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ABSTRACT

A decline in the college-going rate for high school graduates, and the shrinking public school population with its resultant decline in the demand for new teachers, have both contributed to drops in enrollment which many schools of education are experiencing. There are ways, however, by which schools of education can avoid disastrous results. These include the following: (a) eliminate nonproductive programs and courses, (b) retrain faculty in areas of declining interest for employment in growth or stable fields, (c) offer elective courses which appeal to noneducation majors, (d) plan new programs based on existing faculty and physical resources, (e) recruit faculty with flexible, broad-based academic preparation, (f) develop cooperative programs with other academic departments, (g) lobby for more favorable and equitable funding, (h) consolidate and integrate training programs among institutions producing a small percentage of teachers, and (i) prepare students for two or more career options. (PB)

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SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION IN A PERIOD  
OF  
CRISIS AND CHANGING STUDENT INTEREST

Two major factors--both demographic--have contributed to the current drop in enrollment which many schools of education are experiencing. First, the college going rate for high school graduates has declined from a 1969 high of 62 per cent to a 1974 level of less than 55 per cent.<sup>1</sup> This decline has produced overall enrollment drops in many of the nation's four-year institutions. For example, for the fall of 1974, 34 per cent of these institutions had a decrease in full-time enrollment, 27 per cent had part-time enrollment declines, and 31 per cent had reductions in freshman enrollment.<sup>2</sup>

A second factor is the shrinking public school population and the resultant decline in the demand for new teachers. Student enrollment in public and non-public elementary schools has been declining since 1970 and is expected to continue to do so throughout the 1980's. In fact, overall school age population (those between 5 and 17, inclusively) is expected to decline over the next 10 to 15 years. By 1982, the 5 to 17 population is expected to be

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen Green, editor, A Fact Book on Higher Education, American Council on Higher Education, 1974, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>"Enrollment Rose 4 Pct. this Fall, Study Indicates," The Chronicle, November 11, 1974, p. 2.

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about one million less than it was in 1960, and about seven million less than in 1972. Correspondingly, enrollment will decline in the schools through the 1970's and 1980's.<sup>3</sup>

This drop in school age population has produced a concomitant decline in the demand for new certificated classroom teachers. One source indicates that during the 1970's only 2.4 million openings will appear while our institutions are training over 4.2 million new teachers. College students have already responded to this stimulus from the labor market and turned away from education as a vocational interest. As evidence of this trend, the American College Testing Service reported a drop of nearly 36 per cent in the number of entering college freshmen planning to major in education in 1973-74 as compared with 1967-68.<sup>4</sup>

For schools of education staffed and geared to the rapidly expanding teacher preparation programs of the 1960's, these trends bode ill. It appears that unless a number of affirmative steps are taken, schools of education can anticipate reduced budgets, non-renewal of faculty contracts and postponement of new programs. There appear to be, however, a number of affirmative steps which schools of education may take in an effort to ameliorate or forestall retrenchment. The following paragraphs briefly explore these opportunities.

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<sup>3</sup>Green, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>"Trends in Choosing Majors," Activity, The American College Testing Program, January, 1975, p. 1.

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1. Eliminate non-productive programs and courses - One of the most expensive and questionable practices of schools of education is the retention of non-productive programs and courses. Academic programs should be critically examined with a view to the phasing out of those with low production. A criterion of 5 baccalaureate or 3 masters degrees awarded during the preceding three years seems to be a sound basis for a program's retention. Programs having lower productivity should be unequivocally justified if they are to be continued.

Courses should also be carefully examined on the basis of their enrollments and content. This writer feels that courses should attract a minimum of 12 students for freshman and sophomore level courses, 8 for junior and senior courses and 5 for masters degree level offerings. When courses fail to meet these criteria over a two-year period, two alternatives should be considered. First, offering the course on a less frequent basis, or second, dropping the course from the curriculum.

Course contents should also be carefully examined to insure that duplication does not exist. More than one school of education has found itself offering multiple sections of introductory research methodology or statistics, when the content of the various sections was essentially the same. Where duplication is recognized, consideration should be given to combining sections and phasing out or deleting unneeded offerings.

2. Faculty retooling - Although the overall trends for teacher employment are bleak, there are bright spots such as special education, vocational-

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technical subjects and kindergarten. In some states and in certain areas, potential for enrollment increases and program growth seems promising. The suggestion then is for a retooling of faculty trained in areas of declining student interest in order to equip them for continued employment in growth or stable fields.

The advantages of this approach are clear. Nothing can devastate a faculty's morale as much as the threat or promise of a reduction in staff. The affirmative opportunity for retraining in a new but allied field can do much to counter this apprehension. Moreover, the retention of a "retooled" faculty member is doubly positive because of his experience and familiarity with the institution's programs and academic climate.

A number of institutions are providing retooling opportunities to selected faculty members through a range of subsidized educational opportunities. Among these programs are full-year or semester sabbaticals, summer study grants and late afternoon or evening study on the home campus or the campus of a sister institution.

3 Offer elective courses which appeal to non-education majors. -  
Historically, education courses have drawn their clientele almost exclusively from education majors or other students seeking preparation for teaching certification. Careful consideration, however, should be given to the development of courses which have a campus-wide appeal. Examples of such courses would be "the study of education as a social phenomenon," "instructional media," "introductory child study" and "reading improvement." Each of these courses

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could appeal to a student who is majoring in another field and is seeking academic experiences in support of his major area or to the student who desires an interesting elective course.

4. Plan new programs based on existing faculty and physical resources - Faculty and physical resources of schools of education are frequently adequate to offer programs in areas outside of the traditional teaching fields. With an overarching commitment to human service, schools of education can easily reconcile the addition of such programs to their curriculums without the agony of an identity crisis or philosophical re-direction. As examples of successful non-teacher training programs which are currently being offered by some schools of education, consider the following. A counseling education program has expanded its programs to include college student personnel services, ministerial counseling, employment counseling, and psychological counseling for community agencies and institutions. A department of physical and health education is offering programs in recreation and parks management, and a department of elementary education has added a program to train day care center directors.

5. Recruit flexible faculty - When the opportunity to add new faculty or to fill existing positions arises, attention should be given to the recruitment of candidates with flexible, broad-based academic preparation. For example, a special educator with extensive training in reading would be well prepared to shift his time between the two programs as student interest rises and falls. Consideration should also be given to the joint recruitment and appointment of

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personnel with departments outside of the school of education. A public administrator trained in public finance and administration could be well qualified for service in the Departments of Political Science and School Administration.

In either of the aforementioned examples, the broadly-trained faculty member serves as a clear asset in a period of declining and shifting student interest.

6. Develop cooperative programs with other academic departments - A great opportunity is available to the school of education which thrusts itself into cooperative program development efforts with other academic departments. Such efforts not only afford the school an expanded range of programs and students, but they also provide occasions for faculty stimulation and professional development. A number of emerging fields of study appear ripe for the involvement of schools of education. Among these are gerontology with home economics, sociology and psychology, instructional media with communication arts, computer assisted instruction with computer science and management science with business administration and political science.

7. Enhanced Funding - Programs in professional education have long held a reputation of under-funding, under-staffing and over-subscription. There is compelling evidence to support these assertions. A 1972 study of Virginia's state-supported institutions showed that the average salary of upper division faculty in education was \$11,174. This figure compares with salaries of \$12,433 for business administration, \$13,427 for the health professions and \$14,373 for

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engineering.<sup>5</sup> The same study demonstrated that the cost per student credit-hour (this factor is a function of salary costs and class size) in education was \$19.52 as compared with \$26.66 for engineering and \$27.01 for English/Journalism.<sup>6</sup> Similar results were recorded in a 1974 study of Tennessee's publically supported institutions, with the credit-hour cost for education near the bottom of professional rates.<sup>7</sup>

The recommendation then is for schools of education to lobby for more favorable and more equitable funding--funding levels which are fully commensurate with the task of educating the nation's teachers. We should actively advocate class sizes and supervisory ratios which would enable us to effect fully the profitable instructional techniques of PRTE, micro-teaching, simulation and role-playing. As any Dean who has attempted these approaches knows, they are results producing methods, but at the same time they are costly in terms of manpower.

I am confident, however, that a period of declining enrollments is a time in which we can persuasively argue for a re-investment of our "surplus" resources into an improvement in the quality of our programs.

8. Consolidation and integration of training programs - David Clark and Egon Guba of Indiana University recently reported that over 1,340 institutions

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<sup>5</sup>State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, The Volume and Cost of Instructional Services at Virginia's Colleges, SCHLV, 1972, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup>Tennessee Higher Education Commission, IY 75 Appropriations Formula for Public Higher Education, THEC, 1974, p. 2.



of higher learning are currently training teachers.<sup>8</sup> This is a phenomenal number when we recognize that the demand for new college graduates prepared to teach will be something in the area of 133,000 for 1975.<sup>9</sup> Clark and Guba's study also revealed that only 68 per cent of these teacher producing institutions were members of AACTE and fewer than 40 per cent were NCATE accredited.<sup>10</sup>

When we consider also that institutions like Pennsylvania State University graduated nearly 1,500 baccalaureate teachers in 1973, Kean College over 1,100, and Central Michigan University over 1,972, there is obviously a very large number of institutions which are producing a very small percentage of our teachers. Perhaps these institutions as well as some of the mid-range teacher producers will want to consider consolidating their programs with those of other institutions. Or they may wish to share facilities, student teacher supervisors or other resources. I believe that such program integrations would result in significant costs savings, and as a spin-off, I am confident that such an interfacing of programs would result in a stimulation and enhancement of academic programs.

9. Career Alternatives - The idea of career alternatives which prepares students for two or more career options should be studied by schools of education. For instance, students majoring in secondary physical education could

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<sup>8</sup>Egon Guba and David Clark, "Selected Demographic Data About Teacher Education Institutions," National Conference on Teacher Education, 1974, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup>Arthur H. Padilla, "The Market for Teachers in the Nation and the Southern Region," Southern Regional Education Board, 1974, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>Guba, op. cit., p. 1.

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be encouraged to pursue options in special education or physical therapy. An English education major could develop concentrations in journalism or remedial reading. I believe that students who elect such concentrations will better equip themselves for entry into today's labor market. At the same time, schools of education could use this technique to retain more of their majors and to attract elective students from fields outside education.

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing that schools of education are immersed in an era of fiscal change and uncertainty. An uncertainty which was fostered by a changing and declining student demand for teacher preparation programs. In the opinion of the author, those schools of education which are able to initiate positive programs of faculty and curriculum development will have taken the first step towards fiscal stability. This step coupled with an effective delineation of program priorities will significantly enhance the schools' potential for continued vitality. Those schools of education unable or unwilling to embark on this course of action are sure to experience with increasing severity the crisis of a declining student clientele.