

An article written for the Sunday comment section of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. It convinced me that if I got a doctorate I could then get an academic job.

Education Crisis in St. Louis

Colleges Unprepared for Likely Flood of Students

By RICHARD ROSE

MORE AND MORE young people are planning to go to college. This is the biggest change in education in this generation and St. Louis is not preparing for it. Even if colleges and universities in the area spend more than \$100,000,000 on expansion, a minimum of two out of every seven St. Louis high school graduates ready for college in 1965 will be refused admission.

This estimate, and other conclusions in this article, are based upon lengthy conversations with leading administrators in public and private institutions in the area, or are reasonable inferences from statements they have made. Several educators described the prospect as "terrifying."

The crisis has two sources. First, the size of our population is continually increasing, especially in the school-age bracket. Public and parochial schools in the city and county graduated about 9300 students last year; in 1965 they will graduate 16,200. Secondly, an increasing percentage of high school graduates want to go to college. This impulse, unfortunately, is largely pragmatic. It has been estimated that a college degree increases a person's lifetime income by an average of \$103,000; and it is prerequisite for an increasing number of jobs.

THE CITY'S NEED for college graduates should increase as fast as the demand for college training. St. Louis industries need a pool of scientists, engineers and administrators in order to expand and meet competition. Their futures depend upon the availability of trained personnel.

More than numbers is involved. Quality of education is important too. To give every applicant a college education is meaningless, if the education given is lacking in insight, stimulation and content. School administrators in the area are vitally concerned with maintaining their academic standards, or raising them. There is plenty of room for improvement. Missouri's colleges, at a minimum, must maintain their present standards or debase their degrees.

BUT COLLEGES are made of stone and mortar, not rubber; they cannot stretch. They can be added on to, but this is a long and costly process. Schools in the area have already announced major expansion programs. Nevertheless, they will be crammed to capacity, and some will be dangerously overloaded, if they accept 5000 St. Louis high school graduates as freshmen in 1965. By today's standards, at least 7000 high school graduates here will be qualified for admission and be able to pay for their education. Therefore 2000 (or more) high school graduates will have to look for a substitute for college, since institutions in other states will be equally overcrowded—unless something drastic and unforeseen is done.

Three weeks of talking with educators

serving the St. Louis area makes it clear that nothing sufficient to meet this gigantic demand is now being planned. Each educator is responsible for only one institution. All feel they must raise millions of dollars for faculty salaries and for buildings if they are not to go backwards. None is willing to take on a problem clearly too big for a single institution, since the 2000 rejected students of 1965 would form the nucleus for a growing four-year college of 6500 students.

Whether or not the schools can maintain standards while expanding to a limited degree depends upon three things—faculty, facilities and purpose.

UNIVERSITIES ARE NOW attempting to hire men for less money than their students will get in their first job after graduation. A Ph.D. can start at about \$4500 a year in college teaching; an engineering school graduate can go to work for about \$5000. Salaries for full professors in this area range from about \$6000 to \$10,000, going even higher in isolated instances. Industry, government and big foundations are bidding against the schools. One engineering teacher at Rolla School of Mines was offered \$11,000 by a corporation. He is paid \$5000 for teaching.

The raiding that corporations engage in to secure engineers is likely to seem mild compared to what engineering deans and perhaps even liberal arts deans, will soon be driven to. Bright young teachers will be in the enviable position of having many choices. Even the not-so-bright and not-so-young teachers will be able to weigh offers from Missouri schools against those at high salaries from centers of learning in Florida and California.

Ironically, the things that attract good teachers—small classes, limited teaching load, ample time for research and high academic standards—are the very things the local schools will find hardest to provide, or create, in the face of the pressure for expansion.

Physical facilities are already near the saturation point. What vacancies exist are often at the junior-senior level or in graduate school. At Washington University the freshman class is currently frozen in size because there is simply no room for any more freshmen in several basic science courses. St. Louis University now has room for about 200 more freshmen without expansion, but this slack will be gone within three years.

TO INCREASE ENROLLMENT requires more classrooms, more laboratories, more libraries (with more books), more dormitories and more office space. The cost is sizeable. Washington University must raise upwards of \$50,000,000 if it is to increase its present undergraduate enrollment from 3400 to 4400 in 1965. Even this estimate is conservative, because it is based upon construc-

tion costs already several years out of date. St. Louis University will need a minimum of \$20,000,000 by 1968 in order to expand, and even then its long-range \$100,000,000 building program will only have begun. The University of Missouri has obtained \$22,000,000 from the 1956 state bond issue, but this still leaves it \$9,500,000 short of its immediate needs at Columbia and Rolla.

An experienced educator has estimated it requires about \$10,000 a pupil to open the doors of a new college. A four-year college to meet minimum anticipated demands here would cost about \$65,000,000. In addition to carrying such a debt, the institution would have to subsidize annual operating losses—and finance expansion.

Another factor affecting an institution's outlook is its sense of purpose. Washington University, as a private institution, feels obligated to serve the community as a center with especially high standards of teaching and scholarship. This will prevent major expansion there. The liberal arts faculty has already served notice it will not countenance expansion in its division until facilities are greatly expanded. (For example, five English instructors now call a 12x16 foot room their office).

AS A CHURCH-RELATED private institution, St. Louis University feels a special obligation to Roman Catholics, not only in St. Louis but throughout the Mississippi Valley. It is hoping to increase its size by some 3000 students by 1965 and to maintain its academic standards. As a public institution the University of Missouri is required by law to accept all graduates of accredited Missouri high schools. This requirement, although no aid in maintaining academic standards, does embody a part of the American dream—that everyone who wishes may go to college. Unfortunately, at Missouri and Rolla this dream is likely to become a nightmare.

EACH COLLEGE and university will try to remain true to its own image of itself. Each is planning expansion. Millions of dollars will be requested from St. Louisans. Yet the sum of individual efforts will not be enough to meet the demand of young people for college training and to meet the area's need for college graduates. This is not the fault of the individual schools, although if they formed a joint body to make a concentrated attack on the community's problems, that would help.

Clearly this is a problem for no special group but the whole community. What the citizens of St. Louis do or fail to do through city and state governments, churches, alumni associations and professional organizations will determine the nature of the area's educational resources and its general future well being.