

The President Speaks

By DR. GEORGE L. CROSS

In this article President Cross explains the system used by the Admissions Board in selecting students to attend the University School of Medicine. The President lists scholastic requirements of the school, and also points out that the University school is not alone in its problem of having far more worthy applicants than it can accommodate.

A large number of very able young men and women with good scholastic records have failed to receive admission to the School of Medicine of the University of Oklahoma during the past two or three years. There is widespread misunderstanding as to why this should be true. Statements are loosely made to the effect that admission to the Medical School is controlled by Oklahoma City physicians; that only those who have taken their pre-medical on the Norman campus will receive admission; and that admission may be obtained only through the use of political influence. Fortunately none of these statements is true, but unfortunately facilities for medical education in this country are not nearly adequate to meet the needs or demands of prospective students.

Last spring, nearly 22,000 applicants sought admission to medical schools in the United States. Somewhat less than 5,500 could be accepted. The ratio of applications to acceptances was, therefore, about 4 to 1.

At the University of Oklahoma, about 1,500 requests for application blanks were received from non-residents of the state, and all of these were refused consideration. More than 265 residents of the state applied for admission, and although 177 of these young men and women met our scholastic requirements for admission, only 64 could be accepted. Eighty-two of the 177 had scholastic averages better than B (2.0). Because we could accept only 64, several excellent students had to be turned away.

A young man or woman with a grade average of B finds it difficult to understand why he or she cannot be admitted to our Medical School. Most parents find it similarly difficult to understand, as evidenced by the many letters that come to my office concerning admission and the many communications sent to the secretary of the Alumni Association.

I am devoting my page in the *Sooner Magazine* this month to a discussion of the procedures used in the selection of the entering class of medical students because I feel that these procedures are rather widely misunderstood.

First of all, it should be made plain that no single individual connected with the University can commit the School of Medicine to admit any applicant. The first year class is selected by an Admissions Board after a careful study of the qualifications of all applicants, and the decisions of this Board are final. The Admissions Board consists of seven members—four from the instructional staff of the “pre-clinical” years of the Medical School, and three from the part time instructional staff of the “clinical” years.

A student who desires to enter the School of Medicine should, first of all, file a written application (on a form provided for such purposes) with the Admissions Board of the School of Medicine, or if the student is attending a state institution, he is urged to file his application with the pre-medical adviser in that institution. The application form must be accompanied by two certified transcripts of the student's high school and college work complete as of the time of filing.

An applicant must be at least 19 years of age. He must have completed at least 90 semester hours of university or college work. However, if he is only 19 years of age and presents only 90 semester hours of work, it is suggested that he should seriously consider the possibility of completing a program leading to the B. S. or A. B. Degree before applying for admission to the Medical School.

In addition to a written application for admission, it is required that all applicants pass an “aptitude test” given by the Educational Testing Service, Post Office Box 592, Princeton, New Jersey. Each applicant is responsible for making arrangements to take this test, and he should write to the address given above and make his own arrangements. Two examinations are given each year by the Educational Testing Service, one in October and one in February. If the applicant fails to take one of these examinations, his application for admission cannot be considered by the Admissions Board. This is most important since several promising students have failed to receive consideration because they did not make arrangements to take the aptitude test.

The application for admission and the results of the aptitude test are placed in the hands of the Admissions Board. The Board screens out the best of the applicants for personal interviews.

In order to receive consideration, the applicant must have taken certain prescribed courses in the pre-medical program. He must have made a minimum scholastic average of not less than 1.5 in the prescribed work with no grade less than C in any prescribed course, and he must have a minimum average of 1.5 in all of his college work. An average of 1.5 means halfway between a C and a B. No applicant with less than this minimum average receives consideration by the Admissions Board. Those selected by the Board for personal interviews are notified when to appear and the Board gives a great deal of time to evaluating each applicant's possibilities as a prospective medical student. Members of the Board review the applications for admission as a group and many factors are taken into consideration during the interviews.

Scholastic ability as evidenced by the pre-medical record carries heavy weight with the Board and



much criticism has been directed to the Board for giving so much attention to scholastic accomplishment. However, the members of the Board know that unless the pre-medical student presents a satisfactory scholastic record his chances for successfully completing the medical curriculum are low. Students' grades in the Medical School are usually somewhat lower than those earned as pre-medical students, and this is probably due to the fact that the semester hour load in the Medical School is about one-third greater than the heaviest load a pre-medical student is usually permitted to carry. Because only a limited number of students can be accepted each year, the Admissions Board does not feel that it can gamble on the possibility of students with low records finishing the medical curriculum, even though they may have personalities and other qualifications which would seem to fit them for the practice of medicine.

If a student is admitted to the Medical School and then has to drop out because of poor grades, the place which he vacates cannot be filled except in the event that some student may wish to transfer from another medical school. Vacancies in the upper years of the medical program caused by the failure of freshmen are wasteful, and the Admissions Board is justified in attempting to avoid this waste.

The age of each applicant is carefully considered. During the past few years, the Admissions Board has received applications from a number of veterans who have, through no fault of their own, lost years through their service in the armed forces. It has seemed only fair to give these older men some preference over the younger non-veterans whose work has not been interrupted and who may profitably spend an additional year or two completing their programs for a baccalaureate degree.

Attention is given also to the geographic distribution of the members of the entering class, for it is recognized that the Medical School owes a debt to the state as a whole, and it would be a mistake to admit too many from any one area in the state. Although there is no definite quota as to any number which must be admitted from any particular county or section of the state, there is a limit to the number which may be admitted from any county. By resolution of the Regents of the University dated May 3, 1937, the maximum number from any one county must be limited to 20 percent of the enrollment of the freshman class.

In attempting to accept members of the entering class from different parts of the state, the Admissions Board sometimes faces the difficult problem of having to decide whether a young man with inferior qualifications shall be admitted in preference to another with a good record in order to preserve geographic distribution. Although every effort is

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made to secure a class with representation from as many sections of the state as possible, the Admissions Board does not select poorly qualified students in order to insure geographic distribution.

During the personal interview with the applicant, the members of the Admissions Board attempt to determine the basis for the applicant's desire to become a physician. They inquire into his thinking as to the responsibilities of medical practice. They consider his moral qualifications and his emotional stability.

In the class which entered the Medical School this fall, 35 of the 77 counties of the state are represented. It is, of course, impossible to have each of the 77 counties represented each year because the maximum that can be admitted to the freshman class is 64.

I frequently receive letters asking me to help some young man or woman get into the Medical School. Similar letters are received by the Regents of the University and by Ted Beaird, secretary of the Alumni Association. However, my position always has been and will continue to be that the decisions of the Admissions Board must be final in each case. The admission of students to the Medical School and the administration of the school must be kept free of political influence if the school is to remain accredited by the American Medical Association.

A few weeks ago, after many years of probationary status, our School of Medicine was accredited without qualification by the American Medical Association. Before accrediting us, the Association sent a committee to the School to make a careful study of our facilities, administration and admission procedures. The favorable report of the committee which led to our full accreditation is, in effect, a vote of confidence in the way that our Medical School is being handled.

I want to assure the Alumni that the administration of the University and the Regents of the University do not meddle with matters pertaining to admission to the Medical School. I have never requested the Admissions Board to admit a student and I believe that the Regents have never made a request of this kind during my tenure as president. I have the greatest confidence in the Admissions Board. In my opinion, each applicant is considered without prejudice and I think that a serious attempt is made to secure the very best possible material for our entering class each fall. I should like to emphasize that the candidates for admission receive the same careful consideration regardless of which Oklahoma institution gave the pre-medical work. No students are admitted as a result of pressure of any kind.

Finally, we recognize that our facilities for medical instruction are inadequate, but we hope during the next few years to build an addition to the Medical School which will permit the admission of a larger freshman class. In the meantime, we shall do the best that we can with our present facilities and accept as many new students each fall as the standards of the national accrediting agency will permit.

Miss Ida Z. Kirk, professor emeritus of drama at the University, lists Actor Van Heflin as one of her former students.

Lytle Powell, University associate professor of piano, studied in London under Tobias Mattay before his musical debut in England in 1933. Later he traveled in the U. S. concertizing and conducting master pianoforte classes.

A native of Louisiana, Miss Edith Mahier, University art professor, came to the O.U. campus in 1917 after obtaining a Bachelor of Design Degree from Tulane University's Newcomb College. She has studied abroad in France and Italy.

Nowadays there is a good bit of talk about juvenile delinquency and youth problems, but Paul Keen, assistant director of intramural athletics, is one who by-passed the talk and took up the job of helping to direct youth activities. His work with intramural sports would seem to qualify him as a friend of youth, but Keen is not satisfied with a job half done. The recipient of a 15-year veteran's pin for service with the Boy Scouts of America, he serves as chairman of the leadership training program for the Scouts in the Sooner District. As camp director of the Norman Christian Youth program, he supervises their semi-annual weekend camps at Lake Murray.

When Keen speaks of intramurals at the University or of his other youth activities, his eyes fairly twinkle and it is apparent that this is a most vital man. Perhaps his contact with youth makes him that way, perhaps not. It is certain, however, that he hits his full stride when he speaks of the intramural sports program.

Keen is not the originator of the set-up. Ben G. Owen, director of intramurals, came here in 1905 and put the infant sports plan into effect. Said Keen, appraising the current program, "His (Owen's) spirit of fair play and sportsmanship and his desire that every boy in school should be allowed to participate has made the program what it is."

And what a program it is! Everything from horseshoes to touch football, from table tennis to four-wall handball, from basketball to track is offered. All in all, 14 sports are available with seven

of them offering doubles competition for a 21-unit program. In addition to Owen and Keen, Dewey "Snorter" Luster, '22ba, '22Law, completes the trio that makes up the intramural staff. His work with the boxing squads is well known.

Keen arrived at the University fresh from triumphs at Oklahoma A. & M. in 1927 without so much as a degree to his name. Two years later he received his first degree from A. & M. and shortly thereafter he married Irene Herman, '30ed. His long tenure of office at O.U. had begun. About 600 boys participated in the 1927 sports with eight sports offered. Gradually began the rise to the 5,000 participants of last year.

In 1943, Keen took a sabbatical leave and when he returned he brought with him a Master's Degree from Michigan University. Although he holds no degree from O.U., he is, however, an honorary life member of the University of Oklahoma (Alumni) Association.

Last June, Keen was elected to the presidency of the Norman Rotary Club—a club that won the International President's Award for the fiscal year ending June 30 as the most outstanding among the 68 clubs in District 124. Keen hastens to say that it was not through his efforts at the helm that the club received this honor as he did not take office until after the award was made.

In addition to his other active affiliations, Keen is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, honorary educational fraternity, and of the American Association of University Professors.

Faculty Briefs . . .

▶ Anita Couch, '39ed, '47m.ed, is now employed as a test technician in the Evaluation and Testing Service at the University of Oklahoma.

▶ Della B. Owl, '19ba, is on a leave of absence from her duties as assistant professor of modern languages at O.U. to continue her research on Cherokee Indian language. She is living in Cherokee, North Carolina, during her study.

▶ Dr. William B. Swinford, professor of law at O.U., has been given the title of professor emeritus of law by the Board of Regents. Dr. Swinford came to O.U. in 1924 after teaching at the University of Arizona.

▶ Dr. and Mrs. Ernest Carson Ross have established a home in Norman following their marriage August 28 in Accomac, Virginia. Dr. Ross is a professor of English at the University.

▶ Dr. Sherman P. Lawton, University radio professor, will attend a meeting of the Association for Education by Radio in Chicago, October 12 through 15. As regional president of the group, he will serve on the advisory council at the school broadcast conference during the three-day meeting. Dr. Lawton serves as co-ordinator of radio instruction at the University.

▶ W. H. Carson, dean of the University College of Engineering, is preparing a book on the conservation of petroleum. He made a progress report of the work to the Interstate Oil Compact Commission in New York City, August 30 to September 1. Carson also serves as chairman of the commission's engineering committee.

▶ There's nothing like getting your teaching materials first hand, believes Francis R. Harrison, University assistant business management profes-

or. He inspected the facilities of two midwest airlines in late August for practical data to be used in teaching an airline management course.

▶ Dr. Jerome Dowd, professor emeritus of sociology at the University, is the oldest living sociologist in the nation. Now 84 years old, he has been a member of the O.U. faculty 41 years.

▶ Mrs. Dolly Connally, '26fa, '47m.mus.ed, assistant professor of music education at the University, has assumed her duties as the new director of the Vesper Choir for the First Christian Church of Norman.

▶ Carl Mason Franklin, new executive vice-president of the University, has been given the rank of associate professor of law by the University regents. He will teach a course in international law.

▶ Dr. William B. Swinford, professor of law, has been given the title of professor emeritus of law. Swinford, who came here in 1924 after teaching at the University of Arizona, holds a Ph. D. from Stanford University.

New Power and Heating Plant

Delivery of bonds covering a \$1,800,000 loan for construction of a new power and heating plant has been completed by the University of Oklahoma.

The new plant, planned for the 51 buildings on the 431-acre main campus, will enable O.U. to meet present peak demands for power and heat, improve illumination standards and serve additional buildings now under construction. Capacity of the old plant, built in 1913, is inadequate to meet present needs.