

Freshman Limitation Is Prospect

THE critical issue of too many students for too few facilities, an issue facing all institutions of higher education, was brought sharply into focus for Oklahomans March 20. At a called press conference, President George L. Cross released a terse statement that began:

"Applications for University housing, accompanied by \$10 deposits, were 54% higher on March 15, 1955, than they were the same time a year ago. This suggestion of a greatly increased enrollment was considered by the Regents of the University at their monthly meeting March 10.

"Consideration was given also to the fact that the University was not able to accommodate all of the freshmen who wished to enter the University last fall. It is estimated that between five and six hundred were not able to register because sections in English, mathematics and certain of the sciences had been filled."

The next paragraph packed a historic wallop for higher education in the State of Oklahoma. It read:

"Because the University does not have physical facilities or faculty to accept an increased enrollment for the coming year, the Regents agreed that the number of sections available to freshmen could not be increased. It was estimated that the institution will be able to accept approximately 2,500 freshmen. When available sections for freshmen are filled, additional enrollments will not be accepted."

The initial reaction to the limited enrollment announcement found state citizens confused. As is the case when any difficult policy change takes place, people wanted to know, "Why?"

Some thought it was a political maneuver to jar the legislature loose from more money. Some looked through the fog and declared they saw the reason clearly: for prestige purposes, the University wanted to gain the reputation of being exclusive. And some, unacquainted with the increasing problems of higher education everywhere, simply were confused.

The truth was a matter of the educational facts of life: *only so many can be adequately educated with a given amount of faculty and facilities.*

SIGNS WERE VISIBLE

The signs of trouble have been visible for some time for those who would look (*Sooner Magazine*, November 1954; December 1954; March 1955). The source of trouble was too many students. The scope of the situation was defined in September, 1954, when the Univer-

sity was hit suddenly with an 11% increase in enrollment (up 1,000 plus from previous year), an increase that was not provided for by a similar increase in appropriations.

Moreover, a continuous increase in enrollment is indicated. A look at birth statistics would bear out the statement. However, it isn't necessary to look beyond the secondary or grade schools with their overcrowded classrooms to see that enrollments will continue to boom for colleges and universities. Add to the birth statistics the fact that an ever increasing percentage of graduating seniors are attending college (43% of Oklahoma high school graduates of 1954 attended college) and you have a good grasp of the situation. Literally the University has its hands full.

In the March, 1955, *Sooner Magazine*, President Cross wrote: "Aside from the increasing future needs, the University of Oklahoma needs additional classroom buildings to care for its present enrollment (roughly 10,000). The building program initiated and completed after World War II was not designed to meet the needs of the future, but to catch up with the past. Before the war, the institution had approximately one-half the square footage of classroom and laboratory space for the Norman campus needed to meet the specifications of the North Central Association (educational accrediting agency). Despite the building program that followed the war, the class and laboratory space is still definitely below the minimum required for a student body of the present size, much less increased student bodies of the future . . ."

The faculty represents another problem. In fact it represents a two-dimensional dilemma. For many years educational laymen have considered the problem of to raise or not to raise faculty salaries on the basis of what a faculty member actually required to exist. The reasoning: discover the living wage; pay the faculty in accordance; make the minimum salary the maximum.

Today the subject is undergoing some radical changes. Now there is a buyer's market for top faculty members. Other Big Seven schools can and do offer an average of \$1,000 per year more for full professors than does the University. Big Ten institutions offer from \$1,600 to \$4,000 more than O. U.

The second dimension is a matter of number. Last fall approximately 500 freshmen came to the campus only to find that sections in basic courses were already filled and that they could not get in. Many of them

In a historic decision, University Regents announced in March that freshman enrollment at O. U. would be limited in September. Reason: Lack of adequate physical facilities and faculty. Here is the story of how the announcement affects the alumni.

went elsewhere. The reason additional sections could not be opened: lack of faculty members.

A SLIGHT PRECIPITATION

If, as has been suggested, the signs of trouble in higher education have been visible for some time, what happened to precipitate the announcement?

Although no final action had been taken by March 20th (and still has not been as this magazine is prepared), the Legislature was considering a measure that would provide roughly \$6.5 million for higher education for the next two years. This sum represents no increase over the previous two years. It does not cope with the realities of larger enrollments.

President Cross stated the reason this way: "The Regents expressed concern that some of the better qualified graduates of Oklahoma high schools might not be able to enter the University this fall because of limitations of facilities and faculty. The President was instructed to announce by newspaper that the size of the freshman class would be limited to approximately 2,500 and to invite well qualified high school seniors to apply for admission and housing as early as possible."

Those are the facts that prompted the action. To honor the time-worn principle of an education for all state students who are qualified, the University must have adequate funds. Without an increase in appropriations, a limitation is necessary. With adequate funds, the University is eager to fulfill the principle to the fullest.

A LIMITED FUROR

As could be expected, the limitation created a furor among many interested parties. While applications for admissions and housing zoomed, most people adopted the watch-and-wait attitude.

Suggestions to implement the announcement were heard from many, however. One was to limit out-of-state enrollment or to eliminate it entirely. Some thought an entrance examination was the best solution. The State Senate voted to hold an inquiry into the matter—an inquiry that has not yet been completed as this magazine goes to press.

At present the situation is in a state of suspension. No one will know until the Legislature passes the final version of the appropriation bill for higher education what type of limiting policy will be necessary. However, to clarify the initial announcement for alumni, the editor received the following answers from President Cross:

1) Since there has been a suggestion to eliminate out-of-state enrollments, alumni may be concerned that their children will not be admitted. Can alumni be assured that their children will be welcomed at the University following the limitation of enrollment announcement? President Cross said: "We are not going to eliminate out-of-state enrollments. You may assure the alumni that every consideration will be given to children of out-of-state alumni. They are a part of the University family and will be treated as such."

2) The initial newspaper announcement stated that 2,500 freshmen would be admitted on a first-come-first served basis. What will be the general policy of admission? President Cross said: "I have not said that enrollment would be limited strictly to 2,500 freshmen. In my announcement to the newspapers of the Regents' decision, I said, 'It was estimated that the institution will be able to accept approximately 2,500 freshmen. When available sections for freshmen are filled, additional enrollments will not be accepted'."

He continued, "What curtailment may prove to be necessary will be determined by the facilities. We will use every existing facility in an attempt to handle as many freshmen as possible. However, the figure 2,500 was an estimate based on last year's facilities and it would be unwise to expect that we can go too far beyond that figure with existing accommodations."

And there the limitation of enrollment situation stands as of April 15.

AN IMPORTANT STEP

There is one important measure that children of alumni seeking admittance to the University for the first time this fall can take to improve their chances for admission. Apply for admission as quickly as possible.

To apply for admission, request an application form from the Office of Admissions, University of Oklahoma, Norman. The form that will be forwarded includes an application for housing. Form should be completed and returned to issuing office as quickly as possible. The high school should be requested to forward a transcript of student grades to the University at the same time the entrance application form is forwarded. If grades are not available for final semester's work, transcript can be forwarded with a statement that student will be graduated this year.

There has not been a firm policy announced concerning method of selecting first-come-first-served. It

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would be to the student's advantage, however, to apply for admission as quickly as possible.

The decision to limit enrollment when existing facilities have been depleted does not affect transfer students with a sophomore or higher standing. It affects freshmen only.

That's the story as it is known at press time. The Regents took the step only after exploring every other

educational avenue. Undeniably the step is of historical importance to the University and of personal importance to every alumni parent of a college-age child.

Perhaps the major significance of the announcement was the quality of educational leadership the Regents and President displayed. Some students may be excluded by the limitation policy, but those who come will find their University's standards respected.

through," Owen commented proudly, "and you can see the mountains from there. It has a marvelous view."

His home settled, Owen began devoting himself to civic work, desiring as his kind does, to improve the town, build it and to place its growing circle on the nation's map for everyone to see and flock to.

The list of the activities he entered into reads like a Chamber of Commerce glossary. Incidentally, he is president of the chamber of commerce this year, the youngest president ever elected. His lunchtimes and evenings are taken up by Elks, Eagles, Lions, the Presbyterian church, City Planning Commission, Junior Chamber of Commerce and Boy Scouts.

In 1953, he was president of the Central Oregon Bar Association, and last year, was head of the Bend Golf Club, of which he has been champion four years straight. He helps stage the city's annual water carnival, held each year on the Deschutes River which runs through the town between low rock walls and manicured lawns and willow trees.

And besides these hour-consuming projects, Owen is gaining a reputation, as one Bend citizen suggested, of being "one of the best darned trial lawyers in the state."

Panner has moved from stranger to outstanding citizen—in five years with one out for selling cars.

That's moving.

PHONE

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