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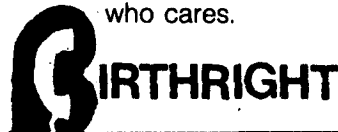
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Two-year schools reach standstill

WASHINGTON (CPS) - There will be about 75,000 fewer students enrolled at community and other two-year colleges this fall, and some observers fear it could be the start of an era of little or no growth for the schools.

Enrollment may fall from one-to-two percent this fall, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) predicted in a study released last week.

It's the biggest drop in the two-year campus population in 20 years, the group adds.

The AACJC survey of member colleges blames the bottoming out of the baby boom population and the end of the recession, which persuaded many people to return to school for retraining, for the slight decline.

"The boom era is over," concludes AACJC

spokeswoman Rosemary Wohlers. "In the sixties, enrollment was growing like crazy. Now it's leveling off."

"The improving economy means fewer students attending community colleges," she says. "As jobs open up, students cut back to part-time attendance or leave school altogether."

And while community colleges still attract their share of "nontraditional" students -- people over 24 -- the decreasing population of 18-to-24-year-old people from which to draw students is taking its toll.

The schools themselves have been anticipating a decline for years, especially since 1978, when two-year campus enrollment dropped slightly.

"Enrollment grew for a couple of years after 1978," Wohler states, "until 1983, when it slipped .33 percent. The projected drop this year is the

largest in 20 years."

Wohler attributes community colleges' ability to keep enrollments relatively stable over the years to the rising costs of four-year colleges.

Almost 40 percent of the students who enroll at two-year colleges come "right out of high school," not other schools, she says.

There's no real geographic sense to the sagging enrollments this fall.

Schools in California, Florida and New York are anticipating declines this school year, while Arizona, Washington and Maryland colleges expect slight increases. Some other states project a greater drop than the AACJC predicts.

Illinois community college attendance could slip as much as five percent, officials there say.

"We definitely have to say enrollment is down," says Virginia McMillan of the Illinois Community College Board. "We estimated earlier this year it would be down five percent, but it looks as though it may be even lower. At some colleges, it may drop as much as 15 percent."

California's huge two-year college system, which claims it enrolls 25 percent of America's community college students, is examining its enrollment figures very carefully because

the system is charging tuition for the first time in its history this fall.

"It looks as if enrollment will be down," reports Allene Murdoch of the California Community College Board of Directors. "Some schools are experiencing depressed enrollments, especially in urban districts."

The slippage is uneven, she adds.

Schools in areas with growing populations, such as the San Francisco area, are enjoying enrollment increases.

"This summer we were up 1200 FTEs ('full-time equivalent' students) over last summer," says Sherie Story of Washington's State Board for Community College Education. "We're not projecting a decline this fall, but an increase of one-to-two percent."

Applications from high school student are down, she admits, but "only about 12 percent of our students come to us directly from high school."

The AACJC stresses its estimate of a slight nationwide decline is only a projection from data gathered from a poll of community college administrators.

In all, the schools surveyed expect a total enrollment of 4,870,000 down from last fall's 4,947,975.



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- 1 Lifted with lever
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- 14 Guido's low note
- 15 Schoolbooks
- 17 Symbol for tantalum
- 18 Noise
- 20 Enticing woman
- 21 Lair
- 22 Periods of time
- 24 Decay
- 25 Sow
- 26 Short jacket
- 28 Jimmy Carter's hometown
- 30 Mountains of Europe
- 32 Thus
- 33 A state
- 35 Poker stake
- 37 Resorts
- 38 Paddle
- 40 Dispatch
- 42 Be ill
- 43 Piggens
- 45 Stream: abbr.
- 46 Note of scale
- 47 Skinning
- 49 About
- 50 Be present
- 52 Scorches
- 54 Believer in personal god
- 55 Whimpers
- DOWN
- 1 Excessively priggish person
- 2 Retreat
- 3 Pronoun
- 4 Organ of hearing
- 5 Expires
- 6 Mountain lake
- 7 Bitter vetch
- 8 Railroad: abbr.
- 9 Mediteranean
- 10 African antelope
- 12 Den
- 13 Insect
- 16 Let fall
- 19 Innate
- 21 Signifies
- 23 Painful spots
- 25 Omens
- 27 Scold
- 29 Macaw
- 31 Plundered
- 33 Narcotic
- 34 Metal fastener
- 36 Main dish
- 37 Dinner course
- 39 Units of Portuguese currency
- 43 Dispatched
- 44 Cut
- 47 Footlike part
- 48 African antelope
- 51 Note of scale
- 53 Symbol for glucenium

