

The Need of Benefactions

For the University of Oklahoma

IN a previous issue of *The Sooner Magazine* (October, 1937), I attempted to present the facts relating to the present financial situation of the University of Oklahoma. I think the figures clearly indicate that the enrolment in the University at the present time is out of proportion to the financial support the institution is receiving. The editor of *The Sooner Magazine* has invited me to follow that article with one on the subject of the need of benefactions to supplement income from the state. I am glad of the opportunity to discuss this subject which has been very much in my mind for many years.

It must be obvious to those who are following the trend of fiscal affairs in Oklahoma that it is almost too much to expect that the state will ever again provide adequate funds for the proper maintenance and support of the University. The demands for relief, old age pensions, and various other new obligations are now taxing the income from government sources to the utmost. There is no indication that appropriations for these purposes will decrease; on the other hand, there is every reason to believe that they will be increased greatly. There is widespread criticism on the part of many taxpayers because of the increasing cost of government, but there is no indication that it is likely to be less. There are many reasons to believe that taxpayers will be contributing increasingly larger shares of their incomes for the support of the state and national governments in the future. As far as I am able to see, higher education will not share proportionally with other projects in the income of the state. This means that if our publicly supported institutions of higher learning are to get on, they must look to other sources of income to supplement state support.

There are only two other sources from which institutions like the University of Oklahoma may look for support. One is from tuition; the other is from benefactions. Most of the state supported institutions of higher learning in other states now charge tuition; and particularly in the professional schools. There is a widespread belief throughout the country today that individual students should share more largely in the cost of their training in professional and technical courses. Almost without exception, nonresident students are paying tuition in excess of that required for residents. For

example, the University of Michigan charges \$220 in medicine for resident students and \$350 for nonresidents, \$120 in engineering for residents and \$160 for nonresidents, and \$140 for residents who are studying law and \$200 for nonresidents. The tuition in arts and sciences varies within rather wide limits, ranging from \$50 to \$110 for residents and a proportionally larger sum for nonresidents. The University of Oklahoma charges nonresident students \$50 per semester, but no tuition is charged residents of Oklahoma.

There has been some discussion in this state about adopting the policy of charging tuition, but it has met with disfavor by members of the legislature on the grounds that it would deprive many capable and promising students of a higher education. Knowing the situation in Oklahoma as I do, I should be opposed to a tuition charge unless a liberal provision were made for scholarships to meet the needs of gifted students who could not afford to pay any part of the cost of their education. At the present time, approximately fifty-five per cent of the students enrolled in the University are earning a part or all of their expenses. It would be disastrous to deprive these worthy students of the privilege of attending college.

It is not likely that this state will soon reverse its policy of free tuition for students in our schools and colleges. The Constitution prohibits our institutions of higher learning charging tuition, except in the School of Medicine of the University. It would take a constitutional amendment to change this policy, and I am not inclined to think that the people would adopt it at the present time.

If I am correct in this assumption, the only immediate source of income to supplement appropriations made by the legislature is from benefactions. There is every reason for us to look to men and women of wealth for funds with which to do many things that are so greatly needed by the University. Both independent and state supported institutions of higher learning have been the beneficiaries of great benefactions. Harvard, which is our wealthiest institution, has an en-

dowment exceeding \$120,000,000; Yale is near the \$1,000,000 mark; Columbia has in excess of \$69,000,000; and Chicago has more than \$65,000,000. Many other independent institutions have endowments ranging from \$5,000,000 to \$20,000,000. There are ten state supported universities today with endowments in excess of \$2,000,000 each. The largest of these is the University of Texas with \$33,000,000; then come Cornell University with \$30,000,000; the University of California with \$20,000,000; the University of Minnesota with \$12,000,000, and the University of Michigan with \$11,000,000. The universities of Virginia, Alabama, Wyoming, Indiana, and Idaho have sufficient endowment to relieve the cost of their educational programs.

The time has come when the University of Oklahoma should press its claims for endowments. There are many men and women of great wealth in Oklahoma. Some of them are looking for appropriate means of using part of their wealth in profitable ways. The fact that the Federal Income Tax Law provides that contributions up to fifteen per cent of net incomes are deductible from taxes furnishes an added incentive to those who give their money for such purposes. The University should capitalize upon this situation and press its claims for gifts.

I think one of the reasons the University has not received benefactions in the past is because its wealthiest friends have not known much about its needs. They naturally assume that the state is supporting the University and that private benefactions are not badly needed. It is not generally understood that many imperative needs of the University will never be supplied by the state.

The University at the present time needs an art museum, a natural history museum, a campanile with a set of carillon bells, and an astronomical observatory. The University has a great collection of Oriental and Western European art that is now boxed and stored. The amount of this material is sufficient to fill a large building, and it would surprise the public to know the extent of the collection. It should be available both for the benefit of the public and for instructional purposes. A vast amount of archeological specimens, mineralogical material, and col-

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By
President W. B. Bizzell



One of the University's serious needs that is unlikely to be met by state appropriations is the need for museum space in which to display artistic and scientific collections worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and of wide interest to the public. Most of a rich oriental art collection, part of which is shown in the upper left picture, is stored away in boxes because of a lack of display space. Upper right shows valuable anthropological materials now crowded together in a basement room. Center right is part of what would be a large geology museum if space could be found. Lower right is part of the zoological collection and lower left is a sample of the botany collection. The little girl viewing the collections with so much interest is Carol Jensen, daughter of the University landscape gardener.

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lections of birds and animals that would reasonably fill a large museum are scattered in several buildings on the campus. These and other items mentioned are essential to every great university, but it is unlikely that they ever will be provided except from private benefactions. Other building needs are very great at the present time. If we wait long enough, I presume the state will provide funds for several buildings; but we need them now. I wish we could induce some benefactor interested in his state and its future progress to provide funds for one or more of them.

There is need for scholarships and fellowships far in excess of the number that can ever be provided out of state funds. If the University is ever to build up a great Graduate School, it is necessary to have an adequate number of stipends for this purpose. Research is an essential function of every university. Nothing will contribute more to the natural resources of Oklahoma than adequate funds with which to conduct thorough studies of the possibilities of our latent wealth.

The time has come also when we should have several endowed chairs in the University. These are usually attached to the names of beloved professors who have passed on or to individuals whose families wish to perpetuate their memories. I can think of a dozen chairs of this kind that should be established at the University at the present time.

I have been present at the commencement exercises of several of our great universities, and it is the custom on each of these occasions for the president to read a list of the benefactions that have come to the university during the year. Sometimes it takes fifteen or twenty minutes to read the entire list. Up to the present time, it has never been my privilege to read the name of a single benefactor or the amount of his gift at commencement. I do not think it too much to expect that before long we may be able to begin the practice of announcing benefactions on commencement day.

History reveals the fact that institutions of higher learning are among the most enduring in human society. Many universities today have been in existence for centuries. This fact should have an appeal to men of wealth who wish to give significance to their benefactions. While state universities are not as old as many universities in Europe, they give promise of existing through many future generations; and benefactions to these institutions may be regarded as imperishable investments in the continuing stream of youth that will enroll in these institutions through the years. I think, therefore, that this should be an important consideration for those who seek to direct their gifts into permanent and helpful channels.

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