

The Student View . . .

Shucking the Label

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Burr



Edwards



Greeno



Farmer



Vinyard

Examining the student role in the university were Ladd Greeno, student body president; Carl Edwards, Student Congress chairman; Terry Farmer, worker in formation of the Young Alumni Council; Karen Vinyard, editor of the Oklahoma Daily, and David A. Burr, vice president for the University community.

GREENO: Many magazines have devoted pages and pages these past 18 months to topics such as student unrest and trouble on the campus. The student has really become a topic for a lot of conversation around the country. One of the problems I think students face, particularly here on this campus, is that students are labeled as students as a whole. The fact that students sat in or took over a building at Columbia or someplace in California hurts students all across the country. Many people suppose the same things are going on from campus to campus. I'm not trying to white-wash OU and say they don't go on here because there really isn't a need to. I think the students as a whole on this campus can be quite proud of the way they've conducted themselves. Of course there are a few exceptions to everything, a few bad apples in every barrel, but I think the student body here has really worked hard to do some things.

Now, I think we can all agree there is unrest on campuses and that this campus is no different. What is important is what are they upset about? What is the unrest over? On this campus I think the topics are the quality of the education they're receiving, curriculum reform, what type of activities are being planned, what type of services are being offered, what kind of entertainment is there, what type of supplementary curriculum is there. This is probably true on most campuses.

One thing I think is very important to point out is that students on the campus of the University of

Oklahoma have realized that the only way to bring about change is to go through the legitimate processes—that is to propose ideas, accept critique of the ideas, and then have them evaluated. We find our ideas are evaluated on the same level as those of the faculty member or the administrator. That means they're turned down just as often and they're kicked around as hard. This is all we're really talking about when we speak of unrest. They're talking about getting a better education. A lot of people have different opinions about what makes a better education. Students as a whole probably have a little bit different outlook than parents or faculty or administrators, and I think it's good that their voice becomes as strong.

About the same time all the unrest had really gotten started, the students on this campus voted to reorganize their student government. Structurally it's a different student government than when you were here. It is an entirely different form of government with a different basis of representation. It is a very representative group.

One of the things that came about in reorganizing was a system of checks and balances with a greater factor of cooperation with the faculty. Instead of working against the faculty or against the administration, we're working with them for the same type of goals, though in many cases from a different perspective.

I don't want to say we don't differ because we do in some matters, but I think the students realize that change has come about on a much longer range. As a result students are becoming involved because student government is beginning to mean something to them.

Because we have all segments represented in student government, all types of philosophies, it works to keep the moderate student, the middle-of-the-road student, from siding with either extreme. If you look into campuses where there are disturbances, this has been one of the big causes—the middle-of-the-road students who normally wouldn't have sided with one faction or another have suddenly decided to take a side, and when this happens, it brings about trouble. We do have a very wide variety of viewpoint represented, and we kind of serve as a melting pot for all that's going on.

Another point I'd like to raise is that there's a lot of talk about a student movement in this country, and one of the questions that's always raised is, "Is there really a student movement?" To that I'd have to answer, yes, there is. I'd have to say the student movement is nothing new, however. There have been national student organizations for years and years. There are two prominent ones in the country today, the United States National Student Association and the Association of Student Governments. The Association of Student Governments was started by an OU student body president several years ago and is the second largest today. I think it is the more representative of the student organizations.

Now, as far as the student movement, what do these groups go into? Both organizations print a number of pamphlets on everything from campus judicial systems to parking to curriculum reform to teacher evaluation. They just do all sorts of things to serve

the individual student governments. So, yes, if you hear somebody talking about a student movement, I think it's safe to say there is one.

EDWARDS: I'd like to talk about the structure of student government as it was set up by the constitution which was ratified last spring. We have a federal form of government here at OU with three branches: the executive, the legislative and the judicial. The executive and legislative work together to implement new programs to be of more service to the students.

The judiciary department is basically like the national judiciary. There are lower courts such as the ones in different housing centers or the broader court like traffic court; then there is a general court and a superior court which is to interpret the different laws of the Student Association. These courts have high recommendatory authority. They can recommend clear to the regents on expulsion or suspension of students.

However, more important than this I think is the committee system set up under the new constitution. This committee system is of rather wide ranging scope. It gives the students a voice. For instance, all the vice presidents, deans, President Hollomon and various other people throughout the University have student advisory councils. This gives a chance for the students to have an input into the policy making decisions of the University. Also in the future all the policy councils which recommend to the president and the regents will have practically equal student-faculty representation. They will carry a little more weight as far as the students are concerned because student input has been allowed. Now you can say, this is all well and good but it was kind of like this back when I was in school. But the one thing that's different about student government is that it is working. Let me give you an example.

Three years ago there was a real strong SDS chapter on this campus. As you know the SDS chapters across the country have been involved in much of the violence. Well, when we had our constitutional convention, the SDS and several small groups tried to disrupt the convention and force an adjournment. The convention met again and went ahead and wrote the document. Today there is no SDS chapter in existence at OU. The reason I think this is the case is because now the students do have a voice and there is a chance for a student to go to a faculty member or the administration through these advisory councils; there's a chance for students to have an input. All we wanted was a voice. We didn't really care about having equal vote. It would be nice if we were equal with the faculty and administration all the time, but it didn't really matter. We just wanted a chance for students to voice their opinions. What it comes down to is that if students are heard, if they have a chance to voice their opinions, then they're going to care more and it will all work out better in the long run for the students.

VINYARD: Ladd and Carl have both talked to you about students wanting a voice, and I think if you'll read the letters to the editor page in the Oklahoma Daily, you'll agree that they do have an opportunity to voice their opinions. Many of them do not agree with me. That really doesn't matter. What does matter is that the Daily is a means through which the stu-

dents can have a voice and can make their opinions known around the campus.

But the Oklahoma Daily really does much more than that. It's a big campus when you include both Oklahoma City and the Norman campus, and then there are commuters who have no central place for finding out what's going on. So it's up to the Oklahoma Daily.

The Daily is distributed to all the housing centers and to most of the main campus buildings. It makes it to the Oklahoma City campus, and many of the alumni get it. It serves as the main vehicle for communication.

What's really great about the Daily is that it's completely run by students. We have a staff of over 150 people. About 30 of those are paid staff people. We have about 50 staff writers and the remainder are people in journalism classes who are required to work on the Daily. We're responsible for everything that goes into the paper, and we're even responsible for the printing. Most of the printers in our backshop are students. We do have a faculty adviser, but generally the students run the paper.

You won't find any four-letter words in the Daily unless maybe it's a preposition. We haven't received the amount of publicity that the Jones Family Grandchildren has, but we do feel that we represent the majority of students. I'm not saying the majority agrees with my editorials, but we do represent the student body because this is the kind of publication the majority believes in and wants.

FARMER: I also am going to talk a little about communication except I'm going to digress a little and get away from strictly the student aspect and go a little more into the student and alumni aspect as being a cohesive unit.

One of the first really positive steps that has come up in the last few months and I think really stands a good chance of getting these two units together is the Young Alumni Council which is under the senior class intern program this year.

Through the Young Alumni Council we hope that the students on the campus and the alums throughout the state can get together and really stand up for the University to promote some really good benefits through the Alumni Association. Through the Young Alumni Council we hope to show the Oklahoma public exactly what a great school this is.

There are two types of students you will find on the University campus: those are the present students, the students that are here, and the students that have already graduated, the alumni. To have a great institution these two types of students have got to work together through areas such as the student government and the public media. You'll find that the students who are now on our campus have programs such as the President's Leadership Class, University Scholars, student government, all of which are helping to build a stronger university. But what we're finding is that in a lot of cases the students here and our alums are our own worst critics. I'm sure you've heard that said before, and in many cases I'm afraid you're going to find it's right. If you look around the state you'll find a lot of times the people who are really degrading the school are the students that are here or

the people who have graduated from this school and are out in the Oklahoma communities. We feel this isn't good. We feel there are enough Aggies from the north who are glad to deride us any time, we don't have to help them out.

This Young Alumni Council is made up of alums throughout the state as well as students here on campus trying for a unity between these two groups. We feel that if we combine the past students with the present students, we'll alleviate some of the bad publicity we're getting throughout the state. We're going to be able to build ourselves a real fine institution. I think it's a real step for the future, and I urge you all to get interested in it.

QUESTION: Yesterday I walked in the Union after not having been on the campus in several years, and I saw some students who looked very far left asking for money for some students who were caught in a marihuana raid or something. What's it all about?

VINYARD: Four students were arrested in Cross Center, and the residents of their center took up a collection to help finance their bail. That's all it was. Most of the students don't support the actions of those who were arrested, but they felt sorry for them and wanted to get them out of jail. The Union is a central location and was a follow-up after the fund raising at Cross Center.

BURR: You will find a significant thing which you have just raised here. If students get in trouble on this campus, you will find that the student body, and sometimes the Student Association itself, puts forth a good deal of effort to help the student out of the problem. This does not in any way represent the viewpoint of the association's leadership. For instance, they helped the people involved with the Jones Family Grandchildren when they were in jail. That doesn't necessarily represent their political belief; they were just trying to be of some assistance to students, any student. I think that was widely misunderstood.

QUESTION: How do you feel about the Jones Family Grandchildren?

GREENO: My feelings can be stated real quickly. Last year they couldn't sell 400 copies, which was all they printed. Now they're selling 5-6,000. They're able to give them away. I think that never would have happened except they got some publicity and the students are buying it only to see what they will try next, how bold they will be. I'd never picked one up until I got in this position and realized they were going to test a few things and see how far they could go. Now you have to fight students to get a copy. I think that's really a shame, but that's people. People are reading it now out of curiosity; I don't think anybody really enjoys reading it. It's a little of all our fault both on and off the campus who have talked about it and made it such an issue. I think if we are careful about it, it will die back down to where they can't afford to print anymore. They get no money from the University, and they're doing quite well selling it. One of the other things that always amazes me about it is that they're against capitalism and yet they sell the thing for a dime when it costs maybe a penny or two to print, and that's capitalism as far as I'm concerned.

EDWARDS: There's a question I got when I went home and told my parents the student government was connected with the JFG thing. First of all all student organizations which can meet the requirements of our student constitution are recognized. Now this is nothing more than being recognized and coming under the purview of student government. A lot of people have misinterpreted this to mean that we are sponsoring the Jones Family Grandchildren. This is not the case at all, and like Ladd said, they're getting no funds from the University or from the Student Association. Probably every university in the country right now has an underground newspaper of some sort. I was in Washington, D.C., a few weeks ago visiting my sister and saw a paper, and naturally I wanted to see what it said. It had exactly the same articles as the paper here. They have an underground news service.

Here we'd just as soon keep the publication above ground. I don't think they're going to break any more laws. Their circulation is dropping, and I'm willing to predict that it will go out before very long.

QUESTION: Karen, if you were a printer that printed newspapers on a job basis, would you print the Jones Family Grandchildren?

VINYARD: No, I wouldn't. If I didn't believe in drinking beer, I wouldn't sell it to anyone else either. It's just a matter of principle, and I wouldn't do anything that violated my own principles.

QUESTION: Who actually puts out the Jones Family Grandchildren?

BURR: A group of students called the Jones Family Grandchildren.

QUESTION: Is the JFG group basically the same group that was associated with the SDS?

BURR: There is an element of the former SDS group in the Jones Family Grandchildren operation. One of my friends from Oklahoma State bragged last year about the fact that they didn't have an SDS chapter on campus any more, and then his face got kind of red and he said, "but we've still got the people."

QUESTION: Why do the students think they should have greater representation on the Athletic Council?

EDWARDS: First, the athletic program is what the alumni are closest to. However, it's also what the students are closest to. They may or may not go to classes, but somehow, they always go to the football games. We sell out all the student tickets for every football game. All sports are represented in the Athletic Department. True, the alumni give most of the financing to the University for the Athletic Department. This is great, but I support the athletic program here as much as anyone else—maybe not with money but with cheering and all that stuff. Students are on this campus, and the sports program represents a big public relations area of the University, and the people in the program are students, therefore, I think students should have as much representation on the Athletic Council as the faculty or the alumni so all three can work together.

QUESTION: How does the student body feel about ROTC?

GREENO: The ROTC became one of the biggest issues in my campaign for student body president. The Daily asked me what I thought about ROTC on campus and

said that was going to be one of the big campaign issues. I asked how they knew, and they said because they were going to make it an issue. In the long run I was happy that it became an issue because I had my doubts about what the students thought, and I really do attribute a large part of my victory to that issue. I think a lot of students that voted for me are not 100 per cent behind ROTC, what they are behind is the right to have it taught here if some students want it. This doesn't mean that they want it necessarily. This works the other way too. In course work for example, some people wonder why a student wants a certain course. There are an awful lot of students here who feel that if enough students want or are curious enough to hear views expressed about something, regardless of whether it's a communist leader or an ROTC class, there should be a class offered. A lot of students that feel that's what college is about—to pick up ideas. These students feel they are mature enough to take ideas and evaluate them. Part of my victory was because there are 1,700 people in ROTC units here who had never voted before. I did my best to make sure all of them did.

QUESTION: What brought about the change in student government?

GREENO: Mostly students were tired of a do-nothing system. People could rot in the dorms or rot in jail or rot looking for a place to park. They still can as far as that goes. But formerly we thought that we had the best people in student government because the government leaders were in every activity on campus. And then we began to realize that maybe that was exactly what was wrong with it—it seemed to represent only the activity type people. We still have a lot of activity people but we also have a lot of people who have never been activity minded.

We work with the city and county authorities. A week doesn't go by that I'm not down in the courthouse for some reason or another. The sheriff and all the deputies have been real good about it. The only service I've performed is as a go-between for somebody who is in jail waiting to be charged or waiting to be tried. I see that his parents are called or a lawyer is called. This goes along with the idea that we offer service to the students and that any person is innocent until proven guilty, no matter what the charges are.

always there was discussion

