

Editorial: Alums, Faculty, Standards Speak Well For University School of Architecture

While its numerous friends are writing strong letters and making indignant phone calls to Norman, the University of Oklahoma School of Architecture is starting the fall semester confident that its record of achievements will prevent any effort to name another architecture school the "major" one of the state.

Following a June meeting of the State Regents for Higher Education, it was announced in state newspapers that Oklahoma A. & M. had been designated the "major" school of architecture in Oklahoma. But this was later charged erroneous. President Henry G. Bennett of Oklahoma A. & M. College attended this Regent's meeting, but O.U.'s president, Dr. George L. Cross, was neither invited nor attended.

Officials of the University of Oklahoma were not consulted prior to the announcement, and a request to the State Regents' office by the University Board of Regents resulted in a public statement from Chancellor M. A. Nash making it clear that no final action on such matter was taken at the June meeting. That problem and others were to receive further attention as indicated in the minutes of the Regents' June meeting.

Many O.U. friends were up in arms following the "announcement" in the newspapers of the state which implied that the O.U. School of Architecture was a second rate school—taking a back seat to the architecture school at Oklahoma A. & M. College. And why shouldn't they be? The O.U. School of Architecture is one of the most progressive in the nation.

Here's why it isn't a second rater.

1. The faculty is composed of young, accomplished architects.
2. The record of O.U. graduates from the school is outstanding.
3. *Progressive Architecture* magazine judged the University of Oklahoma School of Architecture one of the 10 best in the country.
4. The University school is different from any other in the country. It trains modern architects as individuals—to think for themselves.

Younger men are being used in preference to older men as faculty members. Every man on the faculty of the school is a practicing architect, or is working in that field.

Bruce Goff, director of the school, is nationally recognized as one of the best architects in the business. Frank Lloyd Wright, considered the world's greatest architect, has described Goff "one of the most talented members of the group of young architects devoted to an indigenous architecture for America."

As described in a feature appearing in the July issue of *Sooner*, Goff designed the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Tulsa, the *Life Magazine* featured Ledbetter "glass house" in Norman, churches, apartment houses, modern homes, community theaters, and many other types of structures. He is practical and efficient.

The University Regents in August added two instructors, one teaching assistant and three student teaching assistants to the school, effective September 1. Two others will be added before the fall term begins.

New instructors are A. Bruce Etherington, architecture graduate of Cornell University, and William Hix Wilson, '48arch. Etherington did graduate work at the University of Kansas and was an instructor at Kansas for one year. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

Wilson has been a student assistant since September, 1947. He is associated with Goff in designing a church in Edmond, a Norman apartment house, and some Chicago projects. He has designed a house in Purcell, which is now under construction, and has just completed plans for one in Colorado.

Joseph H. Wythe, '48arch, teaching assistant, was assistant in architecture at the University of California and for three years was engaged in private architectural work.

New student teaching assistants are John A. Di Castri, Robert B. Roloff and Dura A. Smith, Jr. Di Castri was with the chief architect of the department of public works of British Columbia. Smith has attended the University for three years. Roloff attended Westminster College before entering the University.

Regular faculty members are Joseph E. Smay, professor of architecture, professional architect who joined the faculty in 1929, and Richard N. Kuhlman, associate professor of architecture.

Kuhlman was appointed University architect on a part-time basis, effective July 1. He will be responsible for originating or approving all plans for buildings, structures or appurtenances to be erected on the campus. He was also recently named associate director of the Institute of Community Development to assist Dr. Leonard Logan, 14ba, director. Approximately one-third of the hours taught in the new graduate curriculum of regional and city planning will be taught by Kuhlman. This is the only training of its type in Oklahoma and Kuhlman is the only consultant planner within the state qualified to teach these courses.

He was employed planning consultant last fall for the city of Norman. Purpose of the planning institute is to help communities throughout Oklahoma overcome growing pains. An engineer said the work done by Kuhlman, with the help of students enrolled in community planning, Boy Scouts, and other community-conscious groups—with a budget of \$4,000—could not have been done for less than \$10,000 to \$20,000 had the city hired a man who would have devoted full time to the task.

President Cross, wanting to co-operate with the city in its planning for the future program, gave full permission to Kuhlman to go full speed ahead with the project.

The surveys included plans for a better school division in Norman, planned industrial and recreational areas, depression for the railroad tracks, plans for parking areas and traffic routing.

But no job is too big for Kuhlman to tackle. When he came to the University School of Architecture in September, 1946, he came from a successful architecture practice in San Antonio. He had been back from the Philippines only six months.

In the Philippines he was planning and housing consultant to President Osmeña, engaged in restoration of the islands. Prior to the war he had practiced architecture in Texas since 1935.

With a Master's Degree from Harvard, where his work centered around experimental housing construction and planning, Kuhlman is typical of the high caliber of men in the School of Architecture.

At O.U., architecture is a separate school which nominates its own chairman. Architectural engineering is now a 4-year course. Architecture is a 5-year course.

Goff takes a personal interest in beginning architecture students. When he first came to the University, he was asked to teach only graduate courses. But he believes in developing creative ability from the beginning. He teaches Architecture 8, the elements of construction. "Most schools do everything they can to discourage beginning architects," says Bruce. "We encourage them."

The administration of the University has backed the school of Architecture to the limit in developing a progressive, creative school unhampered by dead traditions and the usual fear of doing something for our own people in our own time.

Architects of all "creeds" are invited to lecture and visit the O.U. architectural plant. Last year Frank Lloyd Wright visited and lectured at the University. Eric Mendelsohn, one of the three greatest, was also a campus visitor and lecturer. A large exhibition of his work was shown.

Richard Neutra, architect, and Mendel Glickman, architectural engineering consultant for Wright, were other visitors. Editors who trekked to the North Campus school included Douglas Haskell of the *Architectural Record*; Thomas Creighton of *Progressive Architecture*, and Katherine Ford, *House and Garden*.

The school is planning new courses and a different sequence

of courses. The new ones are designed for practical experience. Most students need practical experience before taking the qualifying architectural examination for a license.

"Glass is ordinarily used for windows—steel for beams. Actually, much of the old teaching is simply a set of rules given to the student. The idea of our training," Goff says, "is to give enough information so that the student will be able to develop new uses and applications for materials."

New courses are: 1 . . . Expansion of Architecture 8 (design) to two semesters. It's to be called Design 1. This course will include the elements of composition, color, textures, design, drawing and painting techniques for rendering, that is, the various aspects of making drawings for proposed buildings. 2 . . . Nature of Materials (Architecture 15) will be a complete study of the nature of the most common building materials—wood, glass and steel. Bill Wilson, new instructor, will teach this course. Materials costs will also be stressed.

3 . . . There will also be an advanced study of materials. 4 . . . New courses will be offered in community planning. 5 . . . Electives in art study, economics and social sciences will be approved for credit because these courses give a broad background necessary for the modern architect.

The biggest improvement in the new O.U. School of Architecture will be the sequence of courses. Previously, students often had to do working drawings for a house before the house was designed. Now students will first study design, and work out their own designs rather than copy them from a magazine, following through with drawings and detailed work in a well-integrated program.

Most schools are separated on architectural structure and design. The architectural engineer builds the framework and the architect pretties it up, and that is the common conception of their jobs. The University is building a more rounded course.

"Architectural structure and design are inseparable in organic architecture," says Bruce Goff, just as the bones and the body."

The architect should have a sense for architectural engineering so that an architectural engineer can take his plans and work them out.

The School of Architecture has come a long way since 1921-22. Then, six courses in architecture were listed in the catalog for the first time under the department of mechanical drawing. A degree of B. S. in Architectural Engineering was granted at the commencement, June 5, 1923.

The School of Architectural Engineering was first listed in the general catalog for 1927-28. The department at that time was headed by assistant professor Patricio Gimeno.

Professor Smay became director of the School of Architectural Engineering September 1, 1929. At the meeting of the Board of Regents June 2, 1934, President Bizell recommended "that the School of Architectural Engineering be designated as the School of Architecture, as of September 1, 1934, unless otherwise specified."

Architectural subjects were under the direction of Professor T. L. Sorey, now a practicing architect in Oklahoma City.

This O.U. school leads others in the southwest in the five-year program, which was introduced in 1930.

The history of instruction in architecture is dotted with easily-recognized names.

Graduates include such people as Clifford W. Barbour, '23arch.eng, Allied Materials Corporation, producers of asphalts and road oils, Oklahoma City; Franklin C. Morris, '26arch.eng, chairman of the department of engineering drawing; Sam Claude Holland, '38arch.eng, associate professor of engineering drawing.

Robert W. Vahlberg, '35arch, is associated with his uncle, Walter Vahlberg, Oklahoma City architect. Julian Vahlberg graduated with a B. S. in Architectural Engineering and B. A. in Architecture in 1941.

Joe Boaz, '40arch, is an Oklahoma City architect. Leslie Brauer, '47arch, is with an architect in Indianapolis, Indiana. Paul Harris, '39arch, is practicing in Fresno, California.

John C. Knight, '41arch, did housing in South America. He is now with Pace Associates, Chicago, Illinois.

James Roth, '36arch.eng, is with the art department of Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Culver City, California.

The late Melvin D. Fike, '31arch. eng, worked with Spartan Aircraft in Tulsa and later with Vega Airplane Co. in Burbank, California, a subsidiary of Lockheed Co. He helped design the plane used by Prime Minister Chamberlain in his historic Munich trip.

O.U.'s record in the School of Architecture speaks for itself. It meets and surpasses that expected of the ordinary school of architecture. It is not a second rate school, and any arbitrary effort to classify it as such would be completely refuted by the outstanding record of the school.

O.U. Purchases 'Condemned' Art

President Truman and the State Department may not appreciate good art, but the University of Oklahoma art museum, its director Oscar B. Jacobson and curator Leonard Good certainly know a bargain when they see it.

The University recently became the proud "second-parents" of 35 of the 117 paintings bought by the government to exhibit in Europe but now being sold because top brass did not think them a typical portrayal of American life.

After being shown in their entirety in New York City, the paintings, which represent the work of the best American artists, were divided to be sent both to Europe and South America. They were displayed in Haiti and Czechoslovakia. Secretary Marshall saw them in Prague and finding them distasteful personally, appealed to both Truman and Byrnes. The President took a look at photographs of paintings and came out with his now famous approval of "ham and eggs" art. For a year after this decision the paintings remained in storage while all magazines dealing with national affairs published articles and reproductions about the collections.

Finally they were offered for sale at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York City. Good stated, "The O. U. Museum of Art bid for the whole lot." The regional office of the War Assets Administration in New York recommended, however, that O. U. receive the largest single group, Alabama Polytechnic receive 31 and the University of Washington another large allotment.

The paintings were bought at 5% of their stated value which was purposely set at a low mark by the artists concerned. There was a certain amount of prestige involved in getting a painting in the State Department exhibit.

Notable among the paintings was one by Georgia O'Keeffe who has been regarded as the foremost woman painter in the United States. Her paintings rarely sell for under \$1,000, and more often up to \$5,000. The University obtained her original *Cos Cob* for \$50!

It is a reflection on the judgement of the Washington "critics" that the artists who participated in the State Department exhibit are now being shown "almost without exception" at the American Pavilion in Venice. This exhibition is sponsored by four of the leading museums in the United States: Metropolitan, Whitney, Museum of Modern Art, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art, all of New York City.

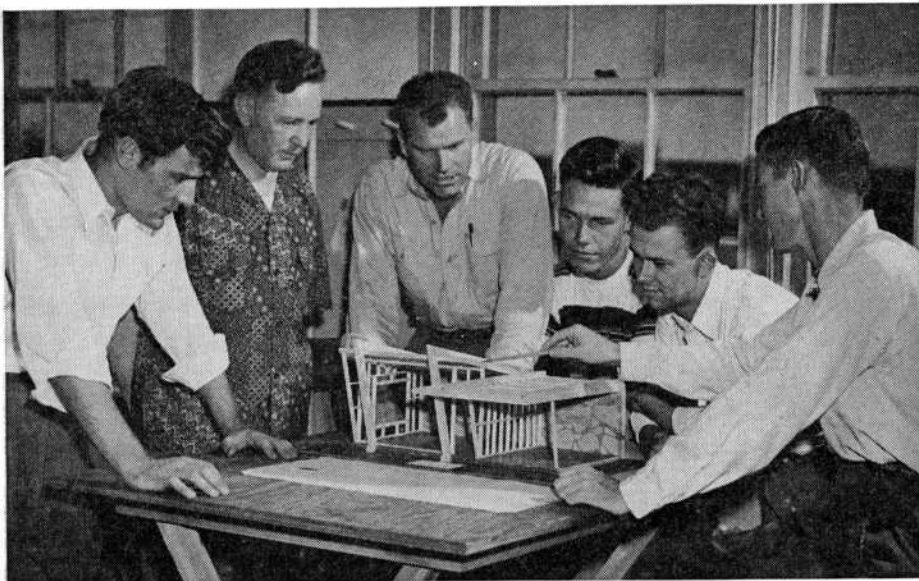
In discussing the paintings, Professor Good stated some of the paintings are "almost photographic in effect" and others are of abstract surrealistic nature. The University collection is "the finest that could be brought together" and will certainly give art students an opportunity to study the brush strokes of original paintings by some of the world's foremost artists.

The University was recommended to receive the most sought-after painting of the entire collection, Jack Levine's *Horse*. Good said this one picture alone would bring nearly \$10,000 if offered for sale.

Two other well-known works the University purchased are Julio de Diego's *Nocturnal Family* and Ben Shahn's *Renasceance*.

Rohrer Awarded Fellowship

Dr. John H. Rohrer, University of Oklahoma psychology professor, has been awarded a fellowship by the National Social Science Research Council. The post-doctoral fellowship will allow Rohrer to study at the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University during the 1948-49 school year. Now serving as summer visiting professor at the University of Denver, Rohrer will work on the development of a research program for the study of personality structure.



Bill Wilson, '48arch, instructor in the School of Architecture, right, explains a model of a modern tourist cabin. Seen left to right in the picture are Charles Praskac, sophomore from Union City, New Jersey; Bruce Goff, director of the School of Architecture; Warren Hughes, freshman from Norman; Wayne Bowman, Oklahoma City junior; and Albert Yanda, junior from Wakeeney, Kansas.