

Sooner Scene

FOUR NEW PROFESSORIAL CHAIRS ARE CREATED THROUGH THE PLAN FOR EXCELLENCE

THE measure of quality at a University must begin with the faculty itself. A devoted faculty given proper tools and equipment and adequately supported is basically all it takes to have a great university. Bright students exposed to this environment are sure to excel.

The University of Oklahoma down through the years has been blessed with teachers of inspiring qualities, at least in scattered areas, and nearly every graduate I have ever talked with thinks automatically of four or five such teachers who influenced his entire life and career. Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more difficult for the University to recruit and hold such teachers.

With the great increase in the number of students seeking a college education, with the high salary scales at many prestige institutions, and with the ever growing shortage of college calibre teachers, this problem becomes critical. The University of Oklahoma is doing something about it through the Plan for Excellence.

For a number of years, the University has had a program of distinguished professorships designed to recognize outstanding excellence among the senior professors in various areas. For example, the David Ross Boyd professors are selected for having demonstrated over a period of years vigorous performance and leadership in the teaching, counseling and guidance of students. Research professors are named for having made "distinguished contributions to knowledge" and must have demonstrated to the learned world over a period of years leadership in their fields.

The third category of distinguished professors is the Regents Professorship which is conferred by the University Regents in recognition of outstanding service to the University in activities not primarily involving teaching or research. These appointments have been in recognition of real merit, and many outstanding scholars have been so recognized on the campus. However, the program has had no special remunerative backing and the truth of the matter is you can only offer recognition and position in competition with competitive salaries up to a certain point even on a uni-

versity campus.

The area of first priority, therefore, in the University of Oklahoma Plan for Excellence is to provide faculty support. The University has been referred to as a boot camp where promising young professors are prepared for higher paying positions in other universities or in business. Those who have remained at O.U. and who are the strength of the faculty today have made a great financial sacrifice for their faith in the University's future.

Support is sought in the Plan for Excellence in four different forms. First is to provide salary supplements for distinguished professors in important academic areas. The idea here is to add private money to the maximum the State can provide, bringing the salaries to a competitive level. Each distinguished professorship with the salary supplement will be used to attract a prominent professor to the University, or to hold an outstanding professor on the present faculty.

The second category is to provide private funds for the support and encouragement of faculty research. The third method is through teaching fellowships. This form of economic assistance will strengthen present and future faculty resources by attracting the best of tomorrow's professors to the campus. And finally, there is a plan for inviting distinguished scholars from other universities and the professional world to spend a year on the campus as visiting professors. This would serve as a stimulus for both the students and faculty. It would also make these distinguished people available to other Oklahoma groups.

The first success in the area of salary supplements was announced by the Regents of the University in December. Three outstanding scholars already on the faculty were given recognition by their selection as McCasland Professors. The professors who received the new titles are Dr. Victor A. Elconin, named McCasland Professor of English; Dr. Duane H. D. Roller, McCasland Professor of the History of Science, and Dr. Chun C. Lin, McCasland Professor of Physics. These appointments are retroactive to September 1, 1963.

The T. Howard McCasland family of

Duncan endowed the newly created professorial chairs. Another major contribution by an oil company made possible an additional faculty chair.

Dr. William T. Reid, who now teaches at the State University of Iowa, Iowa City, was appointed Phillips professor of mathematics, effective September 1, 1964.

Elconin, a specialist on the modern American novel who is serving his second four-year term as chairman of the English department, has been a member of the O.U. faculty since 1947.

Considered a master teacher, Elconin is much sought after as a book reviewer, critic and reader of manuscripts as well. He is an editorial reader for the Publication of the Modern Language Association, the University of Oklahoma Press and *Books Abroad*, on whose advisory board he has served for a number of years.

Elconin received a faculty study fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies in 1951 to do systematic study and reading in modern psychology and anthropology. In 1953 he received a \$500 faculty teaching award.

Roller, who joined the university faculty in 1954, has received international recognition for his writing on the history of science.

He serves as curator of one of the university's outstanding research tools, the DeGolyer Collection in the History of Science and Technology Collection, and has been primarily responsible for the development of the 23,000-volume collection. Roller also has made substantial contributions to the University as chairman of the faculty research committee.

Lin, a member of the department of physics faculty since 1955, is one of those rare physicists who do both theoretical and experimental work.

The 33-year-old physicist is curriculum adviser to all graduate students in the department of physics, and is considered an excellent teacher at all levels of instruction.

Reid, who will join the OU faculty next fall, resigned as head of the department of mathematics at the State University of Iowa when he accepted the O.U. appointment but will continue to teach there until the end of the current school year. He is one of a half dozen mathematicians in the world who have been making consistent and important progress in the field of differential equations, a primary tool used in applied mathematics. —RBG