

## Opportunity Commitment Reaffirmed by University

Desegregation of higher education in the United States began in January 1946 with an Oklahoman, Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher, a scholastically qualified student who was denied admission to the University of Oklahoma Law School because she was black. In the resulting law suit, the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional and void all laws restricting college entrance on the basis of color.

Thirty-five years later, the University has reaffirmed its commitment to the affirmative action goals which have grown out of that historic case. In his report to the OU Board of Regents in May, President William S. Banowsky acknowledged that despite its gains, the state system of higher education has failed to fully achieve the goals established more than five years ago.

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Banowsky pointed out that Oklahoma's current population is 14.2 percent blacks, American Indians and Hispanics, while only 8.1 percent of the students on the Norman campus and 2.5 percent on the Oklahoma City campus come from these minority groups.

To attract more qualified minority students, the University is developing a strong minority scholarship program with 20 new \$500 freshman awards to be added next fall. The University Scholars program for 200 top freshmen, which had 16 percent minority students in 1982-83, will have an even larger minority representation next fall. In addition to departmental scholarships already established on the Norman Campus, the Mary Clarke Miley Foundation provides \$5,000 per year to assist students in fine arts and journalism.

On the Oklahoma City campus, where a target black enrollment of 6.7 percent has been set in medicine and dentistry, the Arnold and Bess Ungerman Scholarships will provide \$25,000 in minority medical scholarships while the Culpepper Foundation and the Major Bass Memorial Fund assists students of American Indian ancestry. Tuition Waiver Scholarships last year provided 67

grants totaling \$87,000. The Graduate and Professional Opportunities Program for Ethnic Minorities provides \$5,000 per student for new doctoral candidates, and Professional Study Grants of \$4,000 are available for seven new medical or dental students.

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Progress in minority faculty appointments over the past two years has been disappointing, Banowsky reported. Blacks make up 6.8 percent of Oklahoma's population but only 1.5 percent of the Norman faculty and 2.2 percent of the Oklahoma City faculty. American Indians make up 5.6 percent of the state population but less than 1 percent of the faculty in Norman and only 1.1 in Oklahoma City. Of the 111 new positions filled in the two-year period, only two went to Blacks; Hispanics had a net gain of four, and American Indians a net loss of two.

In 1978, the Norman campus had a total of 28 minority faculty members, 3.8 percent of the total faculty. In 1982, 33 minority faculty members represented 3.6 percent of the total. Minority staff representation has increased slightly since 1978 to 218, 8 percent of the total staff. In Oklahoma City minority faculty has decreased in the past five years, from 6.3 to 5.1 percent, with minority staff increasing from 23 percent to 24.8 percent.

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In a separate study, Banowsky reported that OU's employment of women staff members was up substantially over the past two years, but the appointment of women faculty members was less successful. Of the 49 new appointments to executive, administrative and managerial positions, 77.6 went to women. Fifty-five percent of the Norman staff and 71.6 percent of the Oklahoma City staff are women. However, women received only 29.1 percent of the new faculty appointments in Norman, bringing the representation of women on the faculty to 20 percent, 2 percent higher than in 1978. In Oklahoma City, women make up 26.4 percent of the faculty.

The Oklahoma system of higher education currently is working under a three-year extension of a federal

court order requiring several states to desegregate or face sanctions including loss of federal funding. But President Banowsky insists that meeting affirmative action goals should be a commitment of the individual institution — not because it is required, but because it is right.

"The responsibility of equal opportunity at the University is not the responsibility of the state or federal government," Banowsky said. "It is the responsibility of this institution and must be individually and collectively shared by each person responsible for making any and all administrative and employment decisions. Until equal opportunity is achieved, the University shall not have achieved its full potential as a public institution."

## Free Speech Strengthened By Common Courtesy

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane J. Kirkpatrick promised to speak to the 1983 graduates of the University of Oklahoma at commencement this spring. She kept that promise, and the audience repaid her with two standing ovations and generous applause.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick, a native Oklahoman, does not automatically expect such basic courtesy any more. Smith College invited her to be the commencement speaker, then the college president withdrew the invitation when a group opposing her foreign policy views threatened to protest. Cal/Berkeley invited her to deliver two lectures; she was shouted off the stage at one, the other was canceled. Members of a University of Minnesota audience greeted her with a Nazi flag and attempted to shout her down — unsuccessfully.

At OU's Lloyd Noble Center, the TV cameras waited expectantly for another media event. But outside only a small group of placard-bearing protestors demonstrated peacefully, while inside a handful of graduates made their statement by leaving during Ambassador Kirkpatrick's speech — all of which seemed to inspire the crowd to a Sooner welcome that transcended political differences. Thus far, at least, the price of free speech at the University of Oklahoma is still common courtesy. — *CJB*