

Sooner Scene

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT
AN ESSENTIAL COMMODITY: EXCELLENCE

MOST of this issue is devoted to problems of financing higher education. The material is general and national but applies in Oklahoma as well as across the nation. At the University of Oklahoma, significant progress has been made in meeting some of these problems through voluntary support. This is our main hope for the future. Five million dollars of a \$20 million goal has already been received. The influence of this money is being felt in every phase of university life.

The University of Oklahoma is the best institution of higher learning which the limited public funds of the State of Oklahoma can be expected to provide. But this is not quite good enough—it is not good enough for the people of Oklahoma—it is not good enough to lead the way to economic and cultural development of the Southwest.

In fact, no great state university was ever built solely by legislative support. The University of Oklahoma seeks a meaningful partnership of public and private resources to create a superior institution which neither public nor private funds could achieve alone.

The University Plan for Excellence is aimed at bringing together the resources of alumni, friends, business and industry to form a base of voluntary support. Results to date demonstrate it can be done.

The key to greatness is cooperative effort. If you will join us in forming a partnership for Excellence, we can develop here one of the truly great universities of the nation. The effort involves every Oklahoman, every Southwesterner with faith and vision.

Our nation can boast of many good universities and a few truly great ones. Where these great institutions have existed, the entire surrounding area has known unparalleled economic, social and cultural prosperity. The

University of Oklahoma is uniquely equipped to be such an institution in the history of the Southwest.

The Southwest has the vast natural resources to feed countless business and industrial enterprises, the transportation to keep an expanding economy on the move, a central location accessible to hundreds of markets, the large, young labor force eager to be trained, a cultural awareness, extensive recreation facilities, enlightened conservation practices.

Only one element is missing, but it is a vital one: people with know-how. The new Southwest must have an abundance of highly trained, skilled, educated manpower—leaders with their roots in the Southwest who can speed the region's growth in the right direction.

This missing ingredient can be supplied only by education—the best education available. The foundation for educational excellence already exists within the University of Oklahoma. The academic programs are solidly established, the faculty is sound, the basic physical plant operates efficiently.

All that is necessary now are those vital extras which can bridge the gap between good and excellent—extras such as the addition of several distinguished scholars and researchers to the faculty, the maintenance of the finest in modern laboratories, accelerated library acquisitions and the construction of specialized facilities. With such a development program the University can become the institution of higher learning essential to the progress of Oklahoma and the Southwest.

The University has a tradition of service to the society which supports it. Since its doors first opened in 1892 the University of Oklahoma has supervised the education of men and women who have become the leading citizens of the Southwest and who have participated in national and in-

ternational affairs. Sooner graduates, in contributing to their communities, their professions and society, have influenced the lives of every citizen in this section of the country.

As the importance of education increases in the next decade and beyond, the importance of the University of Oklahoma to the Southwest will increase accordingly. It is essential to the advancement of both the state and the region that the University be the strongest, most progressive institution that men and money can create.

The Plan for Excellence is a plan for your future. It is a plan by which higher education can contribute to the economic well-being, the social improvement, the cultural advancement of every citizen of Oklahoma and the Southwest.

In briefest terms the Plan is the University of Oklahoma's long-range blueprint for transforming a good university into the superior center of learning which can propel the Southwest to its destiny of greatness.

R. BOYD GUNNING

