

Sooner Scene

SUMMER IS THE TAKE-STOCK SEASON AND A TIME TO THINK BIG ABOUT THE FUTURE OF O.U.

THE summer months are a good time to take inventory and those in the school business do this in the summer time, the same as do those engaged in commercial business. Here are a few random thoughts collected from various sections of the campus about the future of the University of Oklahoma:

"It is clear that the advancing technology of the western world, indeed all of the world, has outrun the supply of educated minds trained to their maximum potentialities." So states Dr. Arthur Doerr, dean of the Graduate College. "Perhaps the most critical shortage of human resources is for people trained at the doctoral level. Everyone will agree that a doctor's degree is not a perfect measure of ability, accomplishment, or creativity, but it serves presently as the best single yardstick for present developments and future progress."

In 1961 approximately 10,000 doctoral degrees were awarded in the United States, and of this number the states of the Southwest produced less than 600, and of these 60 were graduated at the University of Oklahoma.

According to Dean Doerr, "As a rule of thumb, approximately 15 PhDs in an area mean one new industry to the region. In short, there is every reason to expect that the University of Oklahoma, if it can supply larger numbers of PhDs can be very important in improving the financial and industrial climate of the region. It is important to recognize too, that research training acquired in pursuit of the PhD degree leads to expanding horizons, new knowledge, advanced technology, aesthetic appreciation and a general advancement of the welfare of man."

Continuing, he states, "In order for the University of Oklahoma to begin to fulfill its fair share of the total educational destiny, we should be producing 200 or more doctoral degrees per year by 1972. Quite obviously, this will result in an effort more than trebling our present output, and one can assume a nonconcomitant rise in educational costs.

"The implications of the population of the United States and the world require the consummate attention of great minds which have had the benefit of an extraordinarily good education. The political complexities of the world demand the attention of scholars to prevent nuclear de-

struction. The problems of society demand the attention of the humanist to prevent the erosion of the human spirit. In short, we are living in a world which is so vastly different from the world of 50 years ago, or even 20 years ago, that only the best minds available, educated to the maximum of their potential, can cope with the fantastic complexity of the problems which currently face us, and which will be incredibly more difficult 10 years hence. Without the understanding attendant to an inquiring mind trained in the techniques and methods of research and presentation, this region is in danger of falling further behind other areas of the country, and if we do not do our full share for the country at large, our country is in danger of falling behind others which recognize the vital significance of education at all levels."

Dr. Glenn C. Couch, dean of the University College is a man of ideas. Here are some of his thoughts about the improvement of teaching and student life on the campus:

"For the purpose of stimulating undergraduate interest and for the purpose of publicizing the University's interest in such matters, we could use a program of visits by distinguished people to the campus," Dean Couch says. "The kind of person invited would vary, except that in most cases he would be someone quite well known. The length of the visit would also vary depending upon the person and the field he represents and a number of other matters. The program ought to be administered by the University College so that it would be less likely limited in interest to individual colleges. The quality of such a program would vary with the money available, but certainly it seems at least \$20,000 per year would be required.

"The teaching awards, given several years ago, are, in spite of some criticism, an effective way of supplementing teacher's salaries and of concentrating attention on classroom relations if not techniques. It seems to us, to reconstitute these, no less than \$5,000 per year would be required for these awards, however, they would be far more effective if a greater amount could be attained.

"A great deal of creative interest, both undergraduate as well as alumni, could be stimulated in a well-financed, undergraduate quarterly magazine.

"We need a dormitory for physically handicapped students. This should be close to the center of the campus, and I would suggest building a new infirmary and converting the present infirmary building to a dormitory for these students. A new infirmary is needed anyway, but I have long felt that we must expand our facilities for allowing handicapped students to go to school here under the most favorable conditions possible. Their performance is well above that of the average student.

"New ideas in teaching are just as important as new ideas in any other area. The University would benefit from a program financed over a period of years which would allow selected faculty members to visit other universities. The purpose of the visits would be to enable our faculty members to observe first hand educational experiments being worked out at other schools. First hand observation of experimental programs would save the University of Oklahoma both in terms of time and money and it might result in ideas that would lead to better teaching and an improvement in techniques of handling large numbers of students."

These are brief excerpts from 34 statements about the University's needs that were prepared recently by various departments. They serve to point up the urgency of the University Plan for Excellence which is a program very much on the minds of the people on the campus. —RBG

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