

# Help Your Child Through College!

You may think it can't happen to your child, but for every person who earns a degree, another fails. Here are some common reasons for failure and how you can help your child to be the one who graduates.

By ROBERT TALLEY, '55

SEVERAL times a week, the dean picks up his telephone and after introductions hears statements like this, "I don't know what the problem is. My boy's bright enough, but he's failing most of his courses . . ."

Or the secretary ushers in a parent with a worried expression, "Dean, I came here to find out what the trouble is with my son. He says he's about to quit school . . ."

As parents, these speakers could be you. You, concerned, unhappy, desperate to help. Desperate for help. You, in a year or five years or ten years or fifteen years. But you, nevertheless.

Your youngster, the boy or girl you helped to pack, to get down to the campus, to get enrolled, the one you slipped the extra ten bucks to so you could feel a little easier about leaving him alone in a new world, your youngster is flunking out of school!

This may not be you, certainly, but there's a fifty-fifty chance it could be. Because for every bright-eyed, dreaming freshman in the U. S. who completes his degree, there is one who falls somewhere along the four-year road to a better life. With the youngster who falls, surely disappointment and perhaps heartbreak become gnawing realities in the pit of his stomach. He has failed and he knows he has failed in one of the most important phases of his life.

This is perhaps over-dramatized to make a point, but it is real, a crisis met in families every day. The chances are you don't want it to happen to you. Perhaps you think it can't happen to you. As graduates of the University, you reason that you know pretty much what the student is up against—you've been through the mill, hit every grindstone.

But maybe since you were here things have changed some. It's possible that society has changed some. Think back to your college days and try to remember whether good jobs depended upon a college degree as much as they do now. Remember whether competition was as keen. Consider the relative difference in applied pressure.

With those thoughts in mind, the author talked with Glenn C. Couch, dean of the University College, who works with new students and their teachers to find the main causes for student failures at O.U. and how to help. Here are some of the causes of failure and some of the things you can do to help your son or daughter secure the prized diploma.

First, consider three steps you can take while your child is in high school:

1. Determine the child's preference. The parents' preference is, unfortunately, of secondary importance. Make sure your child wants to go to college.

In college virtually everything is left up to the student, whether he goes to class, whether he studies, whether he turns in assignments, eats or sleeps—everything. A student must seriously desire an education before there is much hope for him to attain it.

In talking with deans and professors, several said that students would come to them during their first years to find out why they were not able to pass. "Many of those students I could give only one reason," said one advisor. "They did not want to get through college. After talking with them a while, they would admit it was their parents who really wanted them to attend college. They had no personal interest in the project. As a result, they fought learning."

2. Determine whether the youngster is able to handle college.

One administrator said, "Not all parents are aware of a fact that is before educators every day, that intelligence varies as much in people as their heights and weights. Parents who would never consider putting a 120-pound boy in a ring with a heavy-weight will force their children to compete with heavyweights in college—one of the toughest rings in the world."

"Mothers and fathers readily agree that their youngsters are not musically inclined or athletically inclined," he continued, "but will fight to the death rather than admit they aren't equal to anyone in brain-power."

When your child shows he wants to at-

tend college (or even if he doesn't) it would be wise to give him vocational aptitude and interest tests as he enters high school. If the tests indicate that college is in the cards, then his high school subjects should be oriented accordingly.

The counselor who gives the test probably will go over the results with you and your youngster and will tell you that there is little use in promoting a field in which there is interest but no aptitude. Should the first tests show nothing decisively, that is all right, because the child should receive several testings through high school. Time may move his interest and aptitudes closer together.

Although not laying out one particular road for your child to take, interest and aptitude tests can assist in eliminating areas in which your child may not be best fitted by temperament or skill.

3. Obtain from the University or your high school counselor the high school courses he should take for his particular field.

This University requires only that a student be a graduate of an accredited state high school before enrolling. However, the parent can go farther than that and save some time for the child and some expense for himself. (The editor was required to take college courses to make up high school deficiencies in plane geometry, foreign languages, European history, algebra—an example of time that could have been devoted to other subjects had they been taken in high school.)

Dean Couch stated the general idea this way: "The only thing I know is to make certain he knows the three R's—that's the gospel truth. That's the best way I know to say it. If a student knows reading, writing and arithmetic *well*, there is no reason why he can't succeed in college."

Specifically, the student should have a good background in English grammar, at least one foreign language, basic courses in mathematics, and know something about history, government and science.

Still more to his advantage is to make

sure that the student stays away from manual arts courses if he intends to go to college. As Dean Couch put it, "If he is college bound, the more work he does with his head and the less with his hands, the better prepared he is."

"What's more important," Dean Couch continued, "than what he takes is how well he does in what he attempts. Every study I know about shows that the best device to predict success in college is the student's standing in his high school graduating class."

After the student has completed high school, there are a number of ways the parent can help the future freshman.

1. The student should receive additional aptitude and interest tests. The reason is obvious: aptitudes may show no perceptible change, but interests may be greatly altered. If such tests are not available in your high school, they may be taken at the University by writing the University Guidance Service, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

2. Consider the matter of dollars with sense. One answer that partly explains this statement came from Dean Couch:

*"The underprivileged college boy is one who has the two-toned convertible and the unlimited checking account, and the privileged boy is the one who has to manage his time and money rather carefully. Libraries don't cost money."*

This does not mean that a student should work his way through entirely on his own—that is extremely difficult and could injure his health. But it does mean that a student should not be provided with so much money that he has to spend time spending money, or, for example, get in a crowd of fast-spenders and late-nighters—that is, if he plans to get much out of college.

Dean Couch outlined a schedule of approximate costs for a student's school year. Clothes were left off the budget since it was presumed the student would have those upon arrival or they would be provided by the parents.

Housing and Meals.....	\$520
Fees (state resident) .....	132
Books .....	50*
Cleaning .....	108
Incidentals .....	50
Spending money (dates, etc.)	180
Total .....	\$1,040

\*Books will cost more in some professional schools such as Engineering.

This includes the price of everything really necessary for a student's life at the University, but with only \$5 a week for spending money. If he needs to spend more, the feeling is that he will be letting

school work slide in favor of a more than necessary good time.

There is pretty general agreement that it is wise for a student to invest some of his own money in his college training. If he works, the idea is, then he will appreciate his education more. Also, should he not be earning something but having everything arrive in a silver envelope every month—there is little incentive for him to improve his lot. "Why try to get anywhere?" he could ask. "What I've got is pretty good."

If a family is of moderate means, yet can provide half the money required for the student's education, then the student can get through reasonably comfortably. The two main items on the cost list are housing and meals. On and near campus the student can take many room and board jobs that will not interfere with his school work (the standard rate is an hour's work for each meal and another hour for room.)

And for those who demonstrate a willingness to work and ability, there are schol-

#### THE UNIVERSITY'S ROLE

One administrator stated the case like this: "We would like to see every adequately equipped student who enrolls in the University earn a degree. For those who have a keen desire to get an education, we do everything in our power to remove temporary obstacles. We are not interested in placing obstructions in the way. We best do our job when we help. We cannot do the job alone. We need the cooperation of the parents as well as the student's."

arships that help. Dean Couch mentioned one student who came to him asking for a scholarship to pay his fees for a particular semester. "I have enough money to pay them," the boy said, "but, you see, I don't have a suit I can wear. I have one from my senior year in high school, and it's in good shape, only I've outgrown it."

Dean Couch added that the boy was studying engineering physics, one of the hardest courses of study on the campus, and had racked up 59 hours of A, 11 hours of B, and 5 hours of C. He got the help he needed.

3. Don't encourage visits home at first.

This suggestion is given with the knowledge of the difficulty of accepting it. But when a student comes home each weekend after arriving at college, it's a pretty sure bet he isn't doing well, or at least that he isn't fitting in. To some college appears big and foreboding at first, but they should be encouraged to remain on campus, to get

to know those around them and to start entering into the campus life.

4. Let the young student follow his own course of study.

This is particularly difficult with some parents, who envision a certain life for their children—and that is that. Dean Couch told of one mother who told him, "My son says he wants to study history instead of engineering as I planned for him. You know an engineer makes more money—and money is everything."

"I just had to bite my tongue," Dean Couch remarked.

At some time during his career in college, the young student is liable to realize the field he has been studying is not what he wants, and through talking with students in other fields, may want to change his major.

Faculty advice is: let him. He's the one who is going to have to live with his work and with himself, and at least this is his own idea.

And this leads up to what Dean Couch calls the biggest error of all:

5. Try, somehow, to have the child, by the time he is ready to leave home for college, learn to be responsible for his own conduct.

This, Dean Couch said, is a major problem at the University. Students graduate from controlled high schools into the freedom of college where they can do as they please. What they please to do is frequently not in their best interests.

Without someone standing over them to provide direction, many young students cut too many classes, study too little and some do nothing that is required for college advancement. They do not remain in college very long.

If either the University or the parents step in to guide the student back on course, it must be done so that the responsibility for carrying his work remains with the student, or the responsibility is taken from the young person and he sees something that can be circumvented.

Dean Couch cited an example of the extremes parents will go to to get their children going in school. One boy continually slept through classes, so his parents installed a telephone in his room and called the boy long distance each morning. The son got got around it by pulling the phone over to his bed. As soon as he hung up every morning he went back to sleep.

"I think," Dean Couch said, "if the child was irresponsible to that point, it would have been better not to send him to college. He was not ready."

He cited another example, one that worked.

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and also the most points in a single season, 407 in 1916 made in 26 games on 202 field goals and only three free throws.

"In McCasland's day, a player wasn't compelled to shoot his own free toss when he was fouled, consequently the task was delegated to one man. If McCasland had shot his own free tosses, he might have scored 500 points that year."

The second bright spot concerns an El Reno product named LeRoy Bacher. Bacher becomes eligible for the basketball competition as the second semester opens. He played freshman ball at O.U. before entering service and is now counted on to pick up the team where it hurts the most—in height. He's 6-6 and a relative giant among this year's players. The three extra inches he will add to the team could have meant the difference between victory and defeat in earlier games.

A third bright spot for basketball fans is this year's crop of freshmen. You have to take a long look to find a man under 6 feet and you can spot quite a few over 6-4. This will be the last year O.U. fields a team of shorties for some time.

Remainder of the 1954-55 basketball schedule: February 1—Kansas State at Norman; February 5—Missouri at Columbia; February 10—Oklahoma A&M at Stillwater; February 12—Nebraska at Lincoln; February 16—Kansas at Norman; February 21—Nebraska at Norman; February 25—Missouri at Norman. March 2—Oklahoma A&M at Norman; March 5—Iowa State at Norman; March 8—Kansas at Lawrence.

**T**HE WRESTLING team made its initial start of the year against Oklahoma A&M, defending NCAA Champion, Jan-



LEROY BACHER  
... First Aid for Basketball Woes

uary 14. Starting a team well-stocked in sophomores (five), Port Robertson's wrestlers earned a 12-12 tie in what has been described as the World Series of wrestling.

Leading the sophomore contingent were two wrestlers the fans will be hearing a good deal about. Both have outstanding records and both indicated their ability against the Aggies, although one won and one lost.

The winner, Dan Hodge, 177 pounds, was about as impressive as a wrestler can be in stopping 2-time NCAA champ Ned Blass of the Aggies. His performance was not wholly unexpected. Hodge wrestled on the 1952 Olympic team and was national AAU champ last year at 170½ pounds. He owned a high school record of 50 wins out of 54 matches while attending Perry High School. A little older than most of the sophomores, he finished a 3-year hitch in the navy before enrolling at O.U. last year.

The loser, Bobby Lyons, 137 pounds, was not at top physical form as he lost to Aggie David Simmons. However, Lyons is built from the Tommy Evans mold of wrestlers and will be hard to beat before the season is completed. His loss was the first of his career. He brought a record of 50 straight wins from Bistow High School with him to O.U.

Other sophomores who made their first collegiate start against the Aggies were Billy Pricer, 167 pounds; Everett Johnson, heavyweight; Rex Edgar, 157 pounds. All lost, but indicated that experience would make them tough to beat.

Another Sooner wrestler provided a good deal of excitement and took some of the limelight away from the battle of the AAU and the NCAA champs.

Don Hart, 137 pounds, last year's Big Seven champion at 130 pounds, moved up a weight to challenge NCAA champ Myron Roderick of A&M. Few observers gave Hart much of a chance against the stylish Roderick, but when the match was over Hart led by a comfortable margin.

Other winners besides Hart and Hodge were Ed Corr, 123, and Lee Young, 147.

Consensus of opinion after Aggie match: O.U. has a well-balanced team. When season is finished and experience added, team should be a strong contender for national honors.

The wrestling schedule: February 3—Wyoming at Laramie; February 4—Colorado A&M at Fort Collins; February 5—Colorado at Boulder; February 11—Oklahoma A&M at Stillwater; February 19—Kansas State at Manhattan; February 24—Iowa State at Norman. March 11-12—Big Seven tournament at Boulder; March 19—Illinois at Champaign; March 25-26—

NCAA tournament at Cornell, Ithaca, New York.

**O**UTLOOK for the swimming team is good, also. Six of the Sooner South Africans return with Graham Johnston, British Empire 1,600-meter champion, ready for his senior season.

As the squad prepared to open its season February 4, Coach Ken Rawlinson's team could show added strength. Two transfer students, Tommy Kehoe and Lyle Dillmann, became eligible for competition. Both are sprinters. Kehoe swam the 50-yard sprint in 22.3 seconds and the 100-yard jaunt in 52.6 just before the Christmas holidays. His 50-yard clocking is well under Sooner records.

But it is Graham Johnston who is expected to lead the team in scoring. For the past two seasons he has won the Big Seven 220-yard, 440-yard and 1,500-meter races. Last year his wins were removed when it was discovered that he was scholastically ineligible. This year he leads the swimmers in scholarship.

The swimming schedule: February—4, Southern Methodist at Dallas; 5, Texas at Austin; 12, Kansas at Norman; 19, Colorado at Norman; 26, Iowa State at Ames. March—4-5, Big Seven tournament at Lincoln, Nebraska; 18-19, Southern AAU meet at SMU; 24-26, NCAA meet at Ohio, Oxford, Ohio. April—1-2, National AAU meet at Yale.

### ... Help Your Child

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A businessman whose son was coming to O.U. made a deal with the boy. He placed him on a 40-hour week basis and paid him according to the amount of time the boy devoted to his schoolwork. At first the son billed his father only for the amount of classtime, but gradually he began studying more and more until he was devoting all free time from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to study and his grades were good. Dean Couch feels the plan worked for two reasons, the boy was placed on his honor, and he was made conscious of the value of time.

These are some of the common reasons for college failure and these are some of the ways failure can be averted. But in the end, "If the young student does not have the personal desire for a degree," one professor declared firmly, "he is taking a hard road in attempting to be educated at a university."