

WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON,

May 8, 1918.

To the Presidents of all institutions of
collegiate grade.

Dear Sirs:

In order to provide military instruction for the college students of the country during the present emergency, a comprehensive plan will be put in effect by the War Department, beginning with the next college year, in September, 1918. The details remain to be worked out, but in general the plan will be as follows:

Military instruction under officers and non-commissioned officers of the Army will be provided in every institution of college grade, which enrolls for the instruction 100 or more able-bodied students over the age of eighteen. The necessary military equipment will, so far as possible, be provided by the Government. There will be created a military training unit in each institution. Enlistment will be purely voluntary but all students over the age of eighteen will be encouraged to enlist. The enlistment will constitute the student a member of the Army of the United States, liable to active duty at the call of the President. It will, however, be the policy of the Government not to call the members of the training units to active duty until they have reached the age of twenty-one, unless urgent military necessity compels an earlier call. Students under eighteen and therefore not legally eligible for enlistment, will be encouraged to enroll in the training units. Provision will be made for co-ordinating the Reserve Officers' Training Corps system, which exists in about one-third of the collegiate institutions, with this broader plan.

This new policy aims to accomplish a two-fold object: first, to develop as a great military asset the large body of young men in the colleges; and second, to prevent unnecessary and wasteful depletion of the colleges through indiscriminate volunteering, by offering to the students a definite and immediate military status.

Later announcement will be made of the details of the new system. In the meantime, presidents of collegiate institutions are requested to call this matter to the attention of all their students. Those who do not graduate this spring should be urged to continue their education and take advantage of this opportunity to serve the nation.

I trust that the policy above stated will have your support and co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

Newton D. Baker

Secretary of War.