

# NCA View of O.U.



A REVIEW TEAM FROM THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES  
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS VISITED THE CAMPUS LAST FEBRUARY  
FOR A PERIODIC INSPECTION OF THE JOB BEING DONE AT OKLAHOMA.

THIS IS THE REPORT.

THIS IS O.U. FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN.

**PURPOSES OF THE UNIVERSITY**

As a multi-purpose state institution, the University of Oklahoma holds itself responsible (a) for high-quality collegiate instruction, undergraduate and graduate, in the arts and sciences and in their professional applications; (b) for scholarly study and research in those branches of knowledge in which it offers instruction; (c) for adult services to the adult population of the state and region; and (d) for such informational and consultative services to the people of the state, and to the many types of homogeneous segments of the people as may be consistent with its role as a public institution of higher learning.

These purposes and objectives are clearly and concisely stated, but they appear to be slightly inadequate in one area, namely the area of international understanding. . . .

The work being done in the Institute of Asian affairs, in the department of history and in the "Books Abroad" program is highly commendable, but is it adequate for the major university in the great State of Oklahoma which has such a heavy responsibility in the state for superior work in the humanities and social science fields? This situation exists not only at the University of Oklahoma, but in most of the universities of our midwestern area. . . .

**INTERNAL OPERATION**

The University is organized in an unusually democratic fashion for the carrying out of these purposes. The internal operation of the University under the President functions through a Senate of 43 members elected from the various schools and faculties, the Budget Council, the Council on Instruction and the Council on Planning and Development, plus certain administrative committees appointed by the President.

The relationship between the Senate, the Councils and the administrative committees has become increasingly complex. This development has come as a result of the attempt to maximize the participation of the faculty in the many and varied activities of this multi-purpose university. . . .

This high degree of faculty participation in the policies and administration of the University has produced excellent morale in the institution. . . .

**THE LIBRARY**

The review team was very much impressed with the superior library facilities of the University and the evidence that these facilities were being used.

The presence in the new library section of small and informal reading areas, typing rooms, seminars and conference rooms distributed throughout the open stacks, has obviously been successful in enticing students and faculty to make use of the excellent facilities for study and research now available. Policies of operation appear to be unusually progressive. Approximately half of the library expenditures of \$518,000 annually was for books, periodicals and binding.

Noteworthy also in this area are the special collections which have been secured in recent years. The Bass Business History Collection, the DeGolyer Collection in the History of Science and Technology (including first editions) and the Phillips Collection in Southwestern and Indian History are worthy of special mention. . . .

**THE FACULTY**

Although the examiners spent only a limited amount of time with the teaching staff, they received a highly favorable impression of the faculty both by reason of the representatives of that body and of the reports concerning it. As a whole, the teaching staff is well trained and competent. Approximately 70 per cent of the full professors, 50 per cent of the associate professors, and 48 per cent of the assistant professors hold doctor's degrees. These figures are satisfactory enough when one considers that included in the group are a sizable number of representatives of disciplines which do not call for the doctorate as terminal training.

Skill and success in teaching are stressed throughout the University — even above performance in research. A considerable number of scholars are present, however, thus making possible an ambitious program of research. . . .

The academic environment in which the faculty lives and does its work makes for high morale and for a decided loyalty to the institution. True, teaching loads are heavy, but teachers whose investigational work is

important or whose other services outside the classroom are important have their teaching assignments reduced in proportion to the merits of their situations.

Regulations governing tenure, leaves of absence, and sabbatical leaves are commendable although retirement benefits are below those in force at many state universities. Faculty members who have made a "distinguished contribution to knowledge" are eligible for advancement to one of the special professorships—which carry with them exceptional opportunities for continued scholarly investigation. Especially important is the high degree of academic freedom allowed all members of the staff and the extent to which faculty members may participate in the management of the University.

The median salary for professors during the current academic year is \$8,725—for associate professors \$7,008, for assistant professors \$6,060, and for instructors \$4,512. The salary scale thus suggested is not particularly strong at the present time, but the administration is vigorously and continuously attempting to increase the rate of remuneration. . . .

**CURRICULUM**

*General Education*

In a state university, with its differing curricular divisions, a satisfactory plan of general education is difficult of attainment. The effort to provide and maintain a program of general studies for all students, however, is one of the best measures of a healthy institution.

The University of Oklahoma seems to the examiners to stand somewhere between those institutions which have allowed too great a degree of autonomy to the professional divisions and those maintaining firm general control over curricular developments. On the whole, general education fares well at Oklahoma, although there is room for improvement. . . .

The **College of Arts and Sciences**—the stronghold of general studies on any campus—provides in its central curriculum a strong pattern of unified work. The re-

Continued



# NCA View of O.U. Continued

quirements for the A.B. degree are not, to be sure, striking or original, but they are sound. The new A.B. requirements which go into effect in the summer of 1960 represent an effort to strengthen the program for the degree.

The **College of Law** and the **School of Medicine** may be dismissed with only a few words. In both divisions, the entering student must ordinarily have completed undergraduate work showing a satisfactory program in general education. Also satisfactory in this respect is the **College of Education**.

Only a bare minimum of general studies, however, is prescribed in the **College of Business Administration**, the **College of Engineering**, and the **College of Pharmacy**. Fortunately their situation is partly "saved" (so to speak) as the result of a legal requirement for graduation of courses in American history and government, although they do not have a sufficiency of work in the humanities. In the **College of Fine Arts**, there is no requirement of credits in the sciences and mathematics.

The **School of Nursing** requires for its baccalaureate degree two years of *bona fide* collegiate work followed by two additional years of hospital courses and practical training and experience. This type of curriculum has come to be common over the country, but, from a strictly academic point of view, the awarding of a baccalaureate degree on

the basis of freshman-sophomore credits and very little beyond is open to question.

The examiners feel that the University would do well to study on an institutional-wise basis the whole matter of general education.

## *Professional Education*

That professional training at the University is strong is clearly indicated by the number of programs which have been approved by national accrediting agencies.

## *Graduate Work*

Graduate work at the University of Oklahoma is held in high esteem, as is suggested by the care shown in the selection of a graduate dean and the extent of his involvement in general University affairs. The policies of the Graduate College have been carefully formulated and their execution consistently carried out. . . .

Funds available to subsidize graduate students are sizable, although little or no assistance can be counted on in some areas of study. The principal forms of graduate student support are the teaching assistantship, the research assistantship and fellowships coming from outside sources—chiefly from foundations, agencies of the United States government and industrial firms. Over 200 instructional and research assistantships maintained by the University and about 65 provided through outside agencies are filled this year. Although an accurate

estimate of the funds involved cannot be made from the information requested by the examiners, it would appear that the total would approximate \$500,000 annually.

Unfortunately, except for some tuition awards, the Graduate College has no scholarships or fellowships which it can grant outright, without restriction on the field of study selected. In this one respect the division is unfortunate.

## **RESEARCH**

Research activities at the University have greatly increased since the Second World War, and the outlook for a still further increase is bright. As indicated elsewhere, a sizable group of active scholars among the faculty is at hand, and also available—or to be made available when needed—are sufficient physical facilities and scientific equipment.

The University maintains a Bureau of Business Research, a Bureau of Government Research, a State Biological Survey; in addition the Oklahoma Geological Survey operates from the campus of the institution. . . .

In addition, however, the University supports basic research, both directly and indirectly, on the part of its staff. Fortunately the modest sum of \$15,000 in the budget for direct allocation to faculty members represents only a part of the institutional support available. Support comes also from maintenance funds in departmental budgets, from scientific equipment in the departments, and from the library, of course. The University of Oklahoma Press—one of the outstanding university presses in the country—also offers an indirect sort of assistance through its policy of subsidizing scholarly books. This assistance, however, is not confined by any means to local scholars.

For the chief support and control of research activities, the institution relies heavily on its Research Institute, an organization charged with the task of promoting investigational projects and negotiating contracts with outside agencies. It not only helps individual faculty investigators but procures and supports, as the need arises, a staff of its own. . . . The executive director of the Institute reports that at the present time contracts with supporting funds amounting to \$2,000,000 are in force.

Nothing else shows such initiative in dealing with the problems of research as the establishment recently on a 400-acre tract of land northwest of the main campus of what has been named "The University of Oklahoma Industrial Park." The pur-

## *The Financial View*

The State Regents combine, revise and consolidate the requests of the individual colleges and universities into one budget and submit the same to the State Legislature. The Legislature makes a biennial appropriation to the State Regents who distribute these funds to the state colleges and universities . . . in accordance with a formula devised by the State Regents. . . .

While it is difficult to form an adequate judgment upon this formula method, . . . observations appear to be pertinent. First, the instructional budget seems to be determined primarily by the number of full-time students rather than by the function of the institutions. Those institutions which have a high percentage of graduate study would appear to be penalized since such study is much more expensive than undergraduate. In the second place, rapidly growing insti-

tutions would be at a disadvantage since allotments are at least one year behind such increases. . . .

It was not possible for the review committee to determine whether the use of the present formula had handicapped the University of Oklahoma in the establishment of an adequate salary scale for the staffing of such a major university. The fact is evident that the salary scale is not adequate to enable the University to compete effectively for superior faculty members especially in the highly competitive days ahead. We believe the State Regents will want to study this problem to insure that the two universities of this important state shall not suffer a decline in service and prestige in the critical period immediately before all higher educational institutions, wherein the challenge to produce educational leaders will be ever more insistent. . . .

pose of the Park, the University announces, "is to offer fully developed sites where responsible companies may locate permanent research and development centers. Companies design and erect their own buildings and other facilities according to the plan approved by the University." The Park is already provided with utility installations, sewer, paved roads, and a water supply; and the prospects for the use of the area as envisioned appear to be favorable.

As a start, the University has already installed on the grounds its Numerical Analysis Laboratory, with an IBM 650 computer, and already under construction is a larger installation, an extra high-speed digital computer, to be in operation by the end of the current year.

### STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Generally speaking, those responsible for student activities could be said to be conducting a solid program of activities devoid of special "gimmicks" — one which contributes to, rather than detracts from, the academic enterprise. One can detect a major concern that student energies be allowed a satisfactory outlet through channels which can be acceptable to the University administration and faculty. It is made perfectly clear that actions of students organized into committees and governing bodies are advisory only. On the other hand, observations tend to the conclusion that there has been a satisfactory degree of acceptance of student advice. . . .

A development which seems somewhat unique is a current competitive race to build bigger and better sorority houses. Rapidly dotting the landscape, the new houses reflect an urge to excel in the production of unusual architectural design and the capacity for occupancy. Many of the new houses will accommodate in excess of 100 members. Alumnae and insurance companies appear to be at the source of the amortization plans. University officials view with some concern the problem of enforcing University policies on housing in this area.

### STATE SERVICES

Services to the state was recognized by the review team at the outset to be one of the major areas of strength of the University of Oklahoma. Recognizing the inadequacy of time available to do justice to the many outstanding achievements and programs of the University, the team rather arbitrarily elected to look in some detail into the services of the Extension Division. Particular attention was paid to the somewhat spectacular developments now underway in the field of continuing education.

The team was especially impressed with two characteristics of the work of the Extension Division: (a) the dynamic quality of its leadership, and (b) the extent to which genuine faculty interest is expressed in its programs. Considering the apathy of faculties which is all too general toward extension work, the latter characteristic stands out as a major achievement. . . .

Having received a \$1.6 million grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the University, adding matching funds, now has under construction a Center for Continuing Education. It will house a continuing education program already serving approximately 50,000 persons annually. Those in charge of the development of the Center are quick to point out that this will be no hotel-type residence center. Architectural design has produced a decentralized unit which it is hoped will be conducive to study, thought, reflection, and discussion.

Extremely unique programs in continuing education are now in the developmental stage. One of them is so unique as to merit rather detailed reference here. It is proposed to construct a general education program for adults which will lead to a non-credit baccalaureate degree. The degree will be known as Bachelor of Liberal Studies. Final decisions have not been made, but the general principles upon which the program will be based seem to be fairly clearly emergent. . . .

1. General education (liberal studies) is probably better appreciated by the adult (over 25) than the normal college student.
2. Business, industry and military establishments now recognize more than formerly the need for liberally educated individuals.
3. A different methodological approach is needed with the adult than with the normal college student.
4. The BLS degree is regarded as a distinctive certificate of achievement, but not as the basis for graduate work.
5. The degree program will be constructed on the basis of the following principles:
  - a. The curriculum will consist of the areas of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The student will study in all three, with a major in one.
  - b. The bulk of formal instruction will be constructed on an inter-disciplinary basis, using regular University faculty for the most part.
  - c. Admission will be based on aptitude and achievement tests. Each further step in the program will be

based on achievement and invitation from the faculty.

(1) Independent study, interlaced with educational television, correspondence, advisement, and discussion groups.

(2) Three and four-week intensive residential seminars at the Continuing Education Center. Current plans call for two of these at an interval of not less than one year.

(3) Comprehensive oral and written examinations at appropriate stages of the student's program.

e. The BLS degree will be awarded those qualified after a minimum of three years study.

f. Though considerable attrition is expected, the program will be so designed that each stage will of itself be a valuable educational experience for the student. . . .

### A SUMMARY VIEW

In the opinion of the examiners, the University of Oklahoma is performing its functions as a state university with conspicuous success. It is not perfect, of course, as is no human institution, but its elements of strength far outweigh the few weaknesses which were found.

The University suffers from the unfortunate method used in dividing the tax dollar among the state institutions of higher education. It is somewhat handicapped also, as the result of the recurrent uncertainty over available money ahead and the custom of having to depend on deficiency appropriations. Several of its professional divisions are in need of strengthening their programs of general education. The Graduate College should have general scholarships of its own to allocate in addition to the tuition awards.

On the other hand, the University has an enlightened and efficient administration and a capable faculty. That faculty enjoys the right to share in the making of decisions concerning institutional affairs outside of curricular matters proper, with the result that an admirable esprit de corps has developed on the campus. The institution maintains a vigorous program of research. Its services to the state—in maintaining research bureaus and, in particular, in its program of continuing education—are noteworthy. Its press is one of the most distinguished in the country. The examiners feel justified in stating that the institutional planning for the future on all fronts seems not only sound but also to display a great deal of imagination.