

Coed Counselors

YOUTHFUL MATURITY IS THE KEY TO CATE CENTER'S COUNSELING SYSTEM

By Carolyn Hart, '58journ

QUESTION: What is a housemother?
Answer: A gentle, white-haired old lady with ample girth who just "loves" girls.

This answer would bat 1,000 at most colleges and universities, but not at the University of Oklahoma's Cate Center for Women (formerly the Women's Quadrangle).

In fact, the attractive coed hurrying from one of the houses, wearing the old college uniform of sweater, skirt, bobby-sox and loafers, and carrying an armload of books, is just as likely to be the house counselor as a coed resident. At first glance, the Cate Center counselor and her coeds may seem indistinguishable. They share the vivacity, interest and enthusiasm of youth. There is a difference, however.

This difference is the inevitable chasm between freshmen of 18, who were so recently writing notes to friends in high school Spanish classes, and seniors of 22 or graduate students somewhat older, who have grown and matured within the University and are young adults, not only ready but eager for responsibility.

A bridge for this chasm does exist. The counselors remember that first year of college. The picture has faded, the colors are no longer bright, but the image is there. To a senior or graduate counselor, freshman fears and fancies are not puzzling and incomprehensible. She's been there, too. Because she remembers, she can understand—and perhaps understanding is the most precious commodity of all to freshman coeds.

This concept—that mature youth can be an invaluable aid in channeling the enthusiasm and abilities of immature youth—is the backbone and basis of the University's singular approach to selection of counselors.

In addition to youthful counselors, O.U.'s housing program for freshman women has another unique facet. Opened in 1949 as the Women's Quadrangle and renamed in February for the late University Vice President Roscoe Cate, '26ba, Cate Center is a complex of five buildings. Each building has four separate and individual units, con-

nected only by fire doors at every floor. Each house has its own counselor and assistant counselor and shelters only 50 coeds.

This is a revolutionary approach.

At most large state universities, housing centers are monstrous affairs sheltering at least 1,000 women under a single roof. Counselors are indeed housemothers, women of other generations. The result: Coeds who feel lost in a hotel-like atmosphere with housemothers who "love" them, but may very well not understand them.

In Cate Center all but six of the 20 houses are filled with freshman women. The aim in the freshman houses is to provide understanding during that all-important first year when major adjustments must take place and to prevent the coeds from feeling lost in a great institution.

Understandably concerned with the direction their daughters are to receive, parents have often leveled the charge that the University permits "coeds to take care of coeds" and, in effect, approves the leading of the blind by the blind. This contention is vehemently contested by the Cate Center administrators—and with reason.

Counselors have little in common with ship captains. Behind them, guiding, directing and advising, is Miss Betty Bob Angerman, '46ed, '47m.ed, assistant director of women's affairs in charge of housing. Behind Miss Angerman stands Dr. Dorothy A. Truex, director of women's affairs.

Once a week every counselor meets individually with Miss Angerman for an hour to discuss any problems in her house and progress of coeds. This session is no coffee break, but an intensive hour of consultation. In addition, every counselor checks into Miss Angerman's office, in the Cate cafeteria building, at noon every day to keep abreast of Cate Center activities and announcements. Finally, all counselors meet together with Miss Angerman weekly to view over-all Quadrangle problems.

Counselors stand up well under the close supervision for they are selected not only on the basis of their ability to lead but their ability to accept direction. They aren't pulled out of magicians' hats. There are

twice as many applicants as there are counseling jobs, and the criteria are stringent: academic ability, proven leadership, warm personality, ability to relate to others, and, above all, a sense of humor.

Then comes a written test aimed at discovering how the prospective counselors would handle delicate situations and, finally, a personal interview with Miss Angerman and Dr. Truex.

Although the job is a lucrative one in the eyes of college lasses—room and board and \$50 a month—one cardinal rule in selection is stressed. Counselors are not picked because they need the money. They are chosen because they are able. The Student Affairs Office is quick to remind those just hunting for a "job" that the University maintains an employment placement bureau.

Selection doesn't, however, signal the moment for a sigh of relief and general relaxation. It's only the beginning. Counselors are instructed to read major works in the fields of group relations and counseling to prepare themselves for an orientation week.

Just before the onset of school, new counselors gather on the campus to be put through the hoops. They study and practically memorize a scrapbook-sized list of instructions, suggestions, rules, advice and musts. They attend lectures presented by authorities in human relations. Counsel is offered by University officials who know the ins and outs of human behavior between the critical ages of 18 and 22. Rules which the counselors must enforce are explained.

The list of regulations seems to stretch almost into infinity, but each is aimed at making the transformation from sheltered school girl into mature woman as painless as possible.

Too much emphasis can be placed, so goes official theory, on rules and rulebreaking. In fact, the counselors find only a small

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Meet Miss Killingsworth

Joan Killingsworth, 21-year-old English major from Duncan, typifies the coed counselors sought by O.U.'s Cate Center for Women. One of the most active and well-known senior women on the campus, Joan sees counseling as an opportunity to better equip herself for a high school teaching career. Her advice to her coed charges is no doubt based on her own successful first year, which saw her named one of the 10 outstanding freshman women of 1956-57, vice president of her dormitory and president of Alpha Lambda Delta, freshman women's honor society.



*An endless procession—
charts, records, bulletins—
Joan finds the
paper work always with her.*



*Four flights of stairs
a dozen times a day
keep Joan trim,
her house running smoothly.*

*For those who
lack natural neatness,
Joan provides
some weekly "encouragement."*



Meet Miss Killingsworth--



12 hours a week, Joan is just another class-going student with study time worked in around counseling duties.



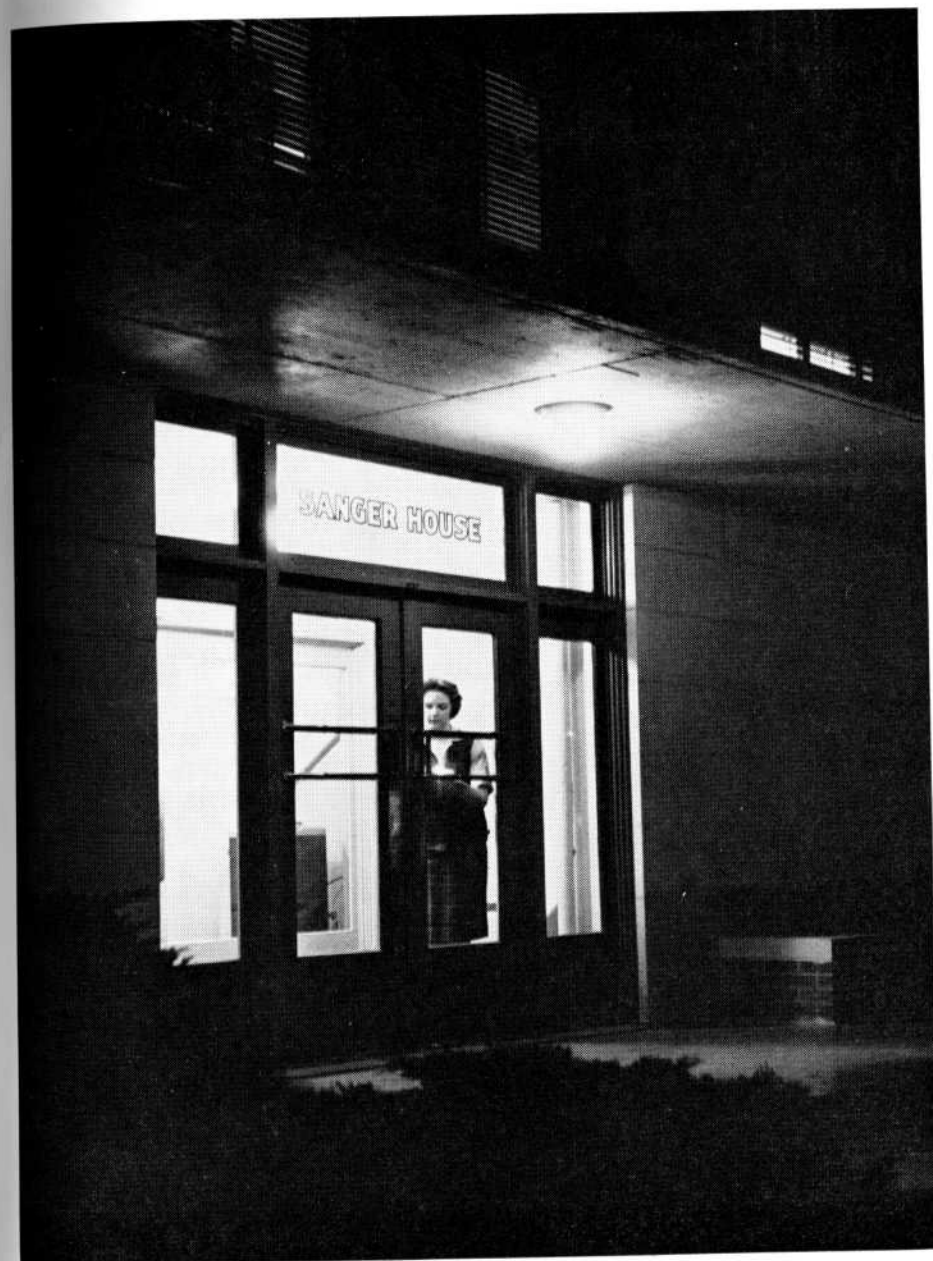
Daily conferences with Miss Angerman give Joan opportunity to ask advice as well as give it.



*Phoned excuses from late coeds . . .
Extra housework in the lounge . . .
That all-important mail call . . .*



Cate Center meal time makes Joan keeper of the peace and judge of proper dress.



Before snatching study time herself, Joan checks freshman rooms during the required night study hall.

10:30 p.m.—door locked—only 30 minutes until lights out—Joan hopes for a night with no emergencies.

COED COUNSELORS

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percentage of their time is absorbed by discipline.

As they see it, their major job is to win the confidence of their girls and help them make the transition from high school to college.

The real icebreaker comes within the first two weeks after a semester's start when each counselor squeezes in at least an hour's private talk with each girl. She finds out the girl's background, her weak points, her strong ones and prepares an individual folder on her.

As the semester continues, a major portion of her time will be devoted to counseling on study problems. At the fourth week of the semester, the counselor talks with every girl who received an unsatisfactory grade.

All of these interviews and counseling sessions take time and lots of it, but the counselor's job doesn't end with the talk. She reports to Miss Angerman on the scholastic situation of each girl who is doing poorly and her approach to the girl's problem receives thorough study by the assistant director.

Some of the problems faced by counselors are more serious than shyness, homesickness or scholastic difficulties. Occasionally there is a coed with a serious maladjustment. This is when the counselor counts herself out and calls in expert help.

There is a major reason for close supervision by Miss Angerman. A counselor can help with the usual adjustments. She can advise on boys and dates and studies. She cannot tamper with the truly disturbed. Miss Angerman, with a backlog of experience in personal relations, studies carefully the reports of counselors on problem coeds and keeps a close tab on their progress in the weekly conference. When real trouble flares, expert help is called in immediately, ranging from doctors to psychologists.

Although counselors give first place to setting up a working relationship between themselves and their charges, this is not all of their job by a long shot.

According to the rule book, theirs is a half-time job, but most find it a full-time concern. Either the counselor or her assistant must be on duty in the house at all times, which means setting up and sticking to a complicated schedule.

One weekend each month the assistant counselor assumes full responsibility while the counselor takes her "free weekend." The assistant counselor also receives one free weekend a month. They are advised to leave thoughts of their houses behind them

on that weekend. The philosophy behind the rule is that each must have a break from her responsibilities regularly or the job will overwhelm them.

The counselor is responsible for knowing where each coed is after closing hours. Then she must check to make sure that all have returned who were out by special permission. Every evening, too, she makes one or two checks of every room during study hall to be sure decorum is maintained.

Three times a week the counselor appears for "cafeteria duty." She takes up her stance in the Cate Center cafeteria to make sure order is maintained and that the girls are dressed properly.

At least once, and likely twice a week, each counselor at unspecified times checks the rooms of her coeds for cleanliness and order. Once every seven weeks the counselor will serve as a hostess in the Cate Center Lounge where coeds and their dates gather on weekends.

Organization and maintenance of house services is another time-consuming duty of the counselor. She sets up a routine for mail service, the taking of messages for house occupants and telephone duty by residents.

The maintenance of information files sounds innocuous but it is another time-consumer. The counselor keeps files containing the telephone number of each coed, the house register, a room chart, schedule cards, weekend permissions from parents, sign-out cards, a list of those receiving special permissions, lateness reports, disciplinary actions and personal data.

And just so the counselor won't be overwhelmed with free time on her hands, there are those periodic surveys and reports on everything from the condition of house equipment, such as ironing boards and mops, to the number of keys lost by students.

As might well be imagined, a counselor's work can pretty well put a crimp in her social life. Somehow or other, however, most of the counselors do have time for dates, even if not very much time. One vivacious house director, newly engaged, contents herself with a brief glimpse of her fiance after her 10 o'clock class on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, a five-minute phone call every night and dates on the weekend nights when the assistant counselor is on duty.

But no matter what the sacrifice, in time, effort and social life, the counselors apparently love every minute of it. From one end of Cate Center to the other, every counselor would detail her woes, glance despairingly at her books, then launch into a glowing account of how wonderful it is to be a counselor.

PHARMACISTS TAKE FIVE

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caution. About 20 colleges have already put the lengthened curriculum into effect.

Oklahoma's plan will be established on the basis of one year of pre-pharmacy courses and four years of professional courses, fitting neatly into O.U.'s University College set-up, where every freshman spends his first year or more taking general liberal arts courses.

However, a program with two years of general courses and three years professional study will also be possible at O.U. This system facilitates the transfer of students from junior colleges and other schools.

Dean Clark is quick to point out the merit in both approaches to the five-year plan. "Personal contact with many state college officials emphasizes that a curriculum consisting of two years of pre-pharmacy plus three years of professional training is desirable. It has been planned to appeal to students who may transfer to the O.U. College of Pharmacy.

"Recent experience indicates general approval of the two-and-three program by Oklahoma college officials and advisers. Because of the internal operation of O.U., students here may qualify to enter the College of Pharmacy for four years after one year in the University College."

Dean Clark believes the new system has advantages to the University as well as to the students themselves. "The improved five-year program makes for greater flexibility in the use of facilities, faculty and the scheduling of classes," he explains.

Enrolment in the College of Pharmacy has increased almost 70 per cent in the last five years—from 84 in 1955-56 to 142 students this year.

The new curriculum at O.U. will add 24 credits for a 160 total for the 10 semesters, bringing the semester load down to 16 class hours a week plus laboratory time as compared to 17 plus under the old system.

Most of the changes within the College of Pharmacy will consist of rearranging courses and the addition of physical and emergency pharmacy. Basic courses in speech and either accounting or economics have been added for the pharmacist's better understanding of the business world.

The main purpose of the five-year pharmacy curriculum is to better prepare the pharmacist for the world in which he lives. By being exposed to a more liberalized general curriculum, he will be better equipped to accept his place in community; and by mastering more comprehensive professional courses, he will be better qualified to pursue his specialty as an expert on drugs.