

Sooner Scene

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SO MUCH has been said about the plight of higher education in Oklahoma some have claimed that college spokesmen are alarmists. This is true only in the sense that many people on college campuses are alarmed. The college people do not feel that all good creative scholars have left the state universities and colleges because of the financial pinch. They know academic standards have not been lowered. The ivy walls of the state institutions will not come crumbling down if the building money fails this time. But the situation is serious, this no one denies.

In order to find out more about the true nature of the college crisis in Oklahoma the *Oklahoma City Times* made an independent survey comparing state support for colleges and universities in Oklahoma with support in neighboring states. The study was made by Mary Goddard, veteran reporter for the *Times*. It resulted in an objective, factual report—the best job anyone has done to date.

The basic question tackled was:

“How much state money do we really spend per student to run state campuses?”

“The approximate answer: \$376.89 this year. In other words, a state campus treasury half again as large as the present total would just about put Oklahoma even with the next lowest state in the Big Eight.

“Iowa spends about \$762.23, Nebraska \$694.14, Kansas \$682.17, Missouri \$593.71 and Colorado \$549.51.”

The figures include only state appropriations used to meet operational costs. Tuition and fees, auxiliary enterprises, capital improvements are not included.

Oklahoma is “education-conscious” and “college-poor.” 40,751 are enrolled in state-supported colleges and universities this year in Oklahoma. Colorado has 28,292 students, Missouri 28,047, Kansas 26,588, Iowa 26,492 and Nebraska 15,679. The other states, except for Colorado, have more students in private schools than does Oklahoma.

Regardless of how you make the comparisons, it is apparent that Oklahoma must find more support for its colleges and universities.

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