

SOONER MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION

ROSCOE CATE, '26, Editor-Manager

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VOL. XVI

SEPTEMBER, 1943

NO. 1

Some Common Misconceptions

Several newspaper stories have been printed recently concerning the University College plan now in effect at the University of Oklahoma. The stories discuss the differences of opinion found on the campus as to the merits of the plan as now operating. The stories stated that the Board of Regents has been making a study of the plan and the way it has been functioning.

Unfortunately, a casual survey of the situation existing on the campus, by either a newspaper reporter or any other person not thoroughly informed on campus affairs, is likely to lead to some erroneous conclusions.

It is a mistake to assume that the differences of opinion among the faculty on this matter constitute a clear, a well-defined split into two factions, one representing culture and the other representing technique.

As a matter of fact, the problem which the University College attempts to solve—to provide machinery for enforcing a proper balance between culture and technique in University education—is an age-old problem which has no final answer. No competent faculty member is favoring culture to the exclusion of technique, or technical education to the exclusion of culture.

Certainly there are differences of opinion as to exactly where the line should be drawn in establishing the proper balance between the two possible extremes, and we would have a very sorry faculty indeed if we lacked this very necessary variety of opinion as to what a balanced University education ought to contain. It is this weighing of different opinions against each other that provides an evolutionary, flexible and up-to-date university curriculum.

The adoption of any new general college plan on any campus is certain to result in considerable discussion and some differences of opinion. This has been the history of similar situations at other institutions, and the fact that the merits or demerits of a new plan are being widely discussed should not be a surprise to anyone.

Another misconception of the situation at the University which seems prevalent in the minds of some observers off the campus, is that when a faculty member or a group of faculty members happen to differ with the policy of the University administration on any certain matter, that the same individual or group necessarily opposes the president of the University on every other matter.

University faculty members, on the whole, are mature people with a good deal more than the average of intellectual integrity. For the most part, they are quite capable of differing with an administrator on one matter, and agreeing with him on another. Some members of the University staff who are strenuously opposed to the University College plan as organized by President Brandt have worked closely and effectively with the president on certain other matters on which they had a harmonious viewpoint.

The differences of opinion on the University campus in regard to the University College are concerned almost entirely with the efficiency or the lack of efficiency of this particular plan as a piece of administrative machinery—rather than any quarrel with the basic objective of seeking to balance culture and technique in the University curriculum.

The issue is whether or not this exact plan is the best possible means of approach to the problem. That the problem of balancing the curriculum exists, and that some solution must be provided, no one denies.

This problem is complicated and difficult enough in itself. Attempting to analyze it in terms of personalities or faculty factions serves no purpose except to add confusion to confusion.

The Cover

Looking at the Union Tower through this particular tree on the South Oval seemed like a good idea to photographer Richard Meek. Ruth Dougherty, library science student, and Sgt. Gerald Conger, of the Army Specialized Training Unit at O. U., in the foreground.

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Sooner Magazine is published the fifth day of each month by the University of Oklahoma Association, Union Building, Norman, Okla. Entered as second class matter Oct. 13, 1928, at the post office at Norman, Okla., under the Act of Cong. of March 3, 1879. Subscription \$3.00 per year, of which \$2.00 is for the Magazine and \$1.00 for Alumni Dues. Foreign, \$4.00. Life, \$60.00. Single copies 25 cents. Opinions expressed are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent official action of the Alumni Executive Board. Member of American Alumni Council.