

FROM: University Relations
The University of Toledo
Toledo, Ohio 43606

Marty Clark
(419) 531-5711, Ext. 2675

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Claims that U.S. colleges and universities are enrolling too many students, and that many students shouldn't be in college in the first place, are "twin red herrings" which hamper educators and the public from examining the real problems of higher education and from ensuring full use of human resources, Dr. William S. Carlson, president of The University of Toledo, told the University's 1971 spring quarter graduates at commencement ceremonies held Friday, June 11 in the UT Field House.

Some 940* students -- largest number in the University's history -- were candidates for graduate, legal, baccalaureate and associate degrees conferred at the June commencement.

Dr. Carlson asserted that making educational opportunities available to the largest possible number is a tradition in this country which goes back at least as far as Thomas Jefferson.

"As a characteristic of American education," he said, "it is an amazing phenomenon to distinguished foreign visitors.

"Since Jefferson made the radical proposal more than 175 years ago," Dr. Carlson said, "that all children in Virginia should receive three years' free instruction in reading writing, arithmetic and geography, the people and their elected representatives have greatly expanded the concept of free education for all. This is one manifestation of our general recognition that society as well as the individual benefits when the citizenry is educated."

Dr. Carlson contrasted this tradition with recent proposals in Ohio and elsewhere that students be made to bear the entire financial cost of their education.

Quoting from Jefferson's program for the curriculum of the University of Virginia, he agreed that "an establishment embracing all the sciences which may be useful and even necessary in the various vocations of life, with the buildings and apparatus belonging to each, are far beyond the reach of individual means, and must either derive existence from public patronage, or not exist at all. This would leave us, then, without those callings

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*total subject to change

which depend on education, or send us to other countries to seek the instruction they require."

"It may have appeared," Dr. Carlson said, "that America had settled forever -- decades ago -- this question of economic equality, but there are those who never will believe it. At present they appear to have access to positions and organs which amplify their voices all out of proportion.

"One of their principal contentions is that college pays so well to the graduate that he should be happy to foot the entire bill...though this normally would mean at least a doubling of tuition charges.

"There are those," Dr. Carlson noted, "who advocate this forcing of the student to indebt himself for many years, at the very outset of his career and family life -- indebt himself for the opportunities which we insist must be part of his birthright.

"I would not argue that each young person should be in a post-secondary program; but I do wholeheartedly contend that the opportunity should be available for those who can profit thereby."

Dr. Carlson said that whatever the complicating factors, "any analysis makes clear that Ohio is well below the national average in its support for higher education in proportion to per-capita income of its people."

He suggested that colleges and universities need to recognize the great resource of sympathetic interest which exists among a widening circle of people to whom opportunities for a college education have personal implications. In many instances that sympathetic support is muted and submerged, but it can be used as a keen, cutting tool for achieving adequate levels of support for higher education, he said.