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.
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, Norman

Continued on page 13
Continued from page 11

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 cur-
rent 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 Univer-
sity has increased by only 20 percent.
The result has been that salary in-
creases for faculty members during
this period have been few and far be-
 tween.

"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 pub-
lisher of The Norman Transcript, testi-
fied 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 pos-
sible standards in certain fields of
instruction and from gaining national
prestige.

"This doesn't mean that our Un-
iversity has lost all of its best
teachers," said Tarman. "Many of
them have turned down attractive of-
fers time after time because of loyalty
to their school and to Oklahoma. We
do have good faculties that have per-
mitted our colleges to upgrade their
instruction and carry on. But we could
have progressed much faster and at-
tained the status of a really great uni-
versity in numerous fields if we could
have retained the outstanding profes-
sors we have lost and also had the
funds to outbid other schools for out-
standing teachers elsewhere whom we
wanted but could not get.

"I could list 100 and more Uni-
versity professors who were key mem-
bers of the faculty or who gave prom-
ise 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 sched-
ule for higher education in Oklahoma
equal to those of the top Big Eight
universities might have kept far more
than half of the outstanding profes-
sors we have lost, and the prestige and
instruction standards of our universi-
ties 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 de-
batable, and Oklahoma cannot expect
its better teachers to wait indefinitely
for significant increases in appropria-
tions. Solutions are being sought.
Private support through the Alumni
Development Fund has been the dif-
ference often between adequacy and
inadequacy. The Plan for Excellence
has as its primary goal the establish-
ment of a superior faculty with sub-
stantial salaries. These measures are
not enough by themselves to insure
OU's continued advancement, how-
ever. The future lies ahead, as they
say, but the present is upon us. And
it's heavy. And critical.  

END