

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Shall the Door Be Shut On Ambitious Youths?

The president of Harvard University in his recent annual report states that, "It seems to me highly probable that a diminution in the total number of students in the universities of this country is desirable." He definitely favors restricting the student body of Harvard to about its present size.

Imagine the cry of indignation that would arise in democratic Oklahoma if the president of the University of Oklahoma should take a similar attitude and state that entrance requirements should be made so rigid that enrolment would be strictly limited to the present level of approximately 6,200!

Fortunately, the present administration of the University entertains no such idea. It is committed to the policy of giving the benefits of higher education to as many young people of Oklahoma as is humanly possible. At times it may appear that we have too many "white collar" workers in certain professions and occupations, but it is shallow thinking to assume that because of this, we have too many educated persons.

Oklahoma needs all the well-educated persons it can produce. We have only to read the newspapers to find that there is a plentiful supply of social, economic and scientific problems yet to be solved before this state becomes a utopia. In the long run, it is the educated leadership of the state that will solve these problems.

In view of the fact that certain members of the last Legislature posed as champions of the "poor but honest" folks from the forks of the creek, it is curious to reflect that in actual practice they follow the principles of the austere president of an eastern university.

Instead of providing enough appropriations for the University so that the steadily increasing student body would have rooms in which classes could meet, certain legislators carried on a bitter fight to prevent appropriation of funds in proportion to the larger enrolment.

It is a fact that the University is now handling just about its capacity load. Classes meet during the noon hour and at night. Classes meet in the Union building in rooms supposed to be available for student activities. Every building is jammed unmercifully.

Do the legislators who choke off the University's funds in the face of steadily increasing enrolment want to adopt the eastern viewpoint that only a select few of our young people shall be permitted to attend the state university?

Unless the next legislature remedies the present situation, the University will be forced into something like that because of lack of space. And the real blame will rest with those certain legislators who proclaim themselves to be fast friends of the poor but ambitious youth of Oklahoma!

A Statement Of Policy On The Election

Whispers and rumors regarding the Alumni Association's part in the forthcoming campaign for governor have been heard about the state. Probably the fact that the Alumni Association is taking a more aggressive stand on matters of importance to the University has led some persons to the mistaken belief that the Association or its officers would attempt to influence alumni to support some one candidate for governor.

Any such effort would be directly opposed to the policy followed by the Association over a period of many years. The Association emphasizes a program—not personalities. It advocates on the part of alumni a careful evaluation of the records of the candidates, to the end that the alumnus can

select a candidate who will deal fairly with the University and not plunge the institution into political complications. It is quite likely that among the candidates there will be several who, on the basis of their past records, might reasonably be expected to treat the University fairly. So far as the Association is concerned, the alumnus may select any one of these as his candidate.

Any whisper that the Association is concentrating on any one candidate is absurd on the face of it. The officers and leaders of the Association vary considerably in their personal choices among the present field of candidates for governor. Many have already stated frankly the names of the men they plan to vote for. Any effort to organize support for one candidate among the 17 members of the Alumni Executive Board, ten members of the state advisory council and some three hundred members of County Advisory Boards—Democrats and Republicans, representing a great variety of professional and business and personal relationships, as well as local political tieups—would be not only a dangerous policy for the Association but would be an obviously impossible task.

There's No Real Rivalry In Education

Hearing talk that the various educational institutions of the state "fight" among themselves for state appropriations, the average Oklahoman might feel that there is a very unwholesome situation. As a matter of fact, the rivalry is more apparent than real.

Each of the educational institutions has a function, some more important than others, but each is serving in some field of usefulness. The teachers colleges to a great extent serve limited areas of the state, and they provide a certain type of undergraduate education. There would be some economy, perhaps, in having all their students attend the University, if the whole state system could go back and start over again. But we have physical plants at each of the teacher colleges, and probably they provide higher education for many local young people who could not afford to go to Norman or Stillwater to attend school.

A. and M. College, of course, has a large program of instruction that does not duplicate work offered at the University, except in a few instances.

The University performs many functions that a college can not, or at least should not, attempt to perform.

Fundamentally, each of these institutions has a job to do that none of the others can do.

The so-called rivalry between institutions is more often merely the apparent rivalry of individuals representing the institutions, rather than being competition between the institutions themselves.

The institutions are greater than personalities. They may be halted in their progress by bad fortune, but they are among the most lasting things in our civilization, and they always come back.

Anyone seeking to damage an educational institution by attacking a personality connected with it is like an invading army trying to conquer China. He may make a big impression temporarily, but he has scant hope for a permanent victory.

Regent Joe McBride, who has written a good many headlines himself, probably could have told the University Board of Regents that the new fee officially known as "fee for repeating a course" would always remain "flunk fee" to newspapers, notwithstanding the University's protests at the inaccuracy of this brief and convenient label.