

# SOONER MAGAZINE

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## Faculty Comes First

While we are making excited and important plans for the University after the war, let us not lose sight of the basic truth upon which this, and every other educational institution, must be founded. *A university is no better than its faculty.*

No one denies that an efficient, quietly-functioning administrative staff must be maintained, nor that buildings and equipment adequate for the purposes of instruction must be provided. But these things alone do not make a great university. Neither does a large enrolment. Insofar as the true worth of a university is concerned, these are secondary to the actual teaching, which is the very essence of education.

The quality of the faculty will determine whether the University of the future is to be a business institution turning out yearly production quotas of graduates who may thereafter claim the label of education, or an educational institution graduating people who will be a more powerful force for good in the world than they would have been if they hadn't attended it.

Without a faculty which is inspired, vigorous, and more than just competent, all the beautiful buildings, modern equipment and hordes of students are beside the point. And we cannot expect teachers, devoted as most of them are to the ideals of their profession, to stay inspired and vigorous on the sub-standard salaries they have in many cases received at this University.

The list, published in this issue, of faculty members who are away on leave has one ominous connotation. Most of these professors are out making valuable contacts, establishing themselves in the eyes of other people, becoming prominent in their fields. If, when the war is over, they are offered and accept positions at other schools or in private business which pay a lot more than their old jobs at O. U., no one will be able to blame them. If this happens, we shall indeed have fallen on evil days.

The University will evidently have no lack of students when the war is over. It is now up to everyone aware of the importance of these students, the University, and education in general in a progressive, intelligent state and nation, to see to it that the University is able to hire, *and keep*, teachers of the very highest quality.

If there is any one thing clearly established in letters received from war veterans planning to attend the University of Oklahoma after the war, it is that they are going to expect and demand high quality instruction.

Their education has been interrupted by the service they have given their country; they feel, rightly, that they are entitled to first class educational service when they return. This kind of service costs money, and it is time to be thinking about it.

Here are some of the reasons why the University will need a greatly increased salary appropriation for the 1945-47 biennium:

1. Living costs have increased about 27 percent since 1939.
2. Competing institutions are paying substantially higher salaries.
3. There is a shortage of promising young faculty members available at low salary rates, because very few have been trained during the war, and very few will be coming out of the universities and colleges for several years after the war.
4. University classes have been much too large for effective teaching. Comparison with the student-teacher ratio at other representative universities shows O. U. at the top of the list in teaching load per faculty member.
5. There is a strong trend away from straight lecture classes, toward more student participation, and this improvement in teaching technique is impossible when classes are too large.
6. An increasing percentage of the University's work is in graduate fields, where much more individual attention from the teacher is required.
7. War veterans will insist on top quality instruction.
8. Faculty and University staff members will have to spend much of their time helping war veterans work out the curriculum problems and other difficulties.
9. More guidance and counseling is required for other students, in line with the national trend for colleges and universities to devote more attention to students as individuals.
10. More faculty members will be needed for summer work, as many veterans will want to continue their studies in the summers.
11. Faculty members should not be so heavily loaded that they have no time for research.

## The Cover

George Lynn Cross, 39-year-old botanist turned administrator, is the seventh permanent president of the University of Oklahoma.

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