



— Action in Teacher Education —

**Governmental Impact on Education/Educational Retrenchment**

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**Part II—Educational Retrenchment**

**ARTICLES**

*This article points out predicted enrollment declines in institutions of higher education which are continuing to affect especially eastern and midwestern states. The author stresses the importance of long-range planning in responding to this trend. Thoughtful responses by Colleges of Education during this era of "Educational Retrenchment" can contribute to appropriate changes which are not necessarily negative ones for teachers and teacher educators.*

**Toward Future Growth or Retrenchment in  
Colleges of Education**

**INTRODUCTION**

Institutions of higher education have been inundated with various reports which predict significant enrollment declines in the decade of the 1980's. Recently, studies (Bowen, 1974; Cartter, 1976; Freeman, 1976) have attempted to define regional and state enrollment trends and compare these to national trends. John Centra (1978) in his publication, *College Enrollment in the 1980's: Projections and Possibilities*, suggests that the South and West may experience continued growth as a factor of regional in-migration and that enrollment decline rates of eighteen-year-olds in their own home states may vary widely by state from 22 to 34 percent. By 1985 Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, and Utah will experience enrollment increases and eleven to thirteen states will experience declines in enrollments (Crossland, 1980, p. 21).

1979 - 1990 Predicted Declines

Indiana	-30%
Illinois	-34%
Iowa	-34%
Ohio	-34%
Wisconsin	-34%
Minnesota	-35%
Michigan	-36%



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New Jersey	-39%
Pennsylvania	-39%
Connecticut	-43%
Massachusetts	-43%
New York	-43%
Rhode Island	-49%

### PROBLEMS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

These reports speak of a declining market for teachers, which in addition to the general concern for retrenchment, negatively effects Colleges of Education with predicted sharp declines in incoming freshmen classes. This decline in teacher education enrollment proves to be a challenge, particularly when incoming freshmen who select teacher education in many universities present low entering ACT scores.

One of the challenges for Colleges of Education is to react to criticisms from many quarters stating "Johnny can't read," and "teachers can't teach." Colleges of Education are challenged to revitalize their programs, to rethink their missions, to retool their faculties, and to recruit higher quality students amidst a severe problem of having to provide remediation and basic skill training for some who hope to become teachers. The recommendations at the end of this article speak to these problems.

What all this amounts to is learning to cope with a downward slope (Crossland, 1980) while looking upward in terms of producing quality teachers for public and private schools. Realistically, however, to increase entrance standards for freshmen, and graduation standards for seniors, may result in producing a higher rate of attrition, a more severe decline in enrollments, and the necessity to cut back faculty and programs. This "Catch 22" presents a frustrating prospect for college administrators. Certainly, imaginative marketing may be a partial answer, however, if those who now select teacher training are those who do not select more difficult academic career training programs which have stiffer academic entry levels, then more of the same may acerbate the problem. Recruitment of the talented and very capable continues to be of high priority in most institutions and subject areas, and the incentives for teachers are not at the same level of such academic areas as business, engineering, technology or health sciences. Additionally, scholarships in universities for teachers-to-be are relatively scarce.

According to Crossland (1980, p. 23) "there is a general agreement that the most endangered species are the public state colleges and the nonpresitigious, tuition dependent private college and universities." Many of the state colleges were initially normal schools, and became teachers' colleges and then general purpose institutions. These institutions in particular face a severe problem of enrollment decline in general and in teacher education enrollments in particular.

Some institutions have tried to create a comeback with enrollment increases brought about by aggressive policies of using faculty to recruit (Spellman, 1979). However, others suggest that enrollments "simply are not amenable to faculty recruitment efforts" (Lindenau, 1979).

What appears to be a growing consensus is a concept which is long in taking root, particularly in Colleges of Education, that is the development of comprehensive plans which look at the *now* realistically and which look at data to develop *long-term strategies*, however painful they may now be. Robert Zempsky in an article "Can Colleges Control Enrollment?" (Zempsky, 1980, p. 15) says, "Short term admissions marketing must now give way to long-range enrollment planning as an integral part of academic and fiscal management." Allan Ostar, President, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (1980) in a speech delivered to the Higher Alumni Council of Oklahoma, December 8, 1979, presented challenges for educators in what he termed a "New Era." The choices to be made, he states, will be very difficult because the world is changing very fast and in domestic fiscal policy, changes can be unsettling. The fiscal cuts of the Reagan administration uphold what Ostar (p. 243) foresaw. But Ostar argues, "Higher education is not tied helplessly to the railroad tracks in front of the inevitable train. We are masters of our fate. By moderating academic programs, class scheduling, and tuition and student aid policies, we can continue to attract students of all ages and circumstances who share the common desire of improving their lives."

The fact is that *institutions in many states are cutting back*. The very hard lessons of retrenchment hit home to disrupt faculty and administrations. Detailed retrenchment plans wrench the very guts of previously stable institutions. Rubin's study (1979), "Retrenchment, Loose Structure and Adaptability in the University," focused on the structural components of adaptability during retrenchment in five case study universities. The conclusions of the study lacked resounding optimism for the universities in the decline process, rather they spoke to the difficulty of retrenchment with structures and linkages which were less than ideal for adaptation.

Emerging out of many reports is the need for comprehensive, long-term interdisciplinary university planning (Frances, 1980). Such planning, because it encompasses an analysis of more possible outcomes, states Frances, while including the concept of retrenchment *among other prospects*, cuts the risks and the costs of being wrong about directions taken. What is alluded to is the "management of decline" amidst a contingency budgeting process.

New Mexico State University, as an example, embarked upon a one year institutional study and published a paper which encompassed the concept of retrenchment, but aptly termed the study, "Toward Future Growth, Strategies for New Mexico State University" (1979). An interdisciplinary team from all sectors of the University studied projections of enrollment at various institutions of post-secondary education at the national, state, and local levels with the conclusion that *declines will occur*. What was critical in the report, however, is that viable alternatives were suggested in recruitment, retention, and placement and positive modifications in policies and programs within the University were developed to meet changing needs. Among the concepts proposed were alternative ways of delivering education, extending the schedule into weekends and evenings, uneven entry, individualized study, enhanced summer programs, flexible-length degrees, expansion of off-campus programs, specialized programs under contract with private industry, and interdisciplinary programs. University personnel studied the effect of a ten percent student credit hour production decline on most N.M.S.U. instructional funding levels, using various mixes of lower division, upper di-

vision, and graduate student credit hour projections. What was significant in this study was a concept which in essence looked at the dollar impact on the total University if certain target areas declined. It became apparent that with differential funding in the State of New Mexico, and with a gradual increase in graduate program, the University could still survive a rather significant undergraduate decline. Thus target groups and areas for growth developed. These were selected to allow for a flexible approach to the retrenchment problem.

### **COPING STRATEGIES FOR COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION DURING A PERIOD OF ENROLLMENT DECLINE**

Colleges of Education face severe problems of decline generally. The general strategies suggested here should be considered for the future. They emerge out of the literature of retrenchment and from a non-Apocalyptic point of view of the author.

1. Thorough, long-range planning should occur using many sources of data and various disciplinary inputs which are vital to develop strategies for futures.
2. Quality teacher education programs which recruit capable, talented and successful students will be necessary for the development of a new cadre of professionals who must change the "image" of teaching—who will be capable models—intellectually able people and who possess requisite process and content skills for their task.
3. High school students must be made aware that Colleges of Education have specific standards which students will have to meet if they wish to embark upon a career in the profession. Students must be capable users of the English language, both in written and oral forms; students must prepare themselves in basic mathematics; and students must select the college preparatory track in high schools if they are to expect admission to teacher education.
4. Open admissions' institutions should develop a pre-teaching group to meet entrance standards for candidacy to teacher education by the junior year; this would allow students to overcome some deficiencies and yet compete for entry.
5. Attempts to raise the g.p.a. requirement for teachers-to-be should *not* be attempted by a lone institution, but rather through state boards of education, state-wide higher education councils, and through state certification boards. A broad state-wide raising of standards and g.p.a. should be sought for teacher education programs. In much the same fashion that CLEP is widely accepted, state-wide entry and graduation standards for teacher hopefuls should begin to be institutionalized.
6. Faculty of Colleges of Education should increase their involvement in grade school and high school teaching, be encouraged to participate in teacher professional organizations, and be given incentives, such as released time, to perform research in the schools, particularly in the area of what contributes to *achievement* among students.
7. Greater efforts should be made within Colleges of Education to develop interdisciplinary programs (yes, faculty sharing between departments), with

a view to providing new human services related programs in the lifelong education process.

8. Planning together for the "contraction" which inevitably will occur, should allow for a more natural birth of creative programs. Going it alone, "ivory tower thinking," must end!

Carol Frances (1980, p. 44) states forcefully, "Fred Crossland mocks the ostrich and the dinosaur as institutional symbols for higher education—but then offers to replace them with the lemming. Myself, I prefer the owl or the fox." Change, maturity, and even some growth is possible during "retrenchment" if wisdom is employed.

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