



prologue.

A complex of buildings, impressive though it may be, does not always make a campus.

By today's standards, the University of Oklahoma's initial presence in Oklahoma City was modest, although it must have seemed momentous at the time. A timely merger in 1910 with the Epworth School of Medicine enabled OU to give state students, for the first time, a four-year medical education—a continuation in Norman of the first two years, in existence since 1900, but now a third and fourth in Oklahoma City. The State University Hospital opened nearby two years later, but not until 1928 did the OU School of Medicine consolidate in the first of many structures that would eventually compose the OU Health Sciences Center.

Several of the health-related disciplines followed the med students to OKC from Norman—Nursing, Public Health, Pharmacy; a couple originated there—Allied Health and Dentistry; and a separate Graduate College was established. With the addition of hospitals, clinics and research facilities, the Health Sciences Center was certainly a complex—but a campus? Not so much.

After launching a revamp of Norman's main campus upon their arrival in the mid-'90s, President David and Molly Shi Boren took a long look at the sterile, cheerless landscape that was the Health Sciences Center. They concluded that visually and programmatically, this would never do.

In many ways, altering the visual was the easy part. With the main campus as a road map, planners and private partners banished the divisive six-lane thoroughfare and the huge electric high lines and created in their place a pedestrian mall, beautifully landscaped gardens, green spaces dotted with fountains and statuary, and presiding over it all a casting of

the Seed Sower identical to the one in Norman. It was good practice, since a few years later, the same formula would be carried out on the newly acquired campus for OU-Tulsa.

Adding a culture of student services to the traditional view of health-related education was more of a sea change for OUHSC. Boren confessed later that a former provost resigned rather than accede to a student-driven push for a student union on the Oklahoma City campus. Nevertheless, a two-story Student Center was built in 1996 and was an immediate hit with students who still craved a place to relax and unwind even in the midst of the most serious of professional pursuits.

HSC Student Affairs was established to develop programming for the Student Center, expanded and improved in 2002 and renamed the David L. Boren Student Union in 2004. One of the staff's first orders of the day was to cultivate a mutually supportive relationship with the administration and faculty of the different colleges.

The facility's new third floor brought together HSC Student Affairs with Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, and the Bursar, and provides a handsome—and comfortable—student lounge in the OU trademark Mission style. An invigorated HSC student government also offices in the DLB Union, along with meeting rooms, a fitness center, a computer lab and IT help desk, a branch bank, ATM and debit machines, and a thriving food court. Students can play billiards and ping pong inside or volleyball and basketball outside, just off a terrace complete with umbrella tables. A satellite OU Athletic Ticket Office rounds out the one-stop shopping.

Many of the student services and activities that have been successful in

Norman have been transplanted to HSC, overseen by the same vice president and dean of students, Clarke Stroud, and directed on-site by Kate Stanton. Some modification was necessary, of course, for a mostly over-21 population of approximately 4,000 (the average age is 27), only a fourth of whom are undergraduates, many married with children, all engaged in high-pressure, time-devouring disciplines.

HSC has its own OU Cousins program to match international students one-on-one with an American friend, a Crimson Club honorary service organization and a Campus Activities Board. HSC Student Affairs hosts a Brown Bag Lunch Series, De-Stress Fest, Campus Awards and a string of "weeks"—Welcome Week, Fall for OU Week, Winter Warm-Up Week, Spring Fling, and on a more serious note, Sexual Assault Awareness Week. There is a book club; HSC 1, orientation for first-year students; and Circles of Influence, in which faculty and staff members invite students to their homes for dinner.

Another significant, student-inspired development for the Health Sciences Center has been the construction of the first on-campus housing. University Village is a gated complex of 86 studio apartments and two-bedroom townhouses for students and their families.

No better example exists of the state's remarkable progress in the last 100 years than the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. It is an amazing, life-altering place. Yet in the midst of the world-class teaching, research and patient care that occurs in its impressive buildings, a recognition exists that all the needs of its students should be met—including a little downtime for social interaction and a hot cup of coffee.—CJB