

Plan for an Alumni College

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WHEN I came to the University more than fifteen years ago, one of the things I most wanted to do was to establish some agency whereby education might be made a continuing process for the graduates of the institution. I had in mind the erection of a building for this purpose; but at that time, a campaign for financing the Stadium and Student Union Building had just ended and it did not seem to be advisable to launch this project then. The economic depression came upon us a few years later which made it necessary to push this whole plan aside for the time being. It has been, however, one of the great ambitions of my administrative career as president of the University to carry through this project before I retired from office.

Education should be thought of as a continuing process. We should never think of the completion of four years of college work as the point at which students cease to learn. I am sure many students feel that when they receive their diplomas on commencement day their education is finished and that their connection with the institution is at an end. I think this is a mistake. When students once enroll in the University, it is the supreme obligation of its officials to maintain contact with them as long as they live and everything possible should be done to build upon the intellectual interests that they have developed while in college. It is this thought that I have had in mind in thinking of an Alumni College for the University of Oklahoma.

In recent years adult education has received increasing attention on the part of educators. It is for this group that extension organizations have been maintained in our colleges and universities, and there has been an increasing demand for all kinds of educational services for people who have never been to college or those who have completed undergraduate or professional courses in these institutions. New techniques have been devised and new programs have been formulated in the interest of those who want to increase their knowledge in some field of learning. As a result, visual education is being largely used and radio is being made an agency for instruction of thousands of people who are living at

places remote from educational centers. In my inaugural address at the beginning of my administrative career here at the University, I said:

"Education today is not restricted to the youth of the land. The thirst for knowledge has no age restrictions. The state-supported university must satisfy the intellectual hunger of every man and woman, regardless of age or place of residence within the state. The university should lend a helping hand to everyone who earnestly desires to increase his skill and capacity for industrial service. The public has a right to turn to the university for every kind of information that will help in the solution of economic, social, and political problems.

"We must, therefore, think of the state's geographical boundaries as the limits of the university campus and the people of the state should regard the buildings here in Norman merely a reservoir of knowledge that they may freely tap whenever they desire. It will, therefore, be my sincere purpose to encourage every form of extension teaching and provide facilities for the dissemination of all kinds of useful knowledge for which there may be a demand on the part of the citizenship of the state."

I still believe this to be a sound policy and I have done everything possible to maintain our extension program through the years. While limited financial resources have made it impossible to do all the things that should have been done in this field, nevertheless the University has maintained a strong department of

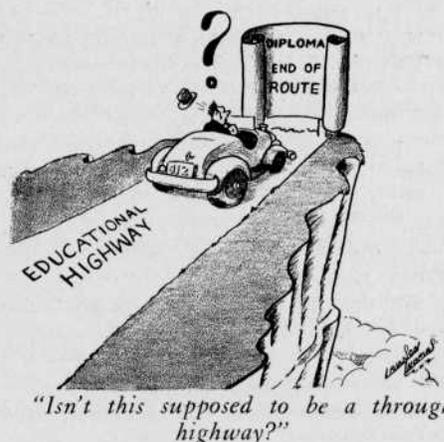
extension teaching and it continues to function as an important activity of the institution. I believe the general adult education program should be maintained and extended, but I am very much of the opinion that the University has a special and peculiar obligation to all its graduates. The time has come when a serious effort should be made to fulfill this obligation.

It is for this reason that I would like to see a building erected on the campus with an adequate staff to direct a comprehensive program through which every graduate of this institution might maintain his or her educational connection with the University. The several faculties of the University spend four or more years developing the intellectual interests of students and these interests should be conserved and extended into their adult lives.

To be more specific, I would like to see a building erected here that probably should be called "The Alumni College Building" and that all the graduates should feel was their very own. It should symbolize to them the University's interest in whatever they are doing regardless of wherever they should live. All those who wish to benefit by this alumni college should enroll in one or more of its activities and every one should be encouraged from time to time to come back to the campus, make this building his home, and participate in some program in which he is especially interested.

I would like to see held here on the campus annually a law institute where the graduates of our Law School could meet for a week and study changing legal procedure and judicial opinion directed by some of the great legal minds of the nation. A similar institute could be held for graduates of the School of Medicine. Medical practitioners eagerly participate in clinics that are being held from time to time for their benefit.

Scientists are constantly making new discoveries and those who practice the medical profession are anxious to keep abreast of the times. I am sure that if a school of instruction for doctors were established and men who are making contributions to medical knowledge were



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invited here to lecture hundreds of our medical graduates would attend. For several years the University has conducted annually a Pharmacy Short Course and the attendance indicates that it is a valuable aid to those engaged in this profession. Why not specifically provide a short course for our pharmacy alumni where they could increase their knowledge for the benefit of those they serve? Our College of Engineering has several short courses each year for men in the engineering profession. I would like to see programs developed in the various specialized fields of engineering in the interests of our graduates.

The University is rendering a large service to the teaching profession and hundreds of those now engaged in administration or instruction in our public schools are its graduates. The objectives, methods, and organization of education are changing rapidly and teachers need to know about them. Conferences and institutes of many kinds should be held at frequent intervals here at the University as a means of improving our standards and adapting our work to the demands of the times. With adequate facilities it will be possible to bring outstanding leaders in education to the campus in the interest of those of our graduates who are responsible for the education of our boys and girls.

Cutting across the lines of professional and vocational services, there are thousands of our graduates who would like to continue their education more or less informally. Students frequently tell me that they wish they had time to take courses in the University that a prescribed curriculum has made it impossible for them to take during their undergraduate years. Such a plan as I have in mind would make this possible. Bibliographies could be made available, books could be supplied, and courses conducted that would accomplish this result.

While this by no means exhausts the possibilities, it serves to illustrate what I have in mind. Above all else, if this program could be put into effect, it would keep the graduates of the University from feeling that when they completed their formal education the University was no longer interested in them. Every student who graduates from the University should feel that while his connection with the institution had been changed his relation to it was in no way affected.

If those who read these words think this is a novel suggestion, I would like to remind you that it is not a new idea at all. The Universities of Minnesota, Michigan, and other great educational institutions have had such a plan in opera-

tion for years. My information is that wherever this program has been promulgated the results have been most satisfactory.

At the Alumni Luncheon last June, I suggested that one of the projects which should be undertaken in connection with the Semicentennial is the securing of funds for the erection of an adequate building on the campus for this purpose. The University now has about 20,000 graduates. If an average of \$10.00 from each graduate of the University were donated, an Alumni College Building costing approximately \$200,000.00 could be erected. While I mentioned the matter only casually at that time, it seemed to appeal to a large number of those who were present. Within the next few days several checks were received as donations to this project and as I have met alumni during the summer, a number have volunteered to make contributions for this purpose. There is not a graduate of the University who could not contribute \$10, and there are thousands who could contribute from \$100 to \$10,000 without making too great a sacrifice. Wouldn't it be a glorious thing if the announcement could be made at the formal Semicentennial exercises that the alumni of the University had provided funds for the erection of their own building on the campus? I think it can be done and I plan to bend every energy to bring it about. I shall be glad to hear from the members of our Alumni Association as to what you think of this project whether your opinion is favorable or unfavorable. I shall be interested in your views.

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Head of Aviation Group

James W. Batchelor, '28ba, '29law, Durant attorney, has been named president of the Civil Pilot Training Association of the Fourth Region, composed of Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana and Arkansas. He is president of National Airways, Inc., of Durant, which owns and operates the airport at Durant. Mr. Batchelor is attorney for the War Department on the Denison Dam project, and also maintains his private law office in Durant which is in charge of Roy B. David, '37law.

Woods' Newspaper Wins Cup

El Reno American, the weekly newspaper of which H. Merle Woods, '17ba, is editor and co-publisher, received the G. H. Mead trophy in the annual newspaper competition at the Oklahoma State Fair this fall. The award was made on the basis of points amassed from high rating on advertising, coverage of agriculture, photography, special editions and general excellence.

This is the first time that a weekly took first place. Last year the trophy went to the *Norman Transcript*.

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