

# Sooner Scene

## FINANCING A COLLEGE EDUCATION IS A MAJOR PROBLEM DEMANDING A QUICK SOLUTION

**T**HREE thousand freshmen began their college careers this week at the University of Oklahoma. They are confident, optimistic about the future, and perhaps the most sophisticated freshmen of any generation. These new students come from every county of Oklahoma, nearly every state is represented and more than forty foreign countries.

The setting, the environment and the new associations are exciting to an 18-year-old youngster who probably never spent more than a few days away from home before he came to college. Now, he has the opportunity to try new ideas, make his own decisions, choose his own friends, all a part of becoming educated and mature.

The new student faces many problems most of which will be either academic, social or financial. He will find teachers and counselors at the University who are understanding and ready to help him solve his problems. In a sense, this is about all that any University can do for a student, the rest he must dig out for himself.

Financing an education is a major problem for at least 20% of the students. The University has made substantial improvements in what it is prepared to do for such students. There is an office of financial aids for students, with a professionally trained counselor, Ronald Green, in charge as director. The program represented by this office has a dual purpose. First, it identifies, with the help of a faculty committee, the best-qualified and most deserving students who must have financial assistance in order to secure a college education. Students in this category will receive help either in the form of a scholarship, a loan, or a part-time job. The difficulty in meeting this objective is that four times as much money is needed for scholarships as is presently available.

Here is the situation as it exists the first week of school: 1,250 applications for scholarships were received last spring, most of these coming from high school seniors in Oklahoma. Usually, only good students apply for scholarships, and it is reasonable to say that from 75 to 80 per cent of the students applying for scholarships this year meet university standards and present convincing cases for assistance. Of the 1,250 students applying, 300 received scholarships totaling \$95,000. An additional 1,800 students will be given loans of \$700,000. The University has a number of loan funds, the two largest are the Lew Wentz Foun-

ation and the National Defense Student Loan Program.

The second function of the director of financial aids is to counsel with students about planning their budgets. Proper financial planning is sometimes the solution to a student's problems rather than a scholarship or a loan.

The best way to form an opinion as to whether or not the financial aid program is needed and justified is to know the students. Here are a few examples.

Recently a farm boy walked into the office looking for "work," as he put it. He was graduated this spring from a small high school in the Oklahoma panhandle. As he expressed his purpose, he "came down here to see if he could study mathematics and art." An investigation of his scores in a national testing program indicates that he ranks in the upper 1 per cent nationally. This is especially significant since he comes from a high school with only a few teachers and a very limited curriculum. When asked how he was able to score so well on tests, he said he guessed it was because his family had never been able to afford a television set. Needless to say, this boy found work at O.U. and a scholarship.

Another job-scholarship situation was worked out for Mohammad Javad Zoroofchi of Tehran, Iran. Here is an advanced student in electrical engineering who has an excellent background of both training and experience in his field, and in one year of college work, despite language limitations, has earned 32 hours of credit with a grade average of "A". There is no doubt, he will be one of the best-trained engineers in Iran when he returns to his native land. He has been given an opportunity to work toward the most important goal in the world to him, a college education. Is it too

much to predict that the United States will have a friend in this man?

A couple of years ago the University scholarship committee received a letter from a high school senior in Monterrey, Mexico. This boy was a United States citizen but lived in Monterrey where his father was a teacher of mathematics in the local high school. His father had been an engineer, but an accident during World War II had caused the loss of his sight, and to find employment he eventually moved to Mexico and became a teacher.

This student was the oldest of six children and was interested in attending an American university to become an engineer. He had an outstanding high school record, having participated in a wide variety of activities, including athletics, and still graduated at the top of his class. It so happened, that his scores on University tests were equally as impressive and he was awarded a scholarship. He has been an outstanding student on the O.U. campus.

Another student, whose education was made possible by scholarship assistance, is a boy from a rural community in western Oklahoma whose mother died when he was two years old. He fed and clothed himself by working at odd jobs, living any place he could find to live. In high school he was taken in by the president of the school board, given a home and encouragement to try for a college education. He graduated from high school as valedictorian of his class and captain of the basketball and baseball teams.

He has received several scholarships and has worked part-time throughout his college career. It would be hard to find a student who works harder or who can match his determination to secure a college education against all odds.

There are many heart-warming stories about the students who succeed in spite of financial difficulties and hardships. Well-prepared highly motivated students deserve a chance at a college education and it is the business of the University to do everything possible to see that they get it. —RBG

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*Association Membership:* Any former student who completed satisfactorily one or more semesters at the University of Oklahoma is eligible for membership. Annual membership is \$5.00. Life Membership is \$80.00, payable \$5.00 down and \$5.00 quarterly.