



Dr. Maurice Temerlin lectures to a Psychology I class. Large classes like this one are not unusual at the University which is growing greatly each year. Appropriations, however, are not growing at the same rate, and the University is facing a financial crisis. How the crisis is resolved will determine the future of higher education for the next decade.

FOR WANT OF A CENT . . .

. . . students will have to fork over more dollars for a University education but they are likely to find that a number of their professors have moved on to greener (meaning more lucrative) educational pastures

SELDOM WAS heard an encouraging word as members of the faculty listened to a state of the University report given by Dr. Horace Brown, vice president for business and finance, at their spring meeting on April 15. The financial situation at OU is somewhere between grim and desperate and even Pollyanna would be hard-pressed to discover a silver lining.

An increase of 1,000 students is expected to swell the fall enrollment to the 17,000 mark. OU must have a \$2.5 million increase in its annual budget if it is to operate on the level it should, said Dr. Brown. This increase would require an appropriation of \$9,564,006 from the legislature for the first year of the next biennium. This compares with \$7,037,871 for each year in the current biennium.

If the state legislature fails to appropriate the minimum amount needed for OU's operation, then an increase in tuition will be necessary to raise the money. A recommendation by President Cross to the Board of Regents asking for an increase in fees of from one to three dollars per credit hour is certain. The amount of the increase will depend upon what the legislature does. If the state appropriation does not increase more than \$1.4 million for each year of the biennium, fees will have to be raised three dollars per credit hour to realize the essential budget expansion. If the legislature appropriates an increase of from \$1.4 to \$1.7 million for the annual budget, raising tuition two dollars per hour would be necessary. If a \$2 million jump is forthcoming, a raise in fees of one dollar per credit hour would make up the difference.

That the State Regents for Higher Education will be able to appropriate the \$2.5 million from the funds the legislature makes available for higher education is doubtful in light of the current financial situation in Oklahoma. At the time of the faculty meeting it was hoped that the statewide referendum for a one-cent increase in the sales tax would be passed, thus alleviating some of the pressure for funds.

Higher education's share from the added revenue was expected to be from \$18-25 million to be divided among Oklahoma's 18 colleges and universities. The increase in the sales tax was, of course, summarily defeated along with a bond issue which would have meant new buildings for burgeoning OU. With the defeat of the tax increase, hope for the needed funds for the University has diminished. And if necessary appropriations are not made, OU stands to lose a significant number of its best teachers to other states. Some professors, in fact, were waiting to see if the tax increase passed before making their final decisions. Others are waiting to see what the legislature does. The University and higher education in Oklahoma faces a turning point. How the state meets the crisis which confronts it will determine its immediate future in education and in prosperity.

In addition to outlining the University's budgetary needs, Brown disclosed results of a study the campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors had conducted at OU. The study reveals that 91 professors (about one-third of the full-time teaching staff) have been offered positions by colleges and universities in other states. Fifty-seven of the professors have firm offers from other institutions, and 34 terminated negotiations because they prefer to remain at OU. The 91 faculty members consist of 4 instructors, 18 assistant professors, 33 associate professors and 36 professors. The average salary increase offered for each rank is \$2,102 for instructors, \$2,844 for assistant professors, \$3,589 for associate professors and \$3,961 for full professors. The increases ranged from \$1,160 to \$3,000 for instructors, \$500 to \$7,876 for assistant professors, \$1,400 to \$7,000 for associate professors and \$1,500 to \$7,000 for professors.

Another portion of the report shows that the University is among the lowest of the 60 universities surveyed in money spent per student. The study

shows an index of financial needs of institutions with the two main determining factors being faculty-student ratio and the level of faculty salaries. Up to a point, says the report, a low cost per student figure may indicate efficient utilization of faculty, but beyond this point the quality of instruction may suffer as a result of spreading a faculty too thin or failure to attract and hold a competent faculty because of inadequate salaries.

For one of the leading institutions in the state to be the lowest in an array of schools which includes the University of Mississippi, the University of Arkansas, the University of New Mexico, the University of Kansas and the University of Texas should be a source of embarrassment and concern to the people of Oklahoma, the report states.

In 1961-62 OU spent \$322 per student. This figure has increased but \$5 in three years. Arkansas paid \$426 per student in 1963 and \$543 in 1964. Texas increased from \$393 in 1961 to \$469 in 1964. California jumped from \$472 in 1961 to \$661 this year.

"One thing is certain," concludes the report, "a budget increase of the magnitude higher education has had in recent years will not rectify this situation. The only way to keep from falling further behind is to have a really significant increase in appropriations or income for the next biennium."

In late February a delegation of University officials and alumni attended a public hearing on legislation for higher education. Representing the OU Regents were Eph Monroe, retiring president of the board, and Reuben Sparks. Dr. Harold Tisdal of Clinton, president of the Alumni Association, and four other past presidents—T. R. Benedum of Norman, Wallace Kidd of Anadarko, Charles Engleman of Clinton and Jack Taylor of Oklahoma City—attended the session before the Committee on Higher Education,

There, too, were other alumni, Nor-

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Faculty members were understandably solemn as they heard the grim financial report on the state of the University at their spring meeting.

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man leaders and ten members of the faculty and staff from OU. The School of Medicine was represented by its dean, Dr. James Dennis, and Dr. Leonard Neal, director of research.

Under discussion was a Senate bill calling for \$102 million for the next biennium to be spent on Oklahoma higher education. This compares with \$67 million appropriated for the current biennium and Gov. Bellmon's recommendation of \$77 million for the next biennium. President Cross in his statement pointed out that during the past five years enrollment at OU has increased 40 percent, the number of students working toward postgraduate degrees has increased by 100 percent and funds appropriated to the University has increased by only 20 percent. The result has been that salary increases for faculty members during this period have been few and far between.

"This legislature," concluded Dr. Cross, "will determine the destiny of the University for the next decade. If something is not done, there will be an exodus of faculty members and the progress of Oklahoma will be similarly retarded."

Fred Tarman, a 1910 graduate of the University and editor and publisher of *The Norman Transcript*, testified before the committee on the loss

of fine faculty members through the years at the University because of non-competitive salaries.

Frequent and continuing "raids" by other colleges, said Tarman, have taken many distinguished teachers and have prevented OU in many cases from attaining the highest possible standards in certain fields of instruction and from gaining national prestige.

"This doesn't mean that our University has lost all of its best teachers," said Tarman. "Many of them have turned down attractive offers time after time because of loyalty to their school and to Oklahoma. We do have good faculties that have permitted our colleges to upgrade their instruction and carry on. But we could have progressed much faster and attained the status of a really great university in numerous fields if we could have retained the outstanding professors we have lost and also had the funds to outbid other schools for outstanding teachers elsewhere whom we wanted but could not get.

"I could list 100 and more University professors who were key members of the faculty or who gave promise of becoming great teachers but who have been lured away by large pay increases to other colleges or to private industry. Some of the colleges that have taken them have been much

smaller than OU and had much less prestige, but they had the money to do the job.

"It is possible that a salary schedule for higher education in Oklahoma equal to those of the top Big Eight universities might have kept far more than half of the outstanding professors we have lost, and the prestige and instruction standards of our universities would be considerably higher than they are.

"But it is useless to lament over what might have been. We are here to urge the legislature to take the steps to obtain the revenue that will give our colleges the opportunity to join the list of the great American universities."

That an emergency exists is not debatable, and Oklahoma cannot expect its better teachers to wait indefinitely for significant increases in appropriations. Solutions are being sought. Private support through the Alumni Development Fund has been the difference often between adequacy and inadequacy. The Plan for Excellence has as its primary goal the establishment of a superior faculty with substantial salaries. These measures are not enough by themselves to insure OU's continued advancement, however. The future lies ahead, as they say, but the present is upon us. And it's heavy. And critical. *END*