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## College Enrollment

**U**NCERTAINTY over how many students will be in American colleges next fall has led to doleful predictions of empty college halls. According to a *New York Times* survey, it has also led university presidents to plan an average reduction of 15 per cent in their faculties. Analysis of the probabilities casts grave doubts on the wisdom of such pessimism.

U. S. Office of Education figures showed a total of 2,295,000 students in higher educational institutions in the fall of 1950—6.6 per cent less than in 1949. A larger drop will result from the passing of the GI bulge next fall, when veteran enrollment should be about 275,000. That factor alone would decrease total enrollment by 13 per cent compared with 1950.

The further decline resulting from military service policies may remain uncertain until Congress acts, probably late in the spring. In view of that lateness, Selective Service may announce interim policies. One way or the other, it seems highly probable that, barring full-scale war, most freshmen and practically all present sophomores, juniors, and students working for graduate degrees will be allowed to continue in school next year if their work is satisfactory.

Next year's freshman class will be cut. But the deferment of up to 75,000 eighteen-year-olds to go to college seems almost certain. There will also be rejectees and some too young for induction. If the minimum induction age remains at nineteen, most of those who wish to can enter college. The number will be much smaller if induction age is reduced to eighteen, but that will probably not happen for a number of months. The Senate subcommittee report would require draft boards to exhaust the nineteen to twenty-six range and then to take those closest to nineteen before moving lower within the eighteen-year-old bracket. Students who have started to college before being

called may have their induction postponed until the end of the school year.

Women constituted 31.6 per cent of the 1950 enrollment, and there is no reason to expect a decrease next fall. In fact, in 1951 a few more girls will arrive at college age than in 1950.

All in all, it seems probable that the 1951-52 freshman class will be two thirds to three quarters as large as last fall's, and that total enrollment will be above 1,800,000. The total decrease would thus be 21½ per cent of the 1950 enrollment figure. The one development that can produce a greater drop is panic—the fear that students should enlist now rather than wait—and academic despair over next year's prospects will increase the tendency of students to make that decision.

From the standpoint of faculty requirements, several factors will tend to offset the drop in enrollment. There will be pressure for accelerated programs. Some college facilities are likely to be used for military and civilian defense training programs. Budgets for military research will increase; contracts for that research will have to be rather widely spread among institutions that have retained their scientific faculties.

There is one further point: I can think of few things that would please the planners in the Kremlin more than to have the United States seriously reduce the specialized training on which our technological superiority rests. The necessity of continuing to train many students is well recognized in Washington, despite the publicity given to counterindications, and I am confident of the ability of government leaders to adopt policies which are so obviously in the nation's best interests that they constitute the only right answer to the question of whether we should continue to produce college-trained specialists.

DAEL WOLFFLE

*Commission on Human Resources  
and Advanced Training  
Washington, D. C.*

SCIENCE, founded in 1880, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at the Business Press, 10 McGovern Ave., Lancaster, Pa. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Lancaster, Pa., January 13, 1948, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate postage provided for in the Act of February 28, 1925, embodied in Paragraph (d-2) Section 34.40 P. L. & R. of 1948.

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Annual subscriptions, \$7.50; single copies, \$.25; foreign postage, outside the Pan-American Union, \$1.00; Canadian postage, \$.50. Special rates to members of the AAAS.

The AAAS also publishes THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY. Subscription rates on request.