
Hal Muldrow, Jr.

'28

Insurance of all Kinds

Bonds

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Under Cover

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

If I had been a member of the 1952 Freshman Class at O. U., and if I had graduated four years later in June, 1956, I would have been in select company. For of an original class of 1,829, only 348 graduated in that length of time, 376 were still in school and 1,105 were out of school.

Such information, needed by the University of Oklahoma as a basis for educational planning, is being gathered as the result of a study conducted by the University College in an attempt to provide reliable information on the academic behavior of an entire class.

Loaded down with the title, "A Longitudinal Descriptive and Predictive Study of the Freshman Class of 1952," the study is only in the initial stages of reporting. Still to come: the relationship between placement test scores and the likelihood of graduation and other pertinent information.

But on the basis of the report that appears on Page 4 of this issue, several interesting and highly significant points are discernible. Some samples:

Item: The College of Engineering, that claimed the interest of 536 freshmen, graduated only 32 who originally preferred an engineering major and picked up one extra graduate from those freshmen who were listed as undecided. To complete the picture fragment devoted to Engineering, 180 Engineering students were still in school and 289 were no longer in school.

In comparison with other colleges, the College of Engineering shows one of the highest percentages of students still attempting to complete their work and one of the lowest percentages of dropouts.

Without reaching far for reasons, it is apparent that the heavy class load required of engineering majors makes more than four years mandatory for most students.

Item: The dropout picture overall is taking form. On a grade point basis, the 348 who graduated in four years show an average of 3.07 (4.0 is tops); the 376 who are still in school have a 2.58 average, and the 1,105 dropouts had a 1.64 average. The last figure is significantly lower than a "C" or 2.0 grade average.

It would be an error to jump to the conclusion, however, that all of the dropouts were due to grade deficiencies. Some undoubtedly were caused by academic failure, but many dropouts resulted from other reasons.

Why is so much emphasis being placed on the study of the Freshmen of '52?

The answer is readily available in booming enrollments and limited facilities. If the time ever comes when facilities will not stretch to meet the numbers of potential freshmen, some rational basis for planning an admissions program will be available.

But perhaps as essential to the well being of the State and the University is an answer to the question, "What causes dropouts?"

The figures presented here tend to indicate that a portion of the answer is low grades, but academic failure is only one of the various reasons. If some of the dropouts can be salvaged, then the study will have enjoyed tremendous success.

Under any set of findings, the definitive study of a single class will provide more information on academic behavior in concrete form than anything previously attempted and will eliminate much of the guess work for administrative officers.

As a unique part of the *Sooner Magazine's* editorial comment for the next several months, additional reports will appear as the results are made known.

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