

Higher Education: Some Facts, Figures, & Opinions

Engineering

The outlook for the School of Engineering is bleak, if not black, says Dr. Gene M. Nordby, dean of the College of Engineering. He describes the school's situation as "glum," and points out that the school is not meeting the requirements of the Mid-America State Universities Association (MASUA). Yet OU's College of Engineering has the largest number of engineering graduate students in the United States. Last year the college produced 50 percent of the world's petroleum engineer graduates. The total engineer enrollment—2,175 students—puts OU among the five largest U.S. engineering schools. Discussing one of the major problems, Dean Nordby says, "We are operating at 75 percent. We need 35 to 40 more faculty members (the school has 96 members) and \$1 to \$1.5 million for laboratory equipment. Our space situ-

ation is fairly good; it probably will continue to be adequate for the next five years. We are getting about \$70,000 a year from the University budget; we need \$300,000 a year to do a good job. We need about a 60 percent increase in our budget just to compete with schools in the surrounding area. We have the lowest salary in the Big Eight at the professor level. We have the next to last salary at the associate professor level, and we are in the middle at the assistant professor level."

Although the average cost per engineering credit hour, \$36, is the highest at OU, it is only half the average engineering cost of Texas schools. Nordby says, "About \$50 per credit hour would put us on the average with other engineering schools. The citizens of Oklahoma are not getting as good an education as they think they're getting, but they're getting more education than they are paying for."

Business

"At our present teaching load of 12 hours per semester, the College of Business Administration needs approximately 12 new full-time positions," says Dr. Horace B. Brown, dean of the college. "Now, we do not have the finances to create these positions. If we are to do our job properly, these positions will have to be created and filled. In faculty salaries we are far below the salaries that are paid by many of the universities we compete with and below the other universities in this region."

Architecture

A professor of the School of Architecture, who did not choose to reveal his name, said that more space and a larger faculty is needed. The average present enrollment of the school is 400. There are 13 professors and two graduate assistants in the department. The national average ratio is one professor for every 18 students; OU has one professor for every 30 students. Last year the school lost two professors because of low salaries. Three new teachers were hired, but there is some doubt that they can be retained because of the high salaries they are drawing. Retirement will cause two new positions to be open in the near future and this will intensify the problem. He estimates that the school needs twice the amount of money it is now receiving and twice the amount of faculty.

History

Dr. Donald J. Berthrong, chairman of OU's history department, labels Gov. Bartlett's budget a sheer tragedy and says that time is running out on OU. "We have 12 graduate assistants working in the department, and we need nine more to cover minimal needs. The undergraduates that we have are very good—everyone has at least a master's degree—we just need more," says Berthrong. Asked about shortages in his staff, Berthrong said, "We have one man for Latin American history; a competent history department would have two. We have one man in Far East studies; a competent history

A Professor's View

"I think we will face an exodus of faculty if there isn't an increase in salary," says Dr. Richard Wells, assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and assistant professor of political science. "Our professors are in some demand, and other schools can outbid OU. Ultimately, a competitive salary will keep them here."

When asked if he thought more of OU's faculty might leave for better paying jobs at other universities, Dr. Wells replied with a firm "yes." "There's a lot happening at OU that is good. What's ineffective about OU isn't what *is* happening, but what *isn't* happening. Our major problem is more money. We have the people interested, we have the facilities, but we don't have the money to buy their time. Other large universities may not have the facilities, but they have the money."

Dr. Wells strongly recommends a decrease in the teaching loads of professors. "Currently, OU professors must teach 12 credit hours per semester and do research. You can't do much on that teaching load. A more realistic figure would be 6 to 9 credit hours. A lot of visitors to OU admit to surprise that the University has the vitality that it does, but they invariably add, 'What you could do if you just had more money!' If the money is forthcoming, then it's worth the wait. The reason most of the faculty stay is because of a simple sentiment for OU."

"Oklahomans are not opposed to education, but they aren't sold on the idea that it is an investment that can pay off. California's economic growth is an example of what can happen when the ability to pour money into educational facilities is present. I don't think a sufficient effort has been made to sell higher education to Oklahomans. Higher education is an investment for the state. It's got to be seen by the people as an investment. It's a marvel that Oklahoma gets better education than it pays for. Unless something is done, OU will sink lower and lower. Our students will lose out in a nation that puts more and more priority on education. Eventually, the whole state will have been robbed. It's not a very pleasant picture, but it's not an impossible one."

department would have four." Berthrong says one professor recently left OU for \$9,000 more in salary. "If there were a sudden jump in the size of the freshman class, my department would be unable to satisfy a substantial increase in enrollment in history classes. We have no one in the area of the colonial period to Reconstruction," he says. Another weakness is the heavy work load. "Many better state

universities are now on six-hour per semester teaching assignments for senior staff members. OU has only one. Even at OSU the senior staff members have a six-hour limit."

Has Berthrong voiced his woes to the administration? "Yes, many, many times. And they have offered a very sympathetic ear. But they don't have the money. The state legislature, year after year after year, fails to give

enough money to higher education. The miracle around here is that we've as good a university as we do with the support we get. We have virtually the same staff in terms of numbers that we had ten years ago. We've been very lucky to get the high quality professors for less money, but I'm afraid that all the elasticity is now gone. I don't see how we can continue unless some-

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How Oklahoma Stacks Up (or Down)

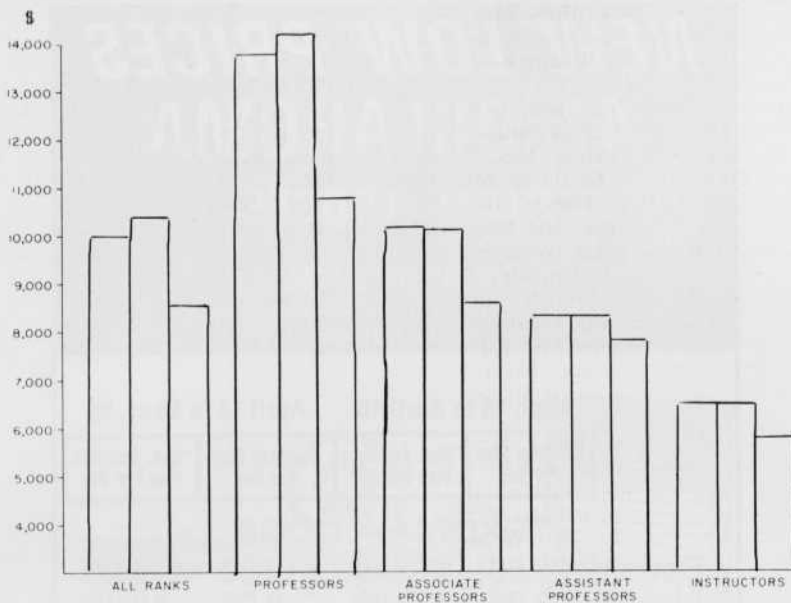
- In 1956-57 Oklahoma as a state ranked 38th in the nation in state appropriations for state-supported, four-year, degree-granting institutions, allocating \$615 per student. By 1963-64, however, our ranking had *dropped* to 47th, with allocations of just \$17 more (\$632) per student.
- In 1964-65 Oklahoma appropriated \$581 per student, 38 percent less than the national average of \$934. Our state now ranks 49th in appropriations per student in higher education. If Tennessee, which ranks 50th, continues its present growth rate, our state will sink to the bottom of the nation.
- Oklahoma's gain in appropriations of state tax funds for operating expenses of higher education over the six-year period 1960-66 is the fourth *lowest* in the nation.
- In the Big Eight Conference appropriations for OU and OSU rank well behind *all other* universities, and OU and OSU rank 59th and 60th out of a hundred large state-supported institutions in amount of state appropriations.
- OU ranks 56th and OSU 59th with \$46 and \$42 average expenditures for library resources per student among 76 selected institutions.
- Oklahoma spent more on county roads the last biennium (\$42 million) than it did on higher education.
- The ratio of professors to graduate assistants in 1957 was 3.31:1. In 1966 it was 1.5:1.
- The Association of American University Professors' salary norm will be increased next year. Our salaries, now in the B and C levels, will plunge into the C and D levels if the legislature and the governor deny the State Regents'

minimum request of \$69.9 million for higher education.

- The 1966 American Council on Education report (Sooner Magazine, July 1966), in evaluating graduate education placed OU and OSU 66th and 86th among the nation's colleges and universities.
- State appropriations for university research are much lower in Oklahoma than in *all the other* Big Eight states. OSU ranks 55th and OU 61st in a list of 76 selected institutions in number of full-time professional staff members for organized research.
- The poor support of research programs is further revealed in Oklahoma's ranking in total research dollars with neighboring states. The universities of Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Louisiana, and Texas *all* were above OU and OSU in total research dollars (1964-65).
- The State Regents for Higher Education have recommended an allocation for higher education to the governor and the legislature, as required by law. This request is aimed at bringing the quality of education, particularly in college teaching, up to a par with neighboring states. The \$69.9 million recommended will provide 886 new full-time teaching positions and allocate \$392 more per full-time student. The figure is an increase of \$28 million over the preceding year.
- The Governor has recommended to the legislature a cut of \$23 million from this figure. OU's share of the governor's budget will come to a \$1 million increase from last year, which will be insufficient to pay for the costs of the increased enrollment in 1967-68.

State Appropriations per Student

New York	\$1,972	Nevada	949	Pennsylvania	757
Illinois	1,506	Michigan	947	Maine	755
Alaska	1,467	Wisconsin	940	Rhode Island	752
Florida	1,332	Massachusetts	938	Connecticut	732
Maryland	1,233	Kansas	935	Colorado	725
Washington	1,210	Louisiana	922	Texas	724
Iowa	1,168	Montana	891	Alabama	698
Hawaii	1,155	Missouri	887	North Dakota	698
Kentucky	1,135	Nebraska	878	New Hampshire	659
Idaho	1,132	Oregon	873	Delaware	652
California	1,077	New Jersey	821	Minnesota	626
South Carolina	1,059	South Dakota	790	Ohio	620
Indiana	1,021	Mississippi	787	Arizona	605
North Carolina	999	Virginia	785	Utah	586
Wyoming	994	New Mexico	776	OKLAHOMA	581
Georgia	969	West Virginia	774	Tennessee	575
Vermont	955	Arkansas	771	U.S. Average	934



Average Faculty Salaries in Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities

The U.S. average is the left column, the Southwest and West the center, Oklahoma at right

Facts, Figures

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thing is done in the legislature to give us at least adequate funds."

Journalism

Since 1960 the School of Journalism has doubled its enrollment without

any increase in faculty. According to Dr. C. Joe Holland, department head, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep pace with the other schools and departments of the same size. The University of Kansas offers \$2,000 more than OU does for young teachers. This often results in the school being outbid by smaller departments. "Our excellent facilities and high

standing among the accredited schools give us some advantage, but not enough to make up for the big difference in salaries," says Holland. "We want to maintain our national standing, but to do this we must be able to compete for replacements for retiring faculty and for new staff members. Young professionals are desperately needed to fill the teaching staff in order to develop a good graduate program." A national survey of accredited journalism departments rates the school's full professors in the lowest one-third in salary.

Modern Languages

Dr. Lowell Dunham, chairman of the modern language department says he needs at least five more teachers in his area—one in Spanish, one in French, one in German, one in Russian, and one full-time professor in Italian. Dunham says he will have to replace his current Russian professor because the one he has now is leaving OU to take a better job at Kansas University. He blames the loss on two things: overwork and underpay. Says Dunham, "The nine-hour work load prevalent in many universities is something that OU needs. Our 11- or 12-hour work load discourages prospective teachers who are able to go elsewhere and carry a lighter load with more pay." Nearly all of the Spanish 1 and 2 courses are taught by graduate assistants. Overall, 75 percent of the staff teaching the 1 and 2 course levels of all language courses are graduate assistants. *END*

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in the next
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A visit with Coach Fairbanks, report on the Plan for Excellence, and some interviews with graduating seniors.

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