

## *Sooner Scene*

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"How can a student stay in school today without substantial financial support from his family?" This question is asked repeatedly by alumni and parents.

There are always a number of bright students whose parents simply cannot finance a college education.

A few students do pay their own way, but not many. Twenty-five years ago a student with a part-time job, who could save \$100 to \$200 from summer work, paid his bills with little difficulty. The same student would have to bring \$600 to \$800 from his summer job to be in an equally good position today. Fees have increased from \$12 per semester to \$6 per credit hour, or \$15 per credit hour if he lives out-of-state. The cost of books, laundry, clothes and recreation are all proportionately higher. A student can still work for his board and room if necessary, but if he does not work, it will cost him \$500 to \$600 for the year. The minimum cost of a year at O.U. is estimated at \$1,100. This figure does not include clothes or spending money.

The working student faces another problem not generally recognized. Contrary to popular opinion, the student today has less time for work or recreation than did his parents. Now he spends from two to three hours a day more studying, and in the classroom meets tougher competition and a more demanding teacher. Two things are responsible for this. Students enter the university from high school better prepared than ever before, and university courses are generally on a higher level than they were twenty years ago. Only a good student can spare much time for outside work or activities.

With these conditions prevailing all around the country, there is a danger that a college education will soon be available only to those who can pay the high cost and no longer to all who are qualified.

This is a serious problem. If in selecting college students, the ability to afford becomes more important than the ability to learn, development of the nation's manpower will be set back a hundred years.

As an easy solution to the problem of the rising costs of higher education, demands are being made that students in the public colleges and universities pay a larger share of the cost of their education through increased tuition charges.

This is based on the theory that higher education benefits only the individual and that he should, therefore, pay directly for its cost. This is a false theory.

Its adoption will jeopardize seriously our national strength, reduce our standard of living, and reverse the entire traditions of equal opportunity in life for our young people.

Speaking of tuition fees raised to meet the costs of operations, President J. L. Morrill of the University of Minnesota stated: "This notion is, of course, an incomprehensible repudiation of the whole philosophy of a successful democracy premised upon an educated citizenry. It negates the whole concept of widespread educational opportunity made possible by the state university idea. It conceives college training as a personal investment for profit instead of a social investment." Of course, the individual gains from an education, but an enlightened society, such as ours, is absolutely dependent upon the literate, educated populace of which it is composed.

Here is a sign of the disturbing trend. While the official living cost index was going up 7 percent in five years, tuition charges climbed 32 percent at public institutions and 39 percent at private institutions. This was revealed in a survey of 196 colleges and

universities made by Dr. Ernest V. Hollis, director of college and university administration, U. S. office of education.

Dr. Hollis stated, "If tuition costs keep on rising at the rate that has prevailed since 1954, many institutions will soon find they are pricing themselves out of the family income market they have been serving."

President C. Clement French of Washington State University, speaking as President of the American Association of Land-Grant Universities and State Universities, said recently: "This campaign for greatly increased tuition costs is diametrically opposed to the concept that the individual should have the opportunity to go as far in his pursuit of knowledge as he is intellectually able, at low cost to himself and without regard to social background. This tradition is America's major contribution to higher education.

The idea was given reality during the nineteenth century by the creation of land-grant colleges and state universities. No longer was college training restricted to children of wealth and to the service of a few professions."

Marion B. Folsom, former U. S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, calls the arguments for the full-cost tuition philosophy "dangerously beguiling." He points out that the heart of the matter is that society, not the individual, is the prime beneficiary of higher education.

Governor Edmondson and the legislature should be complimented for meeting the problems of higher education realistically. Most people recognize the fact that a number of reforms, in the interest of efficiency, are possible in the state system. A committee of the legislative council, headed by Senator Robert Bailey, together with several citizens appointed by Governor Edmondson, has already started work for a better college and university program. I predict this effort will lead to constructive changes in the system within the next two years. The groups will certainly have the cooperation and good wishes of O.U. Alumni.

—R. BOYD GUNNING

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