

Report Upon

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA CENTER

Made for

Acting-Chancellor Marion Smith

By

George M. Sparks, Director

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At the close of college this June, more than 250,000 veterans were enrolled in colleges and universities under Public Law 346. Already, estimates published in the Congressional Record, by authority of Senator Mead, of New York, indicate that college and university enrollment in September 1946 "will total not less than 2,100,000 if adequate dormitory and classroom space is provided, and that such enrollment will represent an increase of approximately 783,000 above the peak prewar enrollment of 1940."

It is also estimated the enrollment of veterans who attend colleges will not reach the peak until 1950 or 1951. Total applications from veterans for education under Public Law 346 by March 31, 1946, had reached 1,687,000. Only 27% of this number enrolled in education and training courses, thus indicating most of them are awaiting enrollment in the fall of 1946.

General Bradley, in his address to the American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., said that the heavy enrollment of veterans in colleges will probably last about twelve years, and that five years hence would be the time when it would be a major problem for colleges. His reason for this statement was that the veteran has nine years after the date of his discharge, or after the end of the war, whichever is the later date, to complete his education. General Bradley estimates that within five years we will be what he terms "over the hump," and that veteran enrollments will then begin to approach normalcy.

All this year about the busiest government agencies in the South have been the Veterans Administration group in the Belle Isle Building, in Atlanta, and the regional offices in the big

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Bell Bomber plant, Marietta. Far more veterans in Georgia have applied for education and training than all the colleges can accommodate, even if they all double their capacities for enrollment by the beginning of the 1946 fall term.

The effort of these Georgia veterans to take advantage of an opportunity to attend college, along with the others of the nation, is a great tribute to the character of our returning veteran, and certainly is an answer to the early critics of the G.I. Bill of Rights.

Because of its position in the Southeast, measured from many angles, but most especially because it is a great retail market and metropolitan office building center, Atlanta is to have a great share in the education of these veterans. The University System of Georgia Center has, in fact, had a large share of metropolitan education during the past ten years.

Two years ago, the Governor's legislative survey committee, acting on the recommendation of your director, asked the Board of Regents to classify this institution as an emergency item of their building program, because of the service it would give the returning veteran. It was brought out then that the faculty and staff of the University System of Georgia Center had, for twenty years, given most of their attention to adult education. (The average age then of students was 24 years; since the big enrollment of veterans, it is 26 years), and the group could the more readily serve the returning service-man. Another reason named by this committee was the overcrowded condition of the old plant and the fire hazard problem confronting even the limited number of GI's enrolled.

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This challenge from the legislative survey committee, the Board of Regents accepted as soon as a building suitable for immediate reconversion could be obtained. The Governor was then well on his way to paying the state out of debt, and stated to your director he could give no financial aid.

Despite the lack of state money to aid, but with the continued encouragement of the Board of Regents, your director accepted the responsibility of a self-liquidating program of \$301,000 for the downtown, six-story Bolling - Jones Building. So anxious was the director to serve these Georgia veterans with college facilities that a liquidating program was arranged, to pay as high as 4½% on trust funds of Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia, the income on which was then as little as 1% and 1½%.

The income on the building when the office of the school moved in was less than \$30,000.00, but during this year it will be doubled. This increased income was made without an increased cost to tenants of the building. Returns on the parking lot provide now an income of about 15% on the school's investment. The lot is also a considerable convenience to the Evening College students, as their time between leaving their employment and attending classes is limited. Furthermore, safety to students attending night classes is of utmost consideration.

An endowment of more than \$2,000,000 at the general endowment rate would not bring in as much income as the school is receiving in net rentals. Besides, it has a most acceptable school building, which this year may house approximately 4,500 Georgia students. Appraisers have stated that with present construction costs the building structure alone would cost \$926,000.00

This does not include materials and labor amounting to nearly \$300,000., which the school has been able to add, all without cost to the State of Georgia.

A wholesale begging spree of several months to friends of the school holding high positions in the armed services, even before the war was over, resulted in more than \$200,000 in building material being donated to the school. Only dramatize the situation of the school's need and its intended need for returning veterans - your director and his staff were then the happy receivers of building material. The old building was sold to the Tabernacle Church for \$85,000., the amount being used for labor in construction with the donated materials in the new building.

The building, although still within several months of completion, was ready enough for all classes to move from Luckie to the Ivy Street building in March of this year. The enrollment of veterans had jumped from 160 in the fall-term to 1300 in the spring, with an equal number of non-veterans.

To accommodate the several thousand anticipated for the fall term, and to care for those not able to enroll at the other units of the University System, classes will run from 9:00 in the morning to 9:00 at night. Additional faculty members have been added so that at the beginning of the term eight divisions of the University System Center will be headed by a Doctor of Philosophy. All other academic phases of the college have been strengthened to care for the heavy enrollment next fall.

Through the foresight in securing the present downtown location for this institution and the adjacent parking facilities, now so successfully income-bearing, the Regents have placed this institution in a position for even further income-bearing development without cost to the State. Your director has several times mentioned the matter to members of the Board on their inspection of the school property. More recently experienced engineers and well financed builders have become enthusiastic about the project.

The project, whether built by the city, the county, or the State Highway Department, would not only serve the public and the anticipated thousands of returning veterans in their parking burdens while at the Evening College, a school so close to Decatur Street and its "car-snitching" followers, but it would also bring in much additional income and at the same time give the school an open-air playground and auditorium. All this can be done without cost to the State, and with people already seeking to finance the program.

People interested in education sometimes forget that students going to a downtown institution wish for and need relaxation just as much as do students on a campus where much money is expended for such facilities. The Mead Bill, if passed by Congress, might enlarge this effort more properly.

The proposed project would serve the outside public, thus giving a reason for the State owning such a project. It would protect life and property of students while attending classes at night in a Decatur Street neighborhood. It would allow expansion of our present facilities into the project without a financial outlay from the State, and it would add to the health and happiness

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of these Georgia high school graduates coming into Atlanta every year to receive the college education they thought they had lost in life because of a lack of money for a campus education.

Certainly these students deserve much because of their willingness to sacrifice the usual pleasurable time at night in their effort for proper training so they may more readily serve their day and generation.

The vision two years ago of the Governor's legislative survey committee, in its findings and productions of needs as they saw them then, and the immediate action by the Board of Regents, following financial suggestions by E. E. Thrasher, State Auditor, have made of this unit of the University System the most prepared of any college in caring for the thousands of additional Georgia youth in this, the first emergency year of big enrollments.