

The President Speaks

BY DR. GEORGE L. CROSS

An Unusual Plan was instigated on the campus last month which was designed to allow the students a better opportunity of meeting the president of their University and vice versa. President Cross outlines the motives, the result of the first "Prexy's Hour" and the anticipated methods of continuation.

FREQUENTLY alumni tell me that while they were students they never had an opportunity to visit the President's Office. At first thought this might seem like a good thing, for certainly the average student regards a visit to the President's Office as the equivalent of "being called on the carpet." In thinking about the matter it occurred to me that most of the students whom I have seen in my office during the past five years were in trouble of one kind or another. This is unfortunate for many reasons. For one thing it gives the President a distorted perspective of the student body. While only a small fraction of one per cent of the student body come to the President's Office on matters pertaining to discipline, the President may get the idea that all students are a bit difficult because he sees only the few who have experienced misadventures.

In my own case I regret these limited contacts because I like students. While I get many satisfactions from my administrative duties, my job now is not nearly as pleasant as it was in those days when I was teaching several classes. I miss their fellowship, their questions, their youthful optimism, their frank statements, their wisecracks and the many other things they have to offer. I think it is most important that a university president should know his student body. Mrs. Cross and I make every effort to attend student affairs. We entertain groups in our home and try to know as many students as possible, but in a student body which ranks nineteenth in size in the entire nation it is possible to meet socially only a small segment of the student body.

The question of how to meet more students was discussed in a staff meeting, and Carl Franklin, Executive Vice President of the University, suggested that we plan a "Prexy's Hour"—an open house to which all students would be invited so that anyone might drop by for a visit. It was suggested that "Prexy's Hour" be held each month. We decided to experiment with the suggestion and the first "Prexy's Hour" was held on March 17.

Taking all factors into consideration the initial effort may be considered a success. Not many students came in comparison with the total enrolment but about one hundred did appear and look through the administrative offices. Most of them were very shy and had a tendency to hurry through. In my own office they showed considerable interest in the trophy which we had received as winner of the Oklahoma-Texas football game last fall. Some wanted to sit in my chair. "Gosh, this must be a pretty soft job," one student said as he sat down. A few students asked questions about the budget, some in a slightly critical tone. Several said, "I've always wanted to know what this room looked like." Others seemed interested in the books and paintings. It was a delightful pleasure for me to chat with each of these students but the time was all too short because they did not linger long after

they could see that refreshments were being served in the next room.

The next time we have "Prexy's Hour" we shall probably invite students from certain schools and colleges in lieu of a general public announcement that all are welcome. For instance we might invite the engineers and lawyers in April. At any rate we shall probably hold one such session a month during the regular school year. We plan to work out a long time schedule early in the 1949-50 session and then set aside special days for certain divisions of the University. That way every student will have an opportunity to drop by the office for at least one visit during the year. This will give us a chance to sample student opinion concerning many matters, including policies established and policies in the making.

In many of the larger institutions there is a tendency to consider students in terms of statistics. We have resisted that trend here at the University of Oklahoma. We make every effort to provide individualized guidance for each student. During the past few years we have developed our guidance and counseling program into one of the best in the nation. Long before skyrocketing enrolment days we made careful plans to increase our counseling staff and thus be ready to aid each of our more than 12,000 students in any problem which he or she might face. We are making every effort to keep abreast of the latest techniques in the guidance field and apply them as rapidly as possible to our program.

Our interest in the student extends beyond the classroom assignments, beyond sports and other activities. It includes the whole life of the student. It is our objective to develop each student to the highest level of his capability. The members of our faculty announce certain hours when they are available for conferences with students, but that isn't all. Most instructors are eager to help a student at any time on any problem. Further, we urge parents to get in touch with faculty members at any time regarding their sons and daughters. Don't feel that you must wait until your son or daughter has a problem before you visit us. We want very much to know you and to help you in every way that we can.

All of this is just a way of saying that the student is the king of the campus. The University exists not for the faculty, nor for the administrative officers, but for the students. Through all of our programs and activities—which includes the "Prexy's Hour"—we hope that we can share the best that we have found here with our students. It is a happy privilege that we have—that of looking with youthful imagination into the future. For somehow in associating with young people one does get a youthful slant—the power to project himself beyond the confines of the immediate into the uncertain tomorrow. That's a privilege which every college president enjoys, I am sure.



Fifty Scholarships Are Available

Beginning with the fall semester of 1949, the University of Oklahoma will offer 50 scholarships per regular semester, each to be known as a "service scholarship", President George L. Cross, said recently.

Each of the recipients will be paid \$75 for each semester for which is awarded the scholarship, on the condition that he performs four hours of service per week throughout the semester for the department of the University which offers his major field of interest.

Each of the scholarships will be awarded on the basis of scholastic record, character and need, President Cross explained. Special consideration will be given to candidates showing promise of unusual ability in the arts, the sciences or professional fields in which the University offers instruction.

Any student who receives a scholarship for one semester will receive a renewal for an additional semester provided he earns at least a "C" average in the first semester's work.

Applications and records should be sent to Paul MacMinn, dean of students.

Land Added for Intramurals

Deed to 12.61 acres of land just north of the Hillcrest housing project on South Jenkins has been delivered to the University by the War Assets Administration, President Cross announced recently.

The deed also includes a small frame dwelling house and one small shed, both of which probably will be removed from the property.

The property was acquired by the University primarily as the location for intramural athletics and possible for drill fields purposes, President Cross said. Construction of the new track is occupying much of the space formerly used for intramural athletics, he said, and there is a great need for additional land for this purpose. This additional land is located close to the student housing area south of Lindsey and west of Jenkins, therefore is easily accessible for recreational service.

The University received 100 per cent public benefit allowance from the current estimated value of the land in the amount of \$8,700.00

Magnolia Renews Scholarship

President Cross announced March 26, 1949 that the Magnolia Petroleum Company has renewed a \$2,000 fellowship for the 1949-50 academic year. The fellowship was established at O.U. in 1948.

Dr. Cross was notified that the program would be continued by W. M. Holaday, director of Socony-Vacuum Laboratories, New York City.

Jimmie L. Huitt, special instructor in chemical engineering, is working currently under the fellowship for a Ph.D. degree. His problem deals with fractionation.