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Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education

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Department of the Interior,

BUREAU OF EDUCATION,

Washington, D. C., August 3, 1899.

To Presidents, Treasurers, and Boards of Control
of State Colleges of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts,
and of Institutions of like Character
for the Education of Colored Students.

GENTLEMEN: Your attention is respectfully called to the requirements of the Act of Congress, approved August 30, 1890, in aid of the land grant colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts, respecting the annual reports of the presidents and treasurers of said institutions to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, and to certain decisions respecting the disbursement of the funds authorized by the said act.

1. The annual reports of treasurers are required to be made on or before September 1st of each year (section 2).

2. The reports of presidents must be received before the States can be certified for the annual installments of this fund, and it is respectfully requested that they be forwarded to this office not later than September 1st of each year.

3. The funds annually appropriated by the Act of August 30, 1890, must be expended during the year for which they are appropriated and for the purposes specified in the said act and can not be allowed to accumulate in the form of an unexpended balance or be invested as a permanent interest-bearing fund. (Decision of the Assistant Attorney General, June 20, 1899.)

4. The funds are “to be applied only to instruction in agriculture, the mechanic arts, the English language, and the various branches of mathematical, physical, natural, and economic science, with special reference to their applications in the industries of life, and to the facilities for such instruction.” It is held that this language authorizes the purchase from this money of apparatus, machinery, text-books, reference books, stock and material used in instruction, or for the purposes of illustration in connection with any of the branches enumerated, and the payment of salaries of instructors in said branches only.

5. The expenditure of any portion of these funds for the purchase, erection, preservation or repair of any building or buildings under any pretense whatever is specifically prohibited by the act (section 3), and the purchase of land is not allowable (decision of Assistant Attorney General, March 1891).

6. The salaries of purely administrative officers, such as presidents, treasurers, secretaries, bookkeepers, janitors, watchmen, etc., can not be charged to this fund (decision of Assistant Attorney General, March 7, 1894), nor can it be expended for heating or lighting buildings, musical instruments, salaries of instructors in pedagogy and in ancient and modern languages (except English). When an administrative officer also gives instruction in any of the branches of study mentioned in the Act of August 30, 1890, or when an instructor gives such instruction and also devotes part of his time to giving instruction in branches of study not mentioned in the said act, only a part of such person’s salary proportionate to the time devoted to giving instruction in the branches of study mentioned in the said Act of August 30, 1890, can be charged to these funds.

7. In view of the fact that unexpended balances have been allowed heretofore to be carried over from year to year, and in order that the institutions having such unexpended balances may not be unnecessarily embarrassed by the decision of the Assistant Attorney-General of June 20, 1899, due time will be allowed such institutions to apply the unexpended balances on hand to the purposes for which they have been granted. But hereafter the Department will insist on the expenditure annually of substantially the entire amount appropriated by the Act of August 30, 1890, and boards of control of agricultural and mechanical colleges are requested to make provision for such expenditures. It is understood of course that contracts may be entered into for machinery or other educational material, which, for good reasons, may not be ready and paid for until the following year. In such cases it is sufficient to explain by a note in the report, that the balance is held for the purpose of liquidating bills already incurred, and stating the nature of the outstanding contracts.

Respectfully,

E. A. HITCHCOCK,
Secretary.

Approved:

E. A. HITCHCOCK,
Secretary.

W. S. Harris
Commissioner.