

Sooner Scene

WHERE can we find the money to provide the essential services of government? This is the one big overriding problem facing the 28th Oklahoma Legislature as it goes to work at the State Capitol this month. Budget requests for appropriations submitted to the state budget department call for \$110 million in new money. The four services needing the greatest increases are higher education, common schools, mental health and highways.

The current appropriation for higher education is \$50 million for the biennium. Legislative leaders of the last session agreed that an additional \$4 million in supplemental appropriations would be needed to finish the current school year. Consequently, the colleges and universities of the state system budgeted their funds accordingly and will need the supplemental money in order to complete the year. Requests for the next two years have been set at \$76 million, representing an increase of \$13 million for each year of the biennium or a total of \$26 million.

This sounds like a lot of money, and it is. However, the full amount of the increase, if appropriated, would place the colleges in a position to barely maintain their relative salary positions in comparison with other colleges of the region. In spite of the fact that practically all of the University of Oklahoma's increase provided by the last session of the legislature went for salaries, our position by comparison with other schools is not encouraging. Here are some interesting facts about the way the University of Oklahoma compares with universities of Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio State and Wisconsin. Dud Giezentanner, business manager for O.U., has made an analysis of data furnished by these universities and some of his findings led to these conclusions.

Although the increase in appropriations provided by the last session of the legislature improved the salary structure of the University of Oklahoma, salaries remain at the bottom of the list when our salaries are compared with those provided by the universities with which we must compete for faculty. At the professor's level, we are \$938 below the institution which pays the next lowest annual average salary and \$3,959 below the midwestern university which pays the highest annual average salary for nine months service. At the associate professor's level, we are \$561 below the next lowest average annual salary and \$1,596 below the highest paid. Other ranks are proportionately as low.

The problem facing the University of Oklahoma is not just one of catching up with the salary schedules presently available at other universities in the region, it is complicated even more by the fact that other increases are expected at competing institutions in the region. Information received from conference schools in recent weeks indicate that the University of Colorado expects to raise their annual salary structure 23.1%, plus a program to establish 15 distinguished professorships at even higher figures. Iowa State University expects

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to advance their salaries 21.3%; University of Kansas and Kansas State will raise salaries 5% next year. The University of Missouri expects a 12% increase, and the University of Nebraska anticipates raising the salary schedule there 13.5%.

A recent study made by the president of Bowling Green State University provides information on the state tax appropriation for full-time equivalent students. The range is from a high of \$1,825 per full-time equivalent to a low of \$322 with 80 universities reporting data. The University of Oklahoma, with a state appropriation of \$595 per full-time equivalent, ranks 72 in a list of 80 schools.

The current budget for the University of Oklahoma is \$9,153,730. Of this amount \$2¼ million comes from student fees and services, and activities; \$481,642 comes from prior year surplus. From state appropriations, \$5.92 million is anticipated. However, \$877,859 of this appropriated sum is from the anticipated \$4 million supplemental money.

In order to meet the budgeted obligations for construction, research, libraries and other regular operating items, it will be necessary for the supplemental funds to be made available during the current fiscal year. Last summer, by an overwhelming majority, the people of Oklahoma voted to provide funds for a college building program that would take care of the coming increases in enrolment during the decade of the 1960s.

The 28th session of the legislature is expected to activate this program. In order to adequately prepare for the future and to be ready on the O.U. campus for more than 15,000 students by 1970, it is highly important that the building program be started immediately.

Contrary to what some people seem to think, the legislature cannot carry the burden of this, and other state problems, alone. The people of Oklahoma will ultimately make the important decisions and therefore set the course for further development or regression which Oklahoma will follow. These responsibilities will fall on the shoulders of the community leaders throughout the state.

There has never been a time when the Oklahoma legislature included so many well-trained and dedicated people. They are willing to write a good program that is economically sound and that will lead to wholesome growth of this state; however, in order to do so, you must lend your support and let them know of your feelings on constructive matters of legislation.

—R. BOYD GUNNING