

SOONER MAGAZINE

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Will O. U. Be Ready?

Men who are trying to see ahead to forecast what is going to happen in higher education immediately after the end of the war are agreed that a great increase in university and college enrolment is very probable. They base this conclusion on a number of specific reasons.

For one thing, there is obviously going to be a period in which war industry is tapering off, and business and industry are making drastic adjustments to get back on a peace-time basis, during which there will be fewer good jobs available. Young people and their parents in most cases will have accumulated savings during war-time, and it will seem to be a good investment for young people to get a college education while jobs are scarce.

Another factor is the increasing importance attached to a college degree by employers—including the government, the armed forces, and private business. Increasingly, a college degree is a prerequisite for certain types of responsible positions. Only last month a former student of the University of Oklahoma, out of school for more than fifteen years and a successful construction engineer, came back to Norman to complete work for a degree, explaining that he had missed several opportunities for very attractive positions just because he lacked the college degree requirement.

Of course there are still people who argue that a college degree doesn't guarantee a thing, and it is true that occasionally someone goes through the motions and gets a sheepskin without becoming truly educated. But employers have become convinced that for many types of positions, graduation from college is one of a number of essential requirements.

Representatives of the University of Chicago, which in recent years made a bold attempt to de-emphasize degrees in higher education, admitted at a national conference this spring that their effort in this direction had largely broken down because of the increasing importance of a degree as a qualification for employment.

Another factor expected to send thousands of students back to the campuses when peace comes is the likelihood of a comprehensive program of federal aid for students—both war veterans and civilians. This would be a natural outgrowth of the college war training programs sponsored by the Army and Navy, and would also fit in with the trend of the government program to take up the slack in employment.

Alert institutions are attempting to make preliminary plans for meeting the expected increase in enrolment, partly by setting up a program for expanding the work on the campus and partly by arranging a plan for numerous extension classes in outlying centers of population.

The University of Oklahoma, and other institutions in the Oklahoma system of Higher Education, will not be ready for the influx of students after the war unless careful planning is done in the meanwhile.

It is only common sense for colleges and universities, while throwing all of their facilities into the war effort at present, to keep thinking about the steps necessary to prepare as far as possible for a large enrolment after the war.

The Army Viewpoint

They used to say that college made men soft. The stream of mail coming into the Alumni Office, telling about promotions of O. U. alumni in army rank, indicates that if this old saying is true the Army evidently hasn't heard about it yet.

The Cover

Academic procession wends into the Fieldhouse for the Class of '43 commencement. Photo by Lloyd Banta.

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