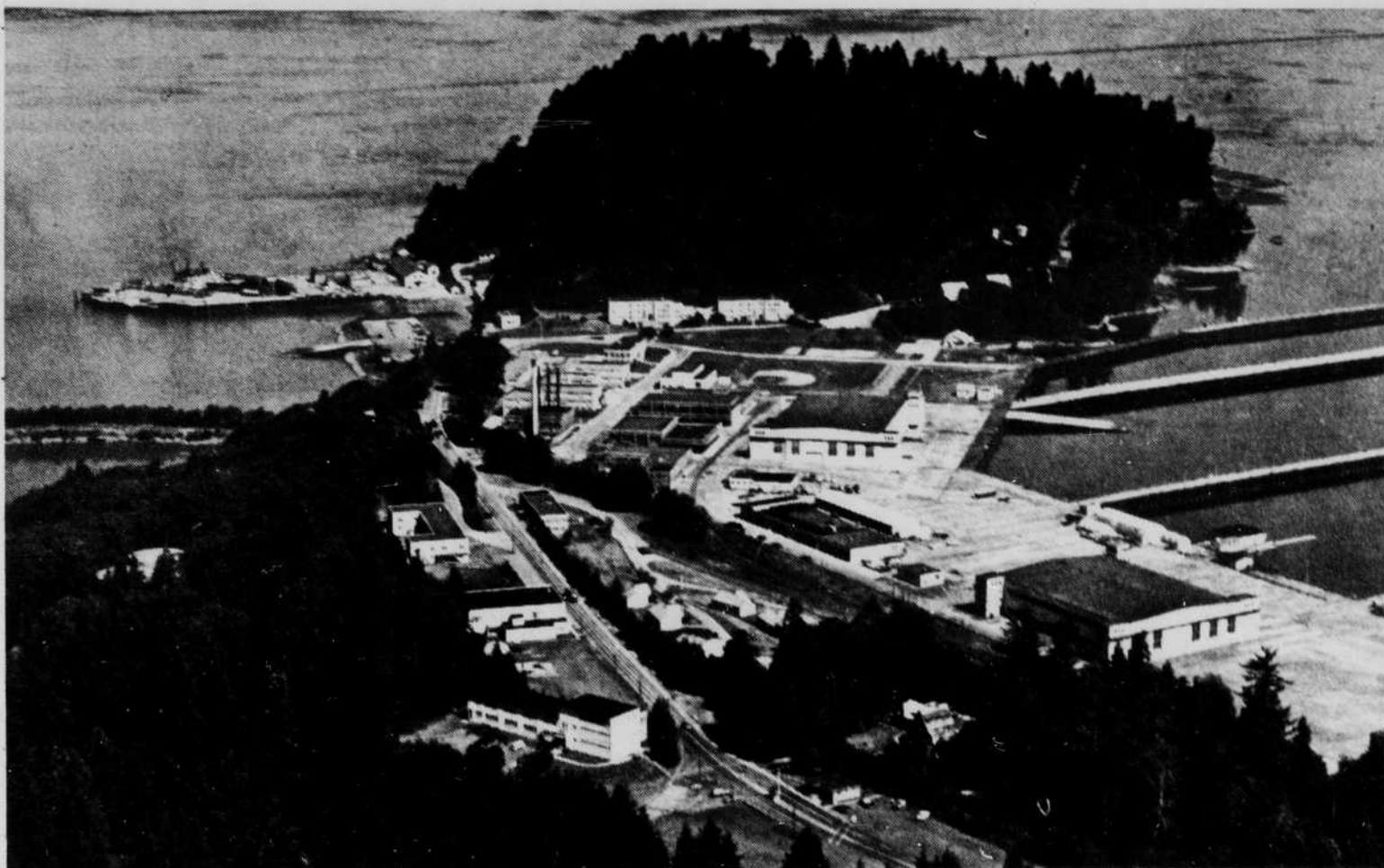
"It was a desire to have a human resources laboratory," Hawk says. "From an educational standpoint, there's a lot to be said for Tongue Point."

Hawk says there are few federal guidelines set down for the administration of Tongue Point. Other than specifying the vocational skills to be taught—according to the job situation in the country as a whole—and setting several program guidelines, the federal government does not intervene, he says.

"We have the latitude to do as much as we have the abilities to do," Hawk says.

The University has used a method of programmed learning at Tongue Point—step by step formula-type processes for all subjects taught at the center—because "simply, we don't know what else to do."

Hawk says the programmed learning being administered at Tongue Point is not so much a problem as are several other aspects of the center:



Tongue Point Job Corps Center

"We have had trouble finding people who are innovative," he says, teachers who can create different types of learning situations and who can work with minority youth at the same time.

"Extremely small" minority staff

—Also, "We are constantly building the staff of minority persons at the center," which currently is "extremely small," Hawk says. According to the center's director Raymond McDonald, 23.5 per cent of the 100 classified staff and four per cent of the 150 academic staff are non-white.

"Generally, these centers are not easy centers to run," Hawk says. A job corps center can become a political issue easily, he says, and a center may have difficult relations with the surrounding community. Most centers are located in small communities throughout the country on federal government land, Hawk says.

Despite the potential conflicts between a nearly all-white small community and a nearly all non-white job corps center, the situation at Tongue Point has been exceptionally good, Hawk says.

"We've done our best job in community relations," he says, "a heck of a good job on both sides. We've worked through this bug with a minimum amount of hassles."

University 'supports' job corps

Does the University's involvement with the federal job corps center at Tongue Point mean that the University is philosophically supporting the idea of federal job corps centers?

Hawk says yes.

"There is more than one road to an objective," he says, citing Tongue Point as one road toward helping disadvantaged high school and college age youth obtain educational and vocational skills.

The center is "providing, at an entry level, educational and vocational ability for a group of young people who really don't have much destiny in history unless something's done."

Most of the women who complete programs at Tongue Point go on to obtain jobs elsewhere, but some do attend college after their Tongue Point experience. And this is one substantial direct benefit to the University, Hawk says.

As with many federally funded programs, there is an excess amount of money spent by the federal government which can turn out to be profit for the administering agency—called overhead. Overhead money from the federal government for Tongue Point is received by the University, Hawk says, but the amount isn't substantial.

Most federally funded research and development programs leave as much as a 44 per cent overhead, but the overhead from Tongue Point is "less than five per cent," Hawk says.

And by the time the indirect costs—the time spent by University administrators, College of Education faculty members and

University committees—are accounted for, the five per cent overhead is soon reduced to nothing.

Small overhead

"There's no money in it at all," for the University, Hawk says.

What is the future of the University's relationship with Tongue Point? "We will continue as we have been," Hawk says. "It is a splendid laboratory as an adjunct to the University." College of Education faculty are "very pleased" with the center, Hawk says.

"We would like to do more research there," Hawk says, but the main obstacle to that is the distance—about 200 miles—between Eugene and Astoria.

"I do not have any doubts that we will continue" to seek the contract for administering Tongue Point, Hawk says.

From the federal government's standpoint, the University's administration of the center is good because the University's stated mission is education, while the mission of private corporations, for the most part, is profit.

"They (the federal government) would hate to lose the only University they have" administering job corps centers throughout the country, Hawk says.

It didn't used to be that way, he says. When the centers were opened around the country in 1965, many were administered by universities. But since then, all but the University have dropped the job corps center contracts, for various reasons—either political problems or bad community-center relations.

Summer conflict

Earlier this summer, a conflict developed at Tongue Point between the center director, McDonald, and two thirds of the summer term student teachers there.

On June 29, 12 of the 17 student teachers charged the center with racial discrimination in center staff hiring. The charges were made in a letter signed by the 12 student teachers and addressed to the University's Office for Affirmative Action.

The letter charged that, "Since the corps women who are clients of the center are all female and 85 per cent non-white, present staffing practices are overtly racist."

It also said, "Presently, the teaching staff is composed overwhelmingly of whites while the administration is entirely white. As this center is under contract to the University, and therefore all center staff is on the University payroll, the affirmative action plan should abide here."

The letter demanded that "there be an immediate halt to the hiring at this center until an investigation is made."

ASUO President Bill Wyatt decided to visit the center after receiving a copy of the letter and toured the center's grounds on Aug. 2 and 3. He met with center director McDonald to obtain a response to the charges made in the letter.

McDonald told him the charges were "erroneous, untrue . . . and made without investigation." He also said, "To make overall conclusions without investigating, I have no sympathy for students who do that. It shows poor judgment."

Charges 'erroneous'

The center at Tongue Point "had been investigated, audited and reviewed" by federal, regional and local agencies, and has been termed a "successful program," despite the low percentages of non-white academic and classified staff, McDonald said.

Persons "might be able to find some fault" with the center, McDonald said, "but it has to be done on an open and sincere, constructive basis."

He added he was irritated the student teachers had written the letter charging discrimination. Student teachers are only at the center to obtain teaching experience with disadvantaged persons, he said, and therefore, "We have to draw lines as to what the student teacher role is in the program."

"We're dealing with a large, disadvantaged volatile group of corps women. I don't want anything interfering with the potential success of our corps women," he said.

"Student teachers, without question, have made some great points," he told Wyatt, "but they have to know what their limitations are."

University students who need to complete a term of student teaching are encouraged by the College of Education to apply to teach for a term at Tongue Point.

Glenn Scofield, director of student teachers at Tongue Point, explains the benefits to student teachers, in a recent memo concerning student teaching, formally called the "field experience program":

"The purpose of the program is to provide specialized training for teacher trainees who, upon graduation, will seek teaching jobs in urban or rural areas with large concentrations of disadvantaged children.

"Job Corps centers, like the one located in Astoria, offer realistic laboratories for learning to understand the characteristics, the value systems and the educational problems of the millions of youngsters who annually drop out of our public schools.

"The traditional American education system has been unable to offer meaningful and purposeful classroom experiences for large numbers of these youngsters.

"Many of today's teacher trainees, both secondary and elementary, are concerned about this problem and are dedicated to playing a part in educational change that will make a difference.

"The Astoria project is designed to help prospective teachers gain the perceptual skills and the knowledge of specialized materials which will enable them to make a difference when they enter the field as certified teachers."