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The Sooner Scene

By R. BOYD GUNNING
Executive Secretary
Alumni Association

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STUDENTS AT O. U. today have a unique opportunity in personal experience and development. For ten years or so there has been an increasing confidence in student judgment and a growing reliance upon it.

Faculty and students participate as equal partners in the determination of institutional policy. Students sit with full voting rights on committees appointed by the President and charged with responsibility for fundamental matters ranging from the standard of admission to planning and development of the campus. These assignments of responsibility, voluntarily accepted, have given hundreds of students an opportunity to deal with problems important to the University. Students thereby gain an insight into the operations of the University. They contribute through their experience and imagination to the University program. By participating in these activities they enrich their educative experiences while on the campus. I believe that alumni and parents would be amazed to know of the extent to which students participate in University affairs.

In recent years student participation has been expanded to include the establishment of Student Judicial Boards which handle student behavioral problems. Cases of behavioral problems arising in residential centers on the campus are always heard first by a Student Judicial Committee. Any student who wishes to do so may appeal his case to the Student Conduct Committee, a committee consisting of both faculty and student members appointed by the President of the University.

The Inter-fraternity Council has jurisdiction over cases dealing with group disturbances or individual violations where the nature of the incident indicates that fraternity rivalries or affiliations are a factor. Individual violations of fraternity members which have no relation to the fraternity af-

fairs are not, of course, handled here.

Another phase of the system is the Student Advisory Judicial Board. This board considers cases of students not arising in the residential centers. With the exception of traffic and parking offenses all student cases of a disciplinary nature are considered by these student committees. The parking and traffic violations are handled administratively for two reasons. First, there are so many of these that they would swamp existing student committees as well as divert their attention from more important considerations. Secondly, these violations are more or less cut and dried, routine in nature and group evaluation seems less meaningful than in other types of offenses. However, even here the student senate has been invited to investigate the possibility of setting up a student traffic court to handle these infractions under the authority of the student senate and the University Administration.

Planning and coordinating student affairs are shared responsibilities between the Student Senate and the office of the Dean of Students. President Cross and the officers he has designated to administer these areas have not sidestepped the ultimate responsibility in these matters and of course, the final authority and responsibility could not be delegated to the students. However, by this system of sharing the authority and responsibility with student committees a better and more democratic job can be done and the students participate in an important and educational function not otherwise available to them.

This unique concept of University administration is an important part of the philosophy held by President Cross. It deserves a great deal of attention because of its outstanding success. A great deal of credit should go also to the office of the Dean of Students, Dean Clifford Craven, Miss Dorothy Truex, Dr. Jody Smith, Mr. Don Wilcox, Mr. Gene Russell, Miss Thelma Haddan, the counselors and student leaders who have worked so skillfully and faithfully for the success of a complicated and many-sided undertaking.

There are many other examples of student participation of equal importance but space does not permit more than a mention of some of them here. Students have major responsibilities in the production of the *Oklahoma Law Review*, the *Oklahoma Daily*, and the *Sooner Shamrock*.

I believe the average alumnus who has been out of school more than 20 years would be absolutely amazed to learn how capable and serious minded the average student of 1957 is.

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