



# Lights On for Study

the students have had a hand in developing  
a workable study hall for freshmen men

By CONNIE RUGGLES

**T**HE cost of electricity for men's dormitories at the University of Oklahoma is going to rise sharply this year—and if all goes according to expectations, the grade average for freshmen men will do likewise. The reason is simple: the new Sooners are in study hall—and the plan few people thought would work is working. O.U.'s freshmen women have been under strict study hall and closing hour regulations for years. But as in most large coeducational universities, the men have been pretty much on their own with no study requirements and no closing hours. As a consequence the men students have regarded their dormitories largely as places to sleep, and the darkened windows of Cross and Wilson Centers have been mute testimony to the few hours they spent in their rooms. During those few hours the noise in the dormitories was so deafening that those who wished to study (continued)

## the study system is easing problems of dormitory discipline and unity

found it almost impossible. The grade average for freshmen men was usually pretty disappointing—to the men, to their parents and to the University.

The office of student affairs had made several false starts in instituting a study program for men. But if new student regulations are to be enforceable, either the students must be convinced or they must be left no room for argument. None of the trial plans succeeded in either regard.

Finally last spring, after the composite grade average for 1961-62 fell below the figures for the two previous years, the impetus for action came from the students themselves in the person of Interfraternity Council President Haskell T. Waddle. He found a ready ally in Dr. Jodie C. Smith, then associate dean of students and now director of housing.

Where Waddle's immediate interest was raising pledge class grades to enable the fraternities to initiate more men, Dr. Smith was concerned with the broader problem of giving the freshmen men a better chance to adjust to college life and to succeed academically. With the support of Dean of Students Dr. Clifford J. Craven and the cooperation of the Independent Student Association and the resident counselors, Dr. Smith and Waddle were able to work out an effective, workable program that both students and administrators could buy.

**T**HEIR solution is actually a watered down version of the rules governing the women students. Between 9:15 and 11:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, every freshman man in Cross and Wilson Centers must be in his room observing strict quiet hours. Recognizing that placing a book in a man's hand will not make him read, the rules do not require that the student be studying. He may read a novel, write letters or go to bed if he wishes so long as he remains quietly in his room. Telephone service to the rooms is suspended during study hours except for long distance and emergency calls.

The rules are enforced by the head resident counselor and by a study counselor who also lives in the dorm and is authorized to give checks which can lead to a campus (restriction to the dormitory room on a weekend night) to rule violators.

The most surprising part of the study hall program has been its ready acceptance by the freshmen men themselves.

"We knew that parents would be in favor of a study hall," Dean Craven says, "but we anticipated strong opposition from the freshmen."

The opposition never materialized. While few 17 or 18-year-olds relish the idea of giving up even two hours of their free time, nearly all of them will admit that the study hall is a good idea; some will go so far as to confess that they probably wouldn't study at all without it.

**T**HE difference in the atmosphere of the dormitories is startling to many upperclassmen who remember the completely adverse study conditions that have existed in past years. There are, however, exceptions to the success of the study hall program; the system works better in some dorms than in others. The degree of success seems to depend on the ability of the individual study counselors to keep order.

There was some trouble at first from upperclassmen who persisted in annoying the freshmen living in their dormitories. But this has largely been brought under control, and many of the upperclassmen now take advantage of the study hall in their dormitories although they are under no room restrictions themselves.

E. H. Miles, assistant director of men's affairs, who is chiefly responsible for supervision of the study program, will admit that he was frankly skeptical of the feasibility of controlling the study hall when it was first proposed. He is now one of the program's strongest supporters and credits the plan with easing the problems of dorm discipline and unity.

The men are beginning to think of their dormitories as living centers while once they went someplace else to study and some place else for entertainment. Participation in house intramural sports has increased greatly, for instance.

It is too early to say for certain that freshmen grades will be higher this year, but the considerable drop in the number of unsatisfactory grades (D or F) reported for freshmen dormitory residents at midterm indicates success on this level as well.

Study hall is in session every school night, but the men may be excused to attend all-campus cultural, education and sports events on the theory that such activities are an integral part of a college education.

Most of the objections which doomed earlier study program attempts have been overcome in the new program. In years past, for instance, organized group study halls have been held in the Cross Center cafeteria from 7:30 to 10 p.m. for men students with more than one unsatisfactory grade at the midterm. The drawbacks to this system are obvious. The group was large and difficult to handle. There was none of the comfort and convenience a student finds in his own room. Many students living in Wilson Center or clear across campus in Whitehand Hall were forced to waste considerable time just getting to and from study hall. Taking attendance and maintaining discipline was an unnecessarily heavy burden for resident counselors. Most important of all, the men students strongly opposed the system.

Some counselors have conducted study hall in their individual houses, but outside disturbances from other students and the lack of close control made the plan ineffective. Second semester of last year two counselors conducted a compulsory study hall in the Irving House lounge, offering either afternoon or evening study hours, and the attempt was fairly well received. However it was adaptable only to the lounge areas in Wilson Center and greatly increased the work load of the resident counselors.

**W**HILE promoting the new system, University officials have been careful not to give freshmen the impression that two hours a night is all the study required for college courses. The goal of the study hall rather is to install good study habits in the freshmen, to firm up the vague study patterns they brought from high school before they find themselves far behind and bogged down in low grades.

There is a certain amount of merit in the theory that by the time a young man reaches college he should be able to manage his own time and efforts—and if he can't accept this responsibility he shouldn't be in college in the first place. But this is only theory. In practice students often need an extra boost to clear the freshman hurdle. Too many potentially successful young college men have been lost during the first semester because such help has not been offered. If the new study hall plan saves just one of these students from failure, it is worth all the time, money and effort which the University has invested in it.