

Fraternities at O. U.

THE fraternity system at O. U. with its 23 social fraternities and 13 sororities encompasses so much of campus life that it has a tremendous effect on the University. What this effect is has been interpreted in many ways. Many questions and comments have been directed to *Sooner* by Alumni, concerning the fraternity system as found on the O. U. campus.

To analyze the situation and thus present the findings to our readers, *Sooner* sought the opinions of six people on the campus who are in a position to watch the operation of the system as co-ordinated by the University administration.

The six invited to a luncheon to discuss the matter involving 3,337 campus Greeks were Paul MacMinn, dean of students; Dorothy Truex, counselor of women; O. D. Roberts, counselor of men; Wendell Cates, president of Inter-fraternity Council; Mary James, president of Panhellenic Council, and Jack Biggerstaff, past president of Inter-fraternity Council.

Discussion was based on an article by Carey McWilliams which appeared in *Commentary* magazine, entitled, "Equality or Fraternities?" In the article, McWilliams attempts to point out an ill effect the fraternity system has on society. After reading the article, the general consensus of the panel of six was that McWilliams had relied very heavily on the literary device of appealing to his readers' emotions by presenting all the bad points of the system as found in isolated cases, thus not objectively reporting on fraternities as a whole.

Several questions were discussed by the group. Answers given apply only to the University of Oklahoma fraternities and sororities.

The questions are as follows:

Do most fraternities and sororities have a clause in their by-laws which prohibits the pledging of Jews, as charged by McWilliams?

Biggerstaff: Nothing in my fraternity's by-laws prohibiting the pledging of members of the race commonly referred to as Jews. However, one must remember that Jews are members of a religious faith, not a race.

Cates: Nothing in my fraternity's by-laws concerning religion, social or economic status.

Miss James: My sorority has no restrictive clause about religion.

MacMinn: It depends on the fraternity's national policy and sometimes the local ground rules of the organization.

Biggerstaff: Discrimination on the basis of color is commonly practiced.

At O. U. do fraternities interfere with school discipline as McWilliams suggests?

Miss Truex: Some sororities withhold information about violations of rules. They want to handle the matter themselves, and seem to shield each other.

Biggerstaff: There are instances in which the particular house can take care of the violation better itself. The fraternity is here to help the student correct his bad points. It is interested in the welfare of its members.

Roberts: The University is also interested in the welfare of each individual student, and has specially trained personnel to assist in the handling of these problems.

MacMinn: Fraternities and sororities do not directly interfere with school discipline but they can, I believe, be charged with occasionally encouraging activities that could easily result in the necessity for disciplinary action. Fraternity walkouts would be an example.

Roberts: Because of its size and organization the fraternity system presents a unified front. It does not interfere with school discipline any more than

any other organized group activity. Fraternities and sororities are trying to solve their own disciplinary problems through internal control.

Cates: It is not that fraternities commit more violations, it is just that it is easier to see because of organization.

Roberts: In administering discipline to the general problems concerned in fraternity life, IFC represents to me a valuable aid, while individual fraternities may attempt to shield.

McWilliams says that at campus level many IFCs have refused membership to Jewish fraternities. Is that true here?

Miss James: The Jewish sorority has full voting membership in Panhellenic.

Cates: Both Jewish fraternities are very active in IFC.

Can you, like McWilliams suggests, forecast which house eligible freshmen will be pledged to, by observing their "type"?

Miss Truex: I think I can, just by seeing them walking down the hall.

MacMinn: If it can be done, I would like to have the formula.

Roberts: Most fraternities try to get a balanced house of various personalities and accomplishments. It will change from year to year.

Do you agree with Dr. Max McCann of Lehigh University in his definition of prerequisites to membership in a fraternity as being in order: money, family connections, the type of preparatory school attended, "personality"?

Cates: No.

MacMinn: I have seen fraternities that have made those things important, but I would not say that is generally true. However, I think it is more prevalent among sororities than fraternities.

Biggerstaff: Naturally you want to know something of the background of a person with whom you plan to live four years.

In being made to conform with the principles of a fraternity, is the person hampered by being "cultivated instead of being allowed to grow"?

Cates: You allow him to grow, but guide him in his growth.

Biggerstaff: A person cultivates new friends and new ideas throughout life.

What are your justifications or objections to the selection process used by fraternities in choosing pledges?

Roberts: I have the feeling that it is one of the basic American rights and one of the bases of the democratic process that any group of individuals banded together for a common purpose has the right to select members on the basis of these principles, keeping within those limits of not interfering with individual rights and freedoms.

Miss Truex: We recognize individual differences, likes and dislikes. We feel that the chapter selection of their pledges is probably justifiable under the present system.

Cates: Selectivity is justified by the fact that anybody uses the best material available.

MacMinn: If Greek groups are the adjunct to education that they claim, they should select students they can help develop rather than those who already conform to their patterns.

Do you have comments to justify or condemn the blackballing system of eliminating those pledges not desired for membership?

Miss Truex: Since we expect a certain amount of self-government from the group, they must be closely knit and homogenous.

MacMinn: Since the man had the stamp of approval for pledging, it is somewhat the fault of the chapter if he is not developed sufficiently during pledgship to justify initiation.

Miss James: When you live together, it is bad to have one person in the house who is "mixing you up."

What is the extent on this campus of McWilliams' "handling a pledge by correcting, criticizing and whipping him into line"?

Biggerstaff: Throughout life there is discipline. Discipline is necessary in the army and in public life. There must be discipline in any organization.

MacMinn: It is according to what you call discipline, what punishment is for. Forced dating, attendance of activities, and forced studyhall at the threat of discipline is not all right. I do not think there is enough leeway made for the individual. Maybe it would be more desirable to handle pledges on more of an individual basis.

Roberts: Maybe this is one of the weaknesses of the fraternity system, but we may be expecting too much without their having trained personnel to handle counseling.

Can you name professional and honorary fraternities which have Jewish members on this campus?

MacMinn: As far as I know, there is no such discrimination on our campus.

Biggerstaff: Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Delta Chi, and all other professionals or honoraries that I know anything about takes in members indiscriminately regardless of color or religion.

Do professional and honorary fraternities on this campus tend to limit their membership to people from certain social fraternities?

Miss Truex: This may have been true over a period of years, but we made great strides in overcoming that situation in Mortar Board selections this year through careful consideration of merit.

MacMinn: I don't think it's prevalent.

McWilliams scoffs at the idea of the fraternity system's making its members loyal. His question is "loyal to what?" Can you answer this?

Cates: Loyalty to friends, for one thing.

Miss James: In a house you have certain ideals which become a part of you after you have lived with them.

Biggerstaff: Loyalty to government is, after all, what you believe in. Loyalty to your fraternity is also loyalty to your beliefs and ideals.

Roberts: The question is, does it make you more loyal to your university?

MacMinn: Perhaps a person is made more loyal to his fraternity than to his university?

Cates: Participation in school activities as a unit inspires greater school spirit and loyalty than you would have otherwise. Also, competition among chapters of the same fraternities in different schools promotes loyalty to one's own school.

The author states that extra-curricular activities do not depend upon the existence of fraternities. To what extent do they depend on Greeks on this campus?

Miss Truex: Greeks are necessary to make them successful, at the present time.

MacMinn: I believe that we have tended to make extra-curricular activities dependent upon the affiliated groups, but I don't think it is necessary. In fact, it would be more desirable to have more campuswide participation.

Biggerstaff: Fraternity spirit is what forces members to participate. There is competition within the house to see who is permitted to participate.

Cates: Life itself is a competition. Fraternity competition in many instances is what has "made" many activities.

Biggerstaff: Practically all sororities and fraternities entered the University Sing. The cup awarded in the independent men's bracket was presented to the only house competing.

The Rush system at O. U. is often condemned on the grounds that it is too harsh and undemocratic in its system of selecting only a part of the group of rushees for pledging. What are your views on this matter?

MacMinn: In any group where you select or reject you are going to have disappointed people. I think we have made great strides in trying to alleviate those hardships.

Miss Truex: Under our quota system last year there were more vacancies in the sorority houses than there were rushees.

Roberts: There is an expansion program to bring more fraternities on the campus to accommodate others who wish to affiliate. We are also constantly revising the Rush rules to eliminate points of contention.

Biggerstaff: Out of 604 fraternity rushees during Rush Week last fall, only 21 failed to accept or receive a bid to pledge.

Miss Truex: Also, we have trained counselors to talk with a girl not pledged. She is notified privately that she has not been extended a bid. There is no reason for embarrassment. We even save rooms in the dormitories for girls not pledged. There will be Rush Week as usual this fall, and we do not anticipate deferred pledging at any time in the near future. The first semester of 1948-49, freshmen pledges will live in the sorority houses as they have in the past, but if the new dormitory project is completed, as expected, at the beginning of the second semester, 1948-49, the freshmen pledges will move into this new dormitory project in compliance with the Board of Regents' ruling that all freshmen women will be housed in University dormitories when such space is available.

Biggerstaff: The Greek system naturally has bad points, as what group doesn't. However, we are open to suggestions. It is up to the student to prove himself to the Greek system. What is to be remembered, though, is that it is not a matter of life or death to be in a sorority or fraternity.

Students Enter Politics

University of Oklahoma students are politically minded, and to prove it 36 have tossed their hats into the political ring. For them the next few months will mean either glorious victory or disheartening defeat.

By far the largest group—30 in number—is the bloc seeking seats in the state legislature. Running for lower house posts are 26 Democrats and four Republicans from O. U.

On the county attorney level are six more students, three Democrats and three Republicans.

Of this the largest group of O. U. students ever to file for state political offices, six of the candidates are seeking re-election.

Candidates for the house of representatives are:

R. K. Ball (D), Pontotoc County; Robert B. Bates (D), Oklahoma County; Jack Blevins (D), Pontotoc; Edgar Boatman (D), Okmulgee; Louis G. Borgman (D), Logan; Lonnie Brown (D), incumbent, Pittsburg; Joe Cannon (D), Muskogee; Harold Dane (D), Oklahoma.

Jack W. Densford, Jr., (D), incumbent, Pottawatomie; H. G. Dickey (D), Tulsa; James Douglas (D), Bryan; D. J. Ferguson (R), incumbent, Pawnee; Floyd F. Hathcoat (D), Nowata; Don Hampton (D), Delaware; Paul Harkey (D), incumbent, McCurtain; George W. Higgins (D), Kiowa; Franklin G. Talley (D), Pottawatomie.

William L. Jones (D), Okfuskee; D. H. Laing, Jr., (D), Tillman; Wayne Lollar (R), Texas; E.



E. E. "Jake" Hill, left, and Paul McClung, both seniors in the School of Journalism, relax prior to taking over the reins of the campus newspaper, The Oklahoma Daily. Jake will edit the paper during the summer, with Paul serving as an issue editor. Paul has been appointed editor for the fall semester. Another terrific job that goes along jointly with editorship is membership on the Oklahoma Memorial Union Board of Managers. Paul is also feature writer for Sooner.

C. Montgomery (D), Major; Richard S. McDermitt (R), Cleveland; Lloyd Reeder (D), Kiowa; Bob Reynolds (D), Ottawa.

John W. Russell, Jr., (D), incumbent, Okmulgee; James M. Sandin (D), Carter; Gene Stipe (D), Pittsburg; John L. Wheatley, (R), Washington; Kenneth J. Wilson (D), Oklahoma and David Wood (D), incumbent, Muskogee.

Those filing for county attorney offices are Jack Amick (R), Grant; Tom Brett (D), Cleveland; Harry Fender (R), Wagoner; Clint Livingston (D), Love; Tom Morford (R), Alfalfa, and Gene Ritter (D), Carter.

Mass Production Graduates

The colleges and universities haven't quite worked out an assembly line for turning out graduate students, but they certainly do have mass production these days, largely because of the "GI Bill of Rights" and the accumulation of young folks from war years who had to take anywhere from one to five years out of their educational programs.

The senior class at the University of Oklahoma this year numbered about 2,000, and the commencement exercises were so grandiose that they had to be held in Owen Field, since no building on the campus was large enough.

Anticipating the large output of qualified youth, many big industrial firms have been scouting graduating classes since the first of the year, and up to date the properly qualified students have encountered no difficulty in getting jobs.

Most in demand are those who have studied technical subjects—commercial, engineering, chemistry, selling, accounting or business administration, according to W. A. Roseman, research director of the Texas Employment Commission, who reports a lively demand in the southwest. Bachelor of Arts graduates can also get jobs without much trouble, he says, but they will have to look around a little more thoroughly.

In Ohio there are more journalism graduates than places to fill, says the employment specialist at Ohio State. Radio student also seem to be in

surplus. So the picture is mixed.

Anyhow it seems that business, industry and the professions are due to receive the largest amount of new blood transfusions they ever had.

Editor's note: The foregoing editorial appeared in the May 6 issue of the OKLAHOMA CITY TIMES under the title "This Year's Crop of College Graduates."

Mothers Give Scholarships

Nine scholarship funds, each one in the amount of \$100, have been raised by the Mothers' Association in a new project for the University. The Association formerly sponsored Rochdale Hall, a co-operative dormitory for women, but this was abandoned when it proved impractical.

Association districts are on concurrent lines with congressional districts. There is one out-of-state district. Each district has been reported, raising a total of nine scholarships among them.

This money will be awarded to students selected by a special faculty committee, consisting of Miss Dorothy Truex, counselor of women; O. D. Roberts, counselor of men; Mrs. A. I. Ortenburger, special assistant professor of zoological sciences, and Dr. Glenn C. Couch, '31bs, '37ms, dean of the University College.

Districts reporting and those in charge of the drive were: Out-of-state, Mrs. David Devonald, Chicago, \$100; District 3, Mrs. D. W. Humphreys, Cushing, \$400; District 2, Mrs. S. F. Ditmars, (Jewell Risinger, '19ba) Muskogee, \$100; District 5, Mrs. Merle Smith, Guthrie, \$200, and District 6, Mrs. S. L. Wilhite, Anadarko, \$100.

More than 100,000 pressed plants are in the Bebb herbarium at the University of Oklahoma.