A new program added during this period was Domestic Science. Another of the school’s progressive programs, this would evolve into Home Economics. On a national level this discipline was developed by Ellen Richards, the first women graduate of MIT. Richards, like many progressive thinkers of the day, had “faith in science as a cure-all.” She worked to apply scientific principles to improve society, beginning with the home. http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/homeEc/cases/profession.html

Home Economics paired practical instruction with theoretical study of the latest research on child development, family health, and family economics. Attracting almost exclusively female students, and taught exclusively by female faculty, this science could satisfy those who looked back to a golden age when women attentions were focused on running a household, but also to more modern, progressive thinkers who saw improvement of the world as their mission, starting with the household.

To them, applying social and natural science data to improving the quality, health, efficiency and economy of the home and developing training programs for students in the elementary and secondary schools that pass on this knowledge, would improve the condition of mankind.

ISNS publications began mentioning this discipline in the first years of the century in its Normal Herald, a quarterly publication which provided school and alumni news and often included a professional development section. Authors in this publication spoke for the need for this program, which they argued would improve the health of families.

Under Ament, this program expanded with additions of rooms fitted up in “a scientific manner.” Instructors for the program had studied at some of the nation’s
leading institutions of Home Economics education. They described their discipline with serious, reformist rhetoric and argued for it with scientific language.

The *Normal Herald* reported that Miss Ella Pine, who had a degree from University of Vermont in Domestic Science, based her teaching “on scientific principles.” The school’s 1915-1916 Catalog boasted that students in the Department of Household Arts and Science learned how to manage household affairs economically and in to understand sanitary laws that saved lives. It stated that, “The secret of thrift, is knowledge. Knowledge of domestic economy saves income. Knowledge of sanitary laws saves health and life.”

Students in the program studied historical and current design of the home, cooking and food science, and sewing. This program teamed actual experiences in administering a home with teaching methods and courses which included aspects of hygiene, chemistry, physics, zoology, physiology, and botany. Natural sciences were so important to the study of this major that the Home Economics faculty considered those teaching in the sciences to be a part of their faculty. [http://www.archive.org/stream/annualcatalogueo1916indi#page/53/mode/1up](http://www.archive.org/stream/annualcatalogueo1916indi#page/53/mode/1up)

The program was also designed to be responsive to the demands of the public schools that were beginning to teach home economics. Study in the program earned students a teaching certificate that would allow them to teach its health and life preserving principles in the common schools.

**Commercial Program**

“Successful men and women of every calling in life recognize the advantages of a thorough business education. To those who intend to pursue an active business
career, such training is an indispensable aid. For this reason, and in order to furnish teachers for business departments in high schools, the commercial department was added to our school several years ago. Its object is to instruct young men and women in the laws, customs and forms of business; to cultivate in them habits of neatness, accuracy and thoroughness of work; to familiarize them with practical business problems, and in every way possible prepare them for successful business careers. The teachers are of the regular school faculty and are specialists in their several lines.” (ISNS Catalog, 1915) http://www.archive.org/stream/annualcatalogueo1915indi#page/63/mode/1up

As the nation’s economy expanded and modernized in the early part of the 20th century, the demand increased for trained office workers and teachers in high schools and commercial colleges to train students for careers in business. Women students, eager for employment in offices or schools to train office workers, came to ISNS to take classes in the commercial program.

By the summer of 1905, the Normal Herald explained that graduates of its teachers training program for commercial subjects could “command excellent salaries.” Advertisements promised students that “the completion of one of these courses with us means Life-Long Independence.”