

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
NORMAN · OKLAHOMA

January 12, 1942

Dear George:

I have not had a chance to answer your gracious letter that you wrote when I came down, but I do want to write you briefly about what we are doing here in the war effort. We have a very extensive and, I hope, very complete program of aiding in the national war effort. Some of our plans were in the process of formation before the actual declaration of war, since the war actually began in 1939 rather than in 1941.

Our first problem, of course, was to keep the students calm until the Government had indicated what it wanted all of us to do. This we attempted to do and I think we were very successful. We have placed all of our personnel and all of our facilities at the disposal of the Government to the end of a successful prosecution of the war. Paralleling this, of course, is the necessity of making plans for winning the peace which many universities are giving serious consideration to already. We certainly don't want to make the same mistake we made at the end of the last war of throwing away the chance for peace.

We have set up a War Council which is designed to serve not only the campus, but the State, and will utilize, we hope, all alumni in Morale Service and in many other ways to aid in Civilian Defense. Of course, on the whole question of defense, we are, first of all, at the orders of the State Defense Council; however, we are going to try to train here young people who can return to their communities to become instructors in various skills, such as first aid, sanitation, lifesaving, et cetera, so that as other people are withdrawn from communities they can be replaced by a constant succession of trained people.

We are offering special morale courses designed to explain the causes of the war, problems the war involves, and pointing to a possible peace solution. Two of these will be offered next semester and will be broadcast over WNAD so that they may be heard by all of the citizens of the State. One deals with all of the problems—cultural, economic, historic, and technical—of the Pacific basin. This will be broadcast on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 o'clock over WNAD. The second course deals with the question of Fascism and totalitarianism and is concerned with the rights of the individual under Communism, Fascism, and Democracy. Both courses are joint college efforts.

We have named a War Research Council which has already started work on two problems of the greatest importance, one finding a new synthetic rubber and the other aiding and producing high octane gasoline. Many other problems will be developed, such as, for instance, examining what spices, of which there is now a great dearth in this country, can best be raised in Oklahoma.

We have organized for the army camps student entertainment programs, such as light opera company, traveling plays, et cetera, in which we hope the alumni will aid us in the matter of transportation. These will put on shows at Fort Sill, Will Rogers Air Base, et cetera, and on occasion, will be available to Oklahoma cities. We have also instituted compulsory physical education for all undergraduate and graduate students on the basis that everyone must be physically fit in this type of war.

We have also made plans to enable students to get their education in a three-year instead of a four-year period. This is being done without sacrificing in any way the content or the quality of the work offered. The danger we must avoid—on this score all educators in the country are in almost unanimous agreement—is that we must not foist upon the Government badly trained people because by so doing we might be innocent accessories in possible murder.

We have not been hasty in this matter because, first of all, the war is going to be a long and bitter struggle and our preparations must be made as thoroughly as those being made by the National Government; but we do have a most comprehensive plan which is being further developed as the needs of the Government are revealed. We will welcome suggestions from all interested alumni for the furtherance of our program.

Cordially yours,

JOSEPH A. BRANDT, President.

The above letter, which was written by President Brandt to a graduate of the University, in answer to an inquiry about the war program, is reproduced here because it gives a concise summary of the situation.—Ed.