

Enjoy This Year's Increased Enrollment While it Lasts

by Charles T. Smith, Jr.

The squeeze is in the middle! North American Division college and university enrollments are up over 800 students, elementary (grades 1-8) enrollments are up 300 students, BUT secondary (grades 9-12) enrollments are down nearly 1,200 students.

North American Division colleges and universities are enjoying an enrollment gain again this year. But their joy is likely to be short-lived—a moment of calm before the storm. Analysis of demographic information indicates that college enrollments will not recover their current levels throughout the decade of the nineties.

Full time equivalent enrollments, which are calculated by dividing the total number of student credit hours generated in any term by a fixed number (15.5), are significant because they are directly related to tuition income—the charges per credit hour. The full time equivalent increase in the 1988-89 school year amounted to 610 students. This is a four percent increase division-wide and is equivalent to a tuition increase of \$4,750,000 or 120 teacher salaries.

This year's total headcount enrollment of 17,580 students (up 828) is the highest since 1982 and represents a five percent increase over last year. All but two colleges experienced increases in both headcount and in full time equivalent enrollments.¹

The college/university enrollment statistics are in harmony with the national and denomina-

tional enrollment trends and forecasts. Enrollment projections by the North American Division Board of Higher Education had indicated an increase of grade 12 graduates through June of 1988, at which time the number would reach a peak and then decline for several years to come. (See "The Fire This Time," *Spectrum* (December 1987) Vol. 18, No. 2, and "College Enrollments Increase," *Spectrum* (February 1988) Vol. 18, No. 3.) The larger first-time freshman classes in the autumn term of the 1988-1989 academic year validates the projections. In addition, it will be a definite asset for the future as most college freshman classes will be decidedly smaller for the next several years.

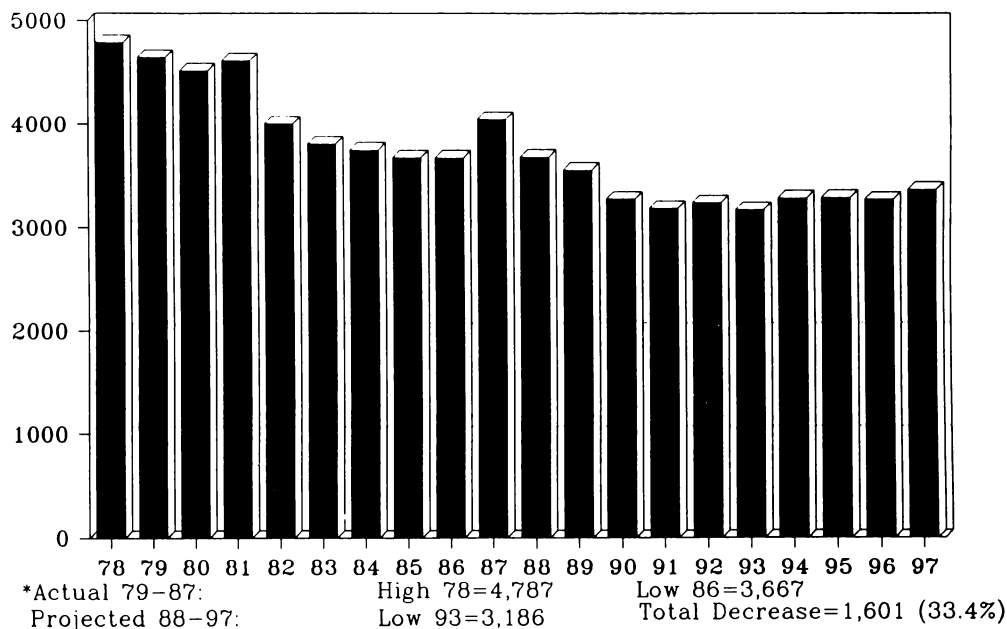
But it is clear that future college freshman classes will be smaller because, as projected, academy senior class enrollments have declined in North America this fall. This year's academy senior classes are markedly smaller—360 students—than those of last year and statistical studies indicate a continued decline in senior class sizes for the next several years. Total academy enrollment losses between the fall of 1987 and 1988 amount to 1,196 students. That breaks down to losses of 190 students in grade 11, 497 students in grade 10, and 149 students in grade 9. Furthermore, the projections noted in Figure 1 illustrate that there will be no immediate or long term relief.

However, there is a glimmer of hope for college personnel. Long-term enrollment projections forecast a stabilization of enrollments in about five years. Adventist elementary enrollments support this long-range hope. Enrollments increased in all but grades 4, 7, and 8 this year.

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NAD Twelfth Grade Enrollments* 1978-1979 to 1997-1998

Figure 1



Fall Enrollment NAD Colleges and Universities 1987-1988 to 1988-1989

	TOTAL ENROLLMENT			TOTAL FTE		
	1987-1988	1988-1989	%Increase/ Decrease	1987-1988	1988-1989	%Increase/ Decrease
Andrews University	2,979	3,215	+ 8%	2,452	2,569	+ 5%
Atlantic Union College	680	795	+17%	556	644	+16%
Canadian Union College	251	262	+4%	219	226	+3%
Columbia Union College	1,233	1,096	-11%	762	719	-6%
Kettering College	491	597	+21%	363	402	+11%
Loma Linda University	4,187	4,393	+5%	3,464	3,537	+2%
Oakwood College	1,074	1,227	+14%	1,019	1,152	+13%
Pacific Union College	1,527	1,614	+6%	1,429	1,520	+6%
Southern College	1,366	1,443	+6%	1,075	1,169	+9%
Southwestern Adventist College	845	778	-8%	641	567	-12%
Union College	591	645	+9%	517	549	+6%
Walla Walla College	1,428	1,515	+5%	1,318	1,371	+4%
TOTAL	16,652	17,580	+5%	13,815	14,425	+4%

And losses in those classes were small in grade 8, moderate in grade 4, and large in grade 7.

In fact, the winds of the storm might be held back even in the short run. In 1987 the Seltzer Daley study indicated that 45 percent of Adventist college and university students are attending non-Adventist colleges and universities even where Adventist colleges are readily available. If North American Division colleges and universities can capture the attention and favorable attitude of a significant portion of these students, it

may be possible for them to avoid the dramatic enrollment declines that have been and still are projected to begin in the fall of 1989.

If those new markets are to be attracted to Adventist colleges and universities, much more careful attention must be paid to mission, price, program, and careful marketing. Otherwise, this year will truly have been the "calm before the storm," and North American Adventist colleges will experience the "fire next time."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Local campus enrollment changes varied from an increase of 21 percent at Kettering College of Medical Arts to a loss of 11 percent at Columbia Union College (CUC). The CUC decrease is deceptive, however, because it was

due to the closure of the CUC branch campus operation at Kettering, Ohio. The "second step" nursing program that was being offered there by CUC is now being operated by Andrews University.