

WHAT O.U. NEEDS

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA needs money from its alumni. Most alumni are aware of this need, and so there is no reason to be subtle or coy about expressing it. The past year's gifts from alumni reached a record total, and no doubt the rate of increase will continue to accelerate as alumni become more conscious of important projects they are supporting.

But money is not the most important thing the University needs from its alumni.

The University of Oklahoma needs active support, in the form of actual work, from its alumni. This may mean helping with drives; it may mean talking to people who can be helpful because of their positions and influence; it may mean drawing the attention of local high-school graduates to what the University has to offer them; it may mean arranging an invitation to a member of the University faculty to come into the community and talk.

But even this devotion of time and energy to working for the University is not the basic thing that the University needs from its alumni.

The most important thing and the basic thing that the University needs is understanding—an informed understanding of what the University is and what it is trying to do.

The University of Oklahoma is not simple in either its purposes or its composition. It is too complex to lend itself to simplification. It is too big, serves too many people, to make itself readily understood through a few clichés and easy slogans. And so it needs all the help it can get from its alumni in making itself understood and in presenting its real image, accurate and undistorted, to all people.

Any number of illustrations of this need are always ready to hand.

Take the argument over compulsory ROTC. Like most important questions this one has at least two worthy sides. It involves economy of public money and of manpower. It is not a question of whether young Americans should have military training as a part of their education; it is a question of how they may best be given it. It is a national question, and one which is apparently as difficult for the Department of Defense as for a university to solve.

Yet letters to President Cross indicate that there are many well-meaning but inadequately informed people who think that somebody or some group at

the University must be either unintelligent or unpatriotic for permitting students to discuss this question and take sides on it. Alumni can render invaluable service by informing themselves on such a subject and helping the University to explain its position.

Or take the problem of deciding who will be able to attend the University in coming years. Population predictions, when they are set alongside projections of our present financial support, indicate that the University's capacity is beginning to fall behind the demands made upon it. Was there a scientist—presumably he was an Irishman—who demonstrated that the only way to get six quarts into a gallon jug was to get another jug? But, as long as it lacks that extra jug, the University must seek other solutions.

So, as we face the prospect of being unable to accommodate all the students that wish to come to us, we begin to talk about the complicated problem of how to make sure that the student most likely to succeed is not crowded away from the door by the student least likely to succeed.

This is not a problem of the University's making, but the University would be derelict if it did not try to keep the public informed of it. Yet people with inadequate information or people of invidious intent seem to be twisting the University's announcements of its plans into rumors that the University is indifferent toward new students.

Well informed and understanding alumni can do much to explain the University's position on this question to people who need to know it.

Those of us who work at the University believe that the alumnus who understands his University and tries to keep informed will have strong confidence in the University and what it is trying to do and will support it with his money and his time. The need for informed and understanding alumni implies, of course, an obligation on the part of the University to supply the alumni with frank, honest, and interesting information upon all the important issues that are constantly forming themselves in the modern fast-paced academic world.

—DR. PETE KYLE McCARTER
Vice President
University of Oklahoma