

# Business Approach At Hood Produces Record Enrollment

By NEIL SANDLER  
Staff Writer

The enormous success that Hood College president Ross Pritchard has had in bucking the nationwide decline in enrollment, which is wiping out most women's colleges, is due to one decision which he brought to Hood when he arrived there two years ago.

That decision was to run Hood College like a business, with him as its manager.

Enrollment, he decided, is a marketing problem. "What would you do?" he posed to the

numerous businessmen who make up the Frederick Kiwanis Club, where he spoke Tuesday. "We decided to find out about our product. We sent questionnaires to students who had applied to Hood, were accepted and later declined to attend.

"They thought that Hood was too traditional, too square. A place that turned out the president of the garden club. Their perception of us was poor," Pritchard explained. "But it was wrong," he added.

Hood extended this effort to find out why enrollments were declining at women's colleges.

Hood found out what women students wanted and reacted accordingly. "We keep in touch with our students on a very personal level. We let them know that we care."

During the years following 1960, the number of women's colleges in the U.S. has dropped from 300 to 96. Most of those former women's colleges either closed or went co-ed.

But during these past two years, Pritchard not only has bucked the enrollment problem but he has raised Hood's

See HOOD, Page A-5

(Continued From Page A-1)

enrollment to the highest it's ever been.

Freshman enrollment is up 170 per cent, there are now 870 undergraduates and 200 graduate students attending Hood. This is the first time enrollment has bridged the 1,000 mark in Hood's 82-year history, Pritchard said.

"This is not magic," he exclaimed. "It's the result of our following a pattern of decision making and it's the result of good management, like any successful business."

Pritchard said that when he came to Hood two years ago he sat down with his associates "and defined our purpose. What we were going to be."

Pritchard noted that more women are going to college than ever before. He also noted that most of the women's colleges that went co-ed, in an attempt to solve the enrollment problem, regretted the move.

With an analysis of Hood educational programs at hand and with some "realistic goals" in mind, Pritchard and the rest of Hood's "management" decided to go after women enrollment. Not men.

"We felt that with the proper expansion of our programs, we could ride the crest of the wave," Pritchard said. With an already strong education curriculum, Hood broadened its horizons by adding courses in special education. Pritchard noted that a court in Baltimore recently ruled that public schools must provide special education curriculums. A plus for Hood's foresight. Hood

also deepened its already strong curriculum in health-related fields by adding internships with local research facilities. Another plus in Hood's foresight. In English, Hood has always had a strong curriculum, yet under Pritchard it became so much stronger and more practical. He added six journalism courses and opportunities for internships at the Frederick News-Post. Another plus in Hood's foresight.

Emphasizing these new programs, Pritchard points out that "a large part of Hood College's new enrollment is going into these new areas."

The internships have proven especially popular, Pritchard says. "It's a question of analyzing your resources and integrating the product," he says with all the experience of a sharp Wall Street ad man. "We feel that if we draw as we do from this community, it's a two-way street. We provide, too." He points to Hood's summer day camp for the retarded as an example. With the Rock Creek Center closed for the summer, Hood's camp more than fills in.

As this give and take process continues, what Pritchard calls "the multiplier effect" takes hold. The more Hood and its surrounding community work

together, the more each benefits. "It's an attempt to refurbish our product," he says.

But at this point, several things are clear in Pritchard's mind. "My major concern is the education of the women of Hood. We are not going to emphasize the men. This is a service we provide to the community, if the men want to attend, they can."

Another of his "business" viewpoints is that "having to close Hood College in the summer is bad business."

So with these "business" thoughts in mind, Pritchard says there are some definite changes pending in the college's near future. "We must either say this is the limit, or we must aspire to bigger things and then meet the challenge."