The Aviation Future of O.U.

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With the recent acquisition of the Norman Naval Air Station, the University of Oklahoma has fully entered into the air age.

In addition to a much needed expansion of its housing and classroom facilities, the University now has an adequate modern airport. However, the mere possession of an airport, with the usual flight facilities, does not guarantee the development of a comprehensive program of aviation training and research.

The four-fold purpose of this article is: (1) to list the physical resources the University now has, (2) to indicate the kind of aviation program the University may institute this fall, (3) to suggest the University's place in promoting aviation, and (4) to point out some of the problems the University will face.

Oklahoma is an ideal place for flying from the standpoint of location, weather and terrain. Every indication points to the fact that Oklahoma is rapidly becoming an aviation center.

The Flying Farmers organization daily is demonstrating the practical use of aviation in farming and ranching. The recent decision to move the Standardization Center of the Civil Aeronautics Administration to Will Rogers Field at Oklahoma City is sound evidence of Oklahoma's central location and suitability for flight.

With the building of the many new airports and airfields now being planned, most of Oklahoma's towns will soon have some kind of landing field available.

The Max Westheimer Field, as a part of the University, is destined to play a very important part in Oklahoma's aviation future, and ought to become the State Airport of Oklahoma.

The Max Westheimer Field is located on the new North Campus, which covers an area of more than 1,600 acres. The field itself contains four 5,000 foot hard surfaced runways, each 200 feet wide, as well as a large hard-surfaced landing mat 2,200 by 2,000 feet.

Two huge hangars, a flight operations building, and a modern traffic control tower provide adequate facilities for both large and small flight operations.

Of special interest to football fans who wish to fly to the games are the concrete ramps on which more than 300 airplanes can be tied down at one time.

A modern wind tetrahedron, up-to-date equipment for night flying, and a compass-swinging turn table, are all designed to promote safety in Oklahoma and are provided as a public service to aviation and at no cost.

Other facilities, found on the North Campus supplementing the Max Westheimer Field, are especially attractive to the flyer. Among the facilities provided for his convenience are a modern cafeteria, tennis courts, handball courts, three complete sheet-sketching ranges, a recreation hall and theater, and auditorium facilities for conferences and other meetings, state-wide or local, within walking distance of the airport.

Realizing that its responsibility in the promotion of aviation is not limited to the mere operation of an airport, the University has a new educational institution, is planning to enter the field of aviation education.

Two curricula have already been proposed and probably will be approved by the end of the month. The first is an Aeronautical Engineering course, giving basic training for the various specialties in aeronautical engineering and requiring flight instruction to the level of a private pilot license. The second, which also requires flight training, is a course in Airport Management taught in the College of Business Administration.

Furthermore, it has been proposed that any student in the University may take a private pilot's course of flight instruction as one of his elective subjects.

Aviation research is another field in which the University expects to make continued progress. One such research project, a comprehensive study of airport accounting methods, has already been approved and is under way. The possibility of doing research in the field of aviation psychology is also being explored.

In the development of its aviation program, the University is co-operating with Fixed Base Operators through the Oklahoma Aviation Association and the Oklahoma Aviation Commission in providing such research and other services as can be logically undertaken by the University.

Of just as great importance, but much more difficult to achieve, is the University problem of finding its legitimate place in promoting a general understanding and appreciation of the place of flight in today's world. As demonstrated in World War II, we are now entering the Air Age. All types of aircraft have been tremendously improved with respect to speed and dependability. Today, no place on earth is more than two days travel distance from us.

Within the usable atmosphere which surrounds the earth, man has discovered a medium in which all former barriers—mountains, rivers, oceans, deserts—have been removed; leaving a new freedom of motion he has never before known.

In this new world which he is just beginning to explore, man finds that his old habits of thinking and acting are of little value. New conditions and new institutions, which previously tied him to the ground, are no longer suitable for effective living in the Air Age. At the same time, his surface dominated experience renders him less capable of critically appraising himself and his institutions in light of the new era.

Therein lies the great challenge to the University. The University must lend every effort to meet it and be prepared to provide the research and training the state citizens will need in the Air Age. As a result, every department of the University will be affected. Faculty members, therefore, should know and understand the importance of flight in the affairs of men, and as such an understanding is practically impossible without some

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