

Dear Senior:

When 1956 seniors entered O.U. in 1952, they became subjects of a highly significant study. Included in preliminary report: By 8th semester, only 1 in 3 still enrolled.

By DEAN GLENN COUCH
University College

We know more about your class than any class ever to graduate from the University! Does that surprise you? Let me tell you why it is so and at least some of the things we know about you.

It all started back in the summer of 1952. Several of us came to the conclusion that many of our policies and decisions concerning student enrollments were based upon conclusions we had drawn from personal opinions rather than observed facts. It was concluded that we should start with a freshman class and observe them in every objective way that we possibly could to learn factually some of these things we had been guessing about.

We thought we should decide ahead of time whom we should consider in our study and how large a sample we should work with. Our conclusion was that we should include in the study everyone who was starting his first college work in September, 1952. If they had gone to summer school or had any previous college credit of any kind (for example, correspondence credit), we would not include them in our sample. We also decided we would include only those persons who had taken our regular placement tests. We finally wound up with 1,829 names of people who fitted our conditions. Certainly 1,829 is a very large sample, and we can be reasonably sure that a sample of this size could be relied upon to yield dependable results.

We soon found that to keep a detailed account of all the facts we wanted to know and to keep up-to-date would require far more manpower than we had available. We began to fall behind in our studies. Most of the things I am going to tell you about your class are concerned with information we have obtained from your first two years. However, the facts for the next two years that we need to know are on the books, so give us time, and we will know.

Eventually we are going to publish a big study about the freshman class of 1952, but that is some time off. In the meantime, I felt you should be the first to know that the study is under way. Now that you are about to become tax-paying, wage-earning

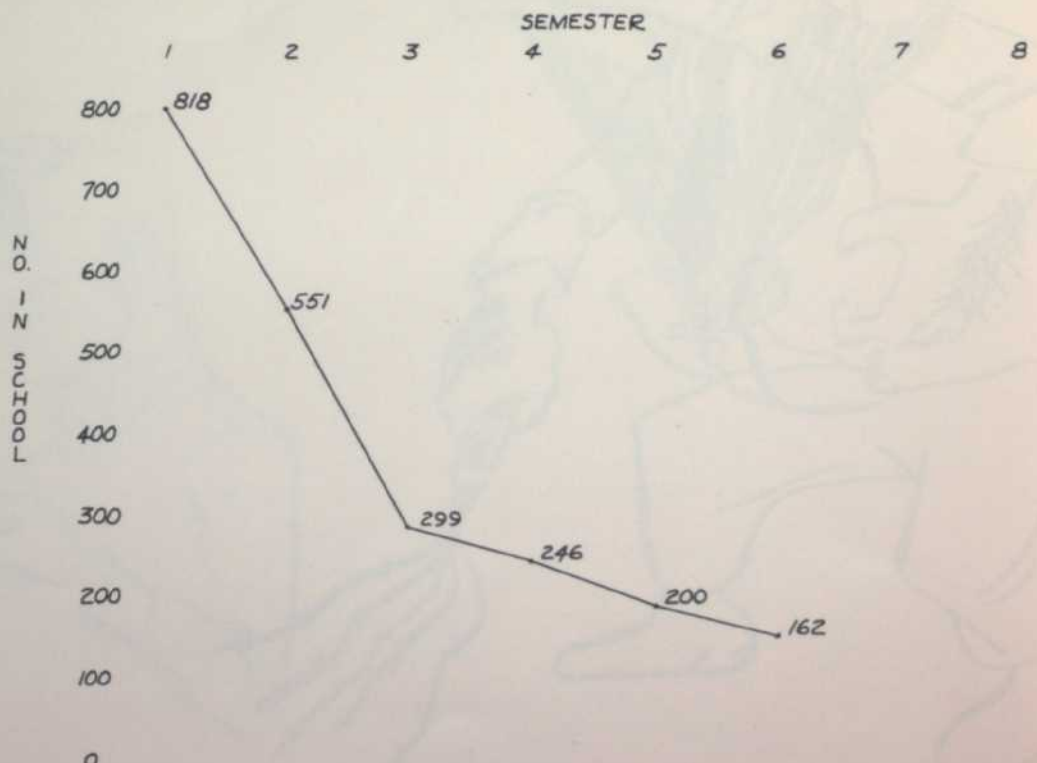
citizens, I think you will discover that your interest in this matter goes far beyond the fact that you were in the group.

One of the things we wanted to know about you was how you compared in background with students of your own age in the nation as a whole. One of the tests we gave you is designed to measure your general background. We found that 42% of you were above the line which, in a national scale, divides students into an upper and a lower group, and 58% were below. That is not too far from the standard 50-50. Certainly as a group you stood that test in fairly good shape. Another test we gave you is designed to predict one's general aptitude for doing things academic. Such tests have no value in predicting hand skills, but they have proven very useful in predicting how well one will get along in the University. Just how well they predict

I will show you later. This test is called the Ohio State Psychological Examination—the O.S.P.E., for short. On this test you did about the same. Forty-two percent were above the theoretical national norm, and 57% were below. We will look at these two groups more carefully later. Seventy-three percent of your freshman class were men, and 27% were women. Seventeen percent of the men were veterans.

I was very anxious for the first semester's grades to come in so we could get on with our study. Since a grade average of "C" is required to be admitted to any of the degree-granting colleges, I could hardly wait to see how many of you would start out with at least an average grade of "C." Out of the 1,829 in your original class, 818 or 44.7% failed to have an average of "C" at the end of the first semester. Only 551 of these 818 completed a second semester,

Semester by Semester
Drop-Out Rate of Students Who Did Not Make
"C" Average Their First Semester



and only 77 of these 551 had managed to get their grades up to "C" by the end of this second semester.

Then came the long summer of 1953 and finally the fall enrollment in September. Two hundred and ninety-nine (299) of the original 818 who did not have an average grade of "C" at the end of the first semester completed their third semester. Five hundred and nineteen (519) of the original 818 below the "C" average were no longer here. I had hoped that a few more at least would raise their averages to a "C," but when the grades were in I was disappointed. There were still just 77. In the spring of 1954, 246 of your 818 group originally below "C" completed their fourth semester. Final grades for that semester indicated that ninety-one (91) had achieved an average grade of "C." Two hundred (200) tried it for the fifth time, but one had hard luck and lost his "C" average, so we were down to 90 at the end of that semester. When the sixth semester ended 162 out of your original 818 had completed the semester, and 97 had an average grade of "C." The story has to end there for the moment, because this is as far as we have gotten with the study. When you plot the drop-outs of this group on a chart, it looks like graph on opposite page.

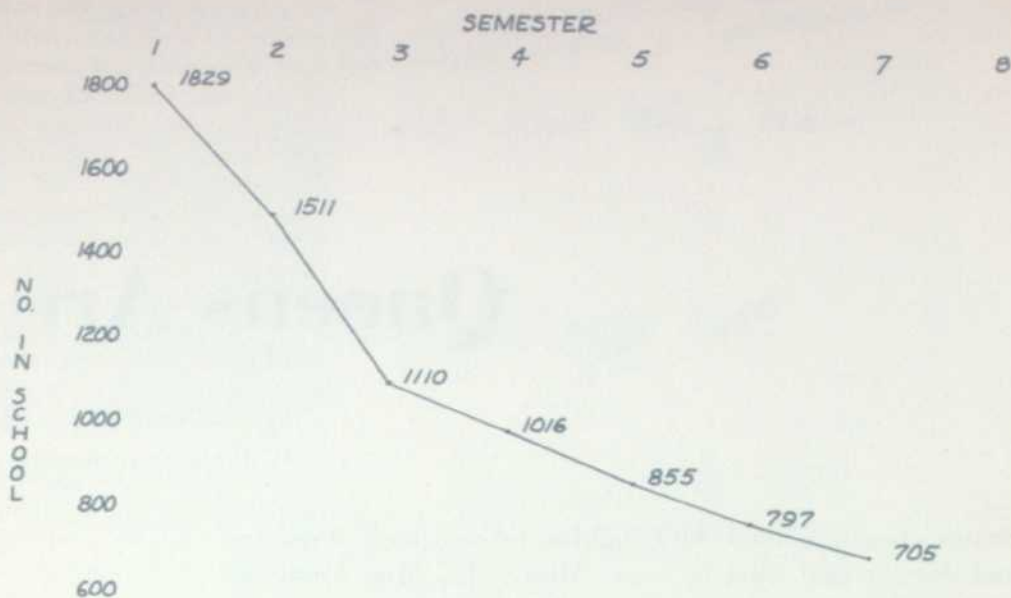
Our study shows that if a person falls in the lowest 10% on the O.S.P.E. test, is in the lowest 10% of the group on the background test, and does not have an average grade of "C" at the end of the first semester, the chances are only 4 out of 100 that he will finish the sixth semester. What his chances are of graduating we do not yet know, but obviously they are quite small. If the University is not able to grow in members of faculty and physical plant as fast as we would like and the time comes when we will need to make more room for the ever-increasing classes, it seems to me we would look to this group first as a likely place to start eliminating.

Speaking of drop-outs, how did your class do as a whole in this respect? The rate of drop-outs is graphically presented above.

You can see from the number who are left to enroll for the eighth semester that only about 1 out of 3 who started are going to graduate. The final answer to this one, of course, cannot be determined in mid-April at the time of this writing.

Do you remember the 8th day of September, 1952, when we held the general convocation for all entering freshmen? It was at 9:30 a.m. in the Field House. If I had known then what I know now, I could have said to you, "Look at the person on

Drop-Out Rate of 1952 Freshman Class



your right and then at the one on your left. Only one of you will be out here four years from now to pick up your degree." I doubt, however, if I would have said it even if I had known. It seems to me the hopes are far too high at that time to warrant the dropping of such a bombshell. Surely there must be something that can be done so that such a statement would not come true. Now that you are about to graduate, you probably have some ideas about it. Certainly you should make your ideas known.

Since there is such a national shortage of engineers, we were anxious to see how well your group did in this area. In September, 1952, 536 out of the 1,829 chose Engineering as a possible major. Much to our disappointment, only 117 had actually met the requirements to enter the College of Engineering after four semesters. This means that only 22% of all those who said they wanted to be engineers even got started in the College of Engineering. How many of those who got into Engineering will actually graduate is not yet known. We know that a very high percentage of those who did not make it were unable to do the necessary mathematics. Apparently many high-school youngsters have an interest in engineering but have no idea of the amount of mathematics background one needs to be an engineer. Perhaps if some of the national effort that is now going into getting high-school students interested in engineering could be spent on teaching more mathematics, there would actually be more engineers graduate in the long run. If mathematics is stressed at the expense of English, however, we would be in still more trouble.

These are the two great areas in which one must have a reasonable capacity if he is to do successful work in college. Ability to do English is necessary in all fields, and mathematics is required in the sciences and technologies.

Those of you who chose Pharmacy as a major did a little better than those who chose Engineering. Twenty-five percent of the Pharmacy hopefuls had been admitted to the Pharmacy College after four semesters.

The Pre-Med group is a significant group, of course, so we have begun to collect data on them. At the end of four semesters, 18.7% of the original group in Pre-Medicine were still enrolled as Pre-Meds; 22.8% had changed majors; 17% were still trying to be Pre-Meds but did not have a "C" average, and 41.5% had dropped out of school. The 18.7% who were still in Pre-Med had a grade average of 3.2 (based on a four-point system). Those who had changed their majors had an average grade of 2.8. Those who had dropped out of school had an average grade of 1.4. The 17% still struggling in the University College at the end of four semesters who had not changed their majors had an average grade of 1.8.

Just as soon as time and money will permit, we will see how you did in other areas, too, but this will give you some idea of the type of information we are obtaining about your class. I am sure many questions have occurred to you. I would consider it a favor if you would send me a list of questions. They certainly will be included if at all

Continued page 24

laspy (the former Mary Jane Simpson), Lawton, have chosen the name Lee Andrew Gallaspy for their son born March 29.

1955

Lieut. Warren L. Summers, '55ed, Norman, has been assigned to the Army's 1st Armored Division stationed at Ft. Polk, Louisiana. He entered the Army in December of 1955 and was stationed at Ft. Sill before re-assignment.

George Calvert, '55mf, has been selected as the winner of the \$2,500 fellowship awarded by the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa. Calvert's award was announced at the center's 16th annual exhibition recently. The grant was made by the Catherwood Foundation of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, for study in Europe during 1956. Calvert is an instructor at Northeastern State College, in Tahlequah.

Ensign Larry B. Flood, '55ba, Norman, recently qualified as a Navy pilot by making six successful landings aboard the aircraft carrier USS Saipan in the Gulf of Mexico. He is now stationed at Corry Field Naval Auxiliary Air Station in Pensacola, Florida, for a course in instrument flying.

MARRIAGES: Miss Peggy Gaynelle Willis, '54-'56, and Lieut. Charles Oliver Lescher, '55bs, both

of Muskogee, were married March 24. Mrs. Lescher was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority at O.U. and Lescher was affiliated with Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. They are living in Big Spring, Texas, where he is stationed at Webb Airforce Base.

Miss Kitty Grant, '52-'56, Davis, and Joe Blake Dutcher, '55bus, Lawton, were married March 29 in Davis. Mrs. Dutcher served as vice president of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Dutcher was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity. They are living in Lawton, where he is engaged in operating several retail shoe stores.

Miss Jane Le Welborn, '54-'56, Oklahoma City, and J. E. Bryan, '55ed, formerly of Holdenville, were married April 26 in Oklahoma City. Mrs. Bryan was a member of Alpha Delta Pi sorority and her husband was affiliated with Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. They are living in Freiburg, Germany, where Bryan is stationed with the Army.

Miss Carol Lynn Morrow, '56, Muskogee, and Henry Eagan Leonhardt II, '55bus, Oklahoma City, were married March 30 in Muskogee. Mrs. Leonhardt was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority at O.U. and he was associated with Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. They have made a home in Oklahoma City.

Wray Littlejohn, '51-'56, El Reno, was recently appointed assistant football coach at Norman High School. Littlejohn was a member of the Sooner varsity, seeing action at fullback, end and tackle.

BIRTH: G. Douglass Fox, '55bus, and Mrs. Fox (the former Joan Wakefield, '51-'55), Norman, have selected the name Judith Lucille Fox for their daughter born April 12. Fox was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity at O.U. and was president of the Interfraternity Council. Mrs. Fox was associated with Delta Gamma sorority.

Dear Seniors . . .

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possible in our future studies. How soon we will need to have this kind of information in making sound decisions about the problems of admissions is, of course, not yet known. It is our hope that when the time does come we will know the facts and will be able to act in the light of these facts so that the University of Oklahoma can continue to serve the greatest number of people for the greatest common good.

Before our study ends we will likely be sending you a questionnaire, because we no doubt will need to have information about those who graduated which we do not have at present. If and when you do hear from us, you may be sure that a prompt answer will be of great help to us and eventually to many future students.

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