

# Engineering schools and economy

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**A**LUMNI of the University of Oklahoma are much exercised about the pending executive order making fundamental changes in the scope and function of the state university.

The attitude of university alumni is not prompted by any partisan desire that the University of Oklahoma, because it is their alma mater, be built up unsoundly or uneconomically or at the expense of any other educational institution. It would likewise be a sad commentary on the effect a state paid for free higher education has had on the thousands of alumni and former students of the University of Oklahoma if those alumni and former students were less impressed by the necessity for economy under present disastrous conditions than the average person.

Millions have been spent during good, and often free and easy times, to put more education into business. The time has surely come when more sound business should be put into the state's educational system. This applies to the grade schools of the state, to high schools, and to the general system of higher education.

There is little reason to assume that the general spirit of loose operation, over-expansion and unessential expenditure, which affected every corporation, every business and every individual in the State of Oklahoma should have passed entirely by the educational system.

Corporations, businesses and individuals have made drastic changes in their expenditures and methods of operation during the past four years. Those who have not have not survived. Unessentials have been eliminated. Ingenuity born of necessity, has pointed the way to greater co-ordination of effort and operation, to ways of obtaining essential results without the expenditure of so much money.

This is the benefit that we of this generation are getting from this greatest depression in recent history. God forbid that alumni of University of Oklahoma should even appear to attempt to keep these benefits from the school system of the state.

The very excellent Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and its President, Doctor Bizzell, have worked ceaselessly to cut expenditures and effect consolidations and economies at the University of Oklahoma. Alumni are proud of the fact that this management has been

capable of making such cuts without sacrificing essentials. Perhaps further cuts are necessary. The garment can be no larger than the cloth furnished to the cutter. Taxes must be reduced. A people impoverished by taxes could take little advantage of higher educational facilities, however good those facilities might be.

Alumni of the university I am sure will give their most hearty support to any move that will effect real economy in the educational system of the state. If educational training is being given at the university that can be provided just as soundly and more economically at any other institution, the university will cooperate whole-heartedly in transferring such work. If other schools are giving work that can be provided more logically and more economically at the University of Oklahoma, I am sure the university will assume the additional burden.

From our own off-hand familiarity with the work of the great engineering school at the university, almost a large college in itself, with buildings costing more than \$250,000, with equipment provided by tax payers costing more than \$150,000, with equipment donated by corporations, scientific institutions, etc., in recognition of the value of the work of the school amounting to \$100,000, with additional equipment loaned by the same organizations to the school amounting to \$60,000, and with eight hundred students of the engineering school having available instruction in related subjects, which can be available only in an institution with the scope of a university, we doubt the logic of such a revolutionary move as is contemplated in the governor's order, however reasonable it may appear on first consideration.

With more than half a million dollars in buildings and equipment already placed at the university, and not available anywhere else except at enormous expenditure of money, we likewise see not economy but additional expense at a time most difficult to tax citizens.

We are sure that thorough investigation will show all this. If this reasoning should prove all wrong, and thorough investigation should show that the educational system of the state can be made stronger and cost less with the proposed change being made, alumni will lead in supporting the move.

Two engineering schools, one at the university and one at the A. & M. college, differing somewhat each from the

other on account of the difference in the fundamental major educational services each was founded to provide, nevertheless each to a certain extent duplicating the works of the other, would seem to be a necessary result of the original founding of the A. & M. college at one place and the university at another.

A university without an engineering school ceases to that extent to be a real university. Such a range of studies and problems are common to all engineering specialists in whatever line that it is illogical to deny the specialist in one line some training in any other.

The engineering school at the University of Oklahoma has become a great institution over the past twenty-nine years in part on account of the higher excellence of specialized engineering instruction that has been provided, but also in very large part on account of the constantly higher standard of instruction that is provided in related subjects in other schools of the university. A great engineering school either must have available from other schools in the same university or college especially high type instruction in physics, chemistry, mathematics, and the other related subjects, or the engineering school must itself supply them.

Granted economical administration, the building of only so many classrooms and the employment of only so many special engineering instructors as are required for the number of students seeking instruction at each school, the saving from elimination of this regrettable but necessary duplication would undoubtedly be far less over many years, than would be the immediate cost of providing at either school from present high priced tax dollars the additional facilities that would be necessary and that cannot be moved.

It cannot be assumed that present facilities and instructors at either school could care for the double problem. If that were true, the major problem would be to reduce an enormously over-built faculty staff or faculty staffs.

A well-rounded engineering school is an essential part of a real university. Since there are so many excellent engineering schools at agricultural colleges of the country, perhaps the modern development of this institution to meet modern needs likewise requires one.

I believe the scrapping of either school at this time would be a luxury move, not an economy move. Able men have been appointed to study the problem. If, regardless of the desirability of having an engineering school at each the university and A. & M. it is decided there can be but one, then study should be made to determine whether more economy and a better fundamental set-up for a school of greatest service to the state will result from a school at the A. & M. college or at the university.