

# SOONER MAGAZINE

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## The University Budget

The State Regents for Higher Education and the State Legislature face a most difficult task in trying to appropriate intelligently for the University and the state colleges for the 1943-45 biennium. Whether the war will continue two more years and the civilian enrolment at the institution will continue on a low basis, or whether the war situation might clear up sufficiently in a year that the enrolment might greatly increase for the 1944-45 year is a question that cannot be answered.

Still, the Legislature is faced with responsibility of making appropriations for the two years starting July 1, 1943.

The University is in the paradoxical situation of having to ask for an increase in its overall salary budget in spite of a very considerable loss in enrolment. It is important that the people of Oklahoma understand why an increase has been asked.

The basic reasons, briefly stated, are these:

1. The University must go on a year-around schedule, giving standard courses three full semesters a year, instead of the present nine-months program. This change is essential to accelerate the training of doctors, engineers, chemists, physicists, mathematicians, and other specialists demanded by war industry and the armed forces. The plan also is only common sense, even in normal times, in order to make full use of the University plant. The state has invested some \$8,000,000 in plant and equipment, and to leave it largely idle for one-fourth of the year is obviously bad business. Under the present appropriation plan, most of the faculty members are employed on a nine-months basis, which permits them to earn additional income by lecturing or teaching elsewhere during the summer. Naturally, if they are to be required to teach on the O. U. campus twelve months of the year instead of nine, their salaries must be increased.

2. An increase in the salary budget is needed because the salary schedule for the various faculty ranks, which was abandoned during the 1933 depression, has never been fully restored. At present many faculty members are serving as associate professors or full professors on the same scale as assistant professors. Each biennium since the depression, the University has requested salary funds to restore those depression-day cuts and make the adjustments necessary to give each faculty member the minimum to which he is entitled by his rank. In spite of the widely recognized increase in living costs during the last year, the University is not asking for a *general* salary increase for all faculty members, because it believes the most important thing is to first bring about the adjustment of salaries to faculty rank.

3. An increase in salary appropriation is needed because the University's revolving fund income (student fees, and particularly the tuition fees paid by out-of-state students) has been reduced substantially by the decline in enrolment. Naturally, with travel becoming more and more difficult, we can anticipate that there will be very few out-of-state students enrolling in the University.

No solution can be found in simply suggesting that if 50 percent of the students are no longer here, 50 percent of the faculty members should be taken off the payroll.

As a matter of fact, because of the failure of past Legislatures to increase University salary appropriations in proportion to the growth in enrolment, the teaching load at O. U. even with the enrolment greatly reduced in the 1942-43 school year is still much too heavy compared with national standards for higher education.

Some adjustments can be made, of course, and as a matter of fact many positions left vacant by professors' going into the army or government service have been left unfilled. But such adjustments come slowly. Faculty members are employed by the year as a minimum contract period, and can hardly be summarily fired after the beginning of a school year. The decline in enrolment affects various departments and divisions unevenly, and in ways hard to anticipate. Consolidation of classes to reduce the number of teachers depends upon many factors, including the availability of enough professors to teach all the subject fields required.

We are inclined to think of the "critical materials" as being purely physical. Trained leadership is also an extremely critical item, both for war and for the readjustment period after the war. The universities and colleges are going to be expected to provide much of that trained leadership.

## The Cover

Sooners in service miles away from home report they like pictures taken on the campus. This photo of the first winter snow was made by Richard Meek.

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