



postscript.

The Graduate College

Because the administration of the University of Oklahoma's second president, Arthur Grant Evans, was brief, 1908-1911, he had to move with alacrity to make his mark on the fledgling institution. Mere survival had been the focus of his predecessor, David Ross Boyd, as he literally built from the ground up. To Evans was left the opportunity to reorganize into something more closely resembling a real university.

In 1909, as the politics of statehood that had brought him into office swirled around him, Evans made three significant moves. He began dismantling the Preparatory School, which had been organized at a time when none of Oklahoma's homesteader youth qualified for college. He oversaw the laying of the cornerstone for the building (later to be named Evans Hall) that would house the University's administration for a hundred years and establish collegiate gothic as the campus' dominant architectural style. More importantly, he reorganized his institution's colleges and schools, giving each something new at OU—a dean.

One of the more interesting of these entities—which included the colleges of arts and sciences and engineering and the schools of fine arts, medicine, pharmacy and law—was the Graduate School. Postgraduate studies were a must for a new university seeking academic respectability, and the faculty had moved quickly to set the wheels in motion. They set the standards in 1898 and the next year had a master's candidate in Carlton Ross Hume, who had earned OU's first bachelor's degree. A Graduate Council oversaw Hume's work and that of others who followed him; by 1909 six masters of arts had been granted and two masters of science.

The Graduate School that President Evans installed was modest in the extreme. The dean, Albert Heald Van Vleet, operated the new school



Albert Heald Van Vleet



Homer L. Dodge

out of his office in the botany department, overseeing the defense of every degree and personally advising every graduate student—from 10 in 1909 to the 300 enrolled at his death in 1925.

The next dean, Homer L. Dodge, who served until 1942, took the Graduate School to the next level. He developed an administrative structure, added staff, assumed a more prominent role in the campus' academic life—and in 1929 awarded the first doctorate to Mary Jane Brown for her work in ecology. Progress was slow during the '30s; only five doctorates had been awarded by 1940 and most master's degrees were in education. World War II sapped the University of students but spurred the growth of graduate study; 70 doctoral degrees were granted from 1941 to 1945 with strong emphasis in the sciences.

The University's research activities and graduate study were joined from the beginning, with the graduate dean directing both until the late 1940s when an independent Research Institute was established. High-level research expanded enormously over the next 30 years, as did graduate study; the two were reunited in 1972. The Graduate School eventually became the Graduate College, and the graduate dean,



T.H. Lee Williams

who is now T.H. Lee Williams, acquired the additional title of vice president for Research Administration.

The Graduate College has had 13 different deans (one of them, Eddie Carol Smith, holding the job twice), most, unlike Van Vleet and Dodge, for relatively short terms. Only Laurence Snyder, Kenneth L. Hoving and Williams have had double-digit tenures.

At its centennial, the Graduate College is anticipating accomplishments that could dwarf all that have gone before. The new state-of-the-art facilities on the recently developed Research Campus and elsewhere throughout the campus are making possible educational, business and governmental partnerships and creating study/research opportunities for top-flight graduate students.

President Evans would be gratified that the new facilities have been carried out in a modified version of his chosen collegiate gothic, and deans Van Vleet and Dodge would be absolutely amazed at all the wonders that are happening inside.

—CJB

The history of the OU Graduate College, which can be found at <http://gradweb.ou.edu/History/history.asp>, was compiled by graduate research assistant John Stewart, who holds both a bachelor's and master's in the history of science.