**O. U.'s Employment Problem**

By Frances Hunt, '29

The once familiar sign, "Boy Wanted to Wait Tables," no longer appears on the Ad Building bulletin board. It hasn't for quite a while.

Sooners of a decade or two ago who encouraged his younger in their home towns to come to Norman with $20 and a will to work, need to get a new picture in their minds of employment conditions on the campus. A graduate who earned his way ten years ago has a false conception of what it takes now, unless he has had frequent contact with student life in the interval since commencement.

It is not easy to get a job in Norman, and not everyone who gets one is capable of holding it and doing good work in classes.

A much larger number of students are competing for jobs than in the past. The town hasn't expanded its businesses as rapidly as the University has increased its enrollment, and hence opportunities for paid jobs off the campus are scarce. More freshmen are coming to Norman trained to do typing and office work, having been told by their high school teachers that the typewriter will write their pay checks for four years in University. The University itself no longer has a special fund to employ student assistants.

Admittedly, we do have 670 students on NYA rolls this fall, and a few more will be added on the extra fund of $105 per month to aid young people from the drouth-stricken districts. Without NYA, the employment scene would be good deal more drab than it is. Without NYA, University enrollment would drop, and several hundred bright young people might have to go home.

But every alumnus who advises a prospective student to tackle college without funds should understand that no NYA job pays as much money as the most frugal freshman needs.

I have just gone the rounds of offices, seeking facts and opinions from men and women of the University who know most about this employment problem and have put in many hours helping students get jobs.

Andy Crosby, the NYA secretary, told me that the average monthly pay of NYA students this semester is $12.75. The average was reduced from $15 to enable the NYA committee to give more jobs. About one-fourth of the money goes to freshmen.

The committee, when considering applications, estimated that each student needs a budget of $30 a month, aside from fees, clothes and books. If a student can show that he has another job which pays him $10 a month and his parents send him $10, then he probably will be okayed for an NYA job for the third $10 he needs. But if he has no resources, the NYA committee cannot help him, for the most an undergraduate can earn on NYA is $20 a month. And not many students are allowed as much as $20.

To get an NYA job, a freshman must have high school grades averaging B-minus. A student who has been in college must have a C-plus average. Grades are checked every four weeks.

A student applying for NYA must show actual financial need. Surprisingly, applications sometimes come in from sons and daughters of men known in their home communities as comfortably fixed. In some cases, parents just get the idea that the young people for their own good should work and get experience.

The 670 on NYA rolls represent in many ways the cream of the student body, and a lot of them are working at jobs that train them for their future professions. Crosby told me about a student who is assistant to the director of radio production. Another is an artist technician. Another helps a crippled girl. Several give tutorial service and supervise study halls. Two are readers for the blind, and several are freshman counselors. One does photo-engraving and another is a news writer. Many others, of course, fill jobs of a more routine nature, where they learn little of future value.

But what of the other hundreds who need work, who fail to get NYA aid for one reason or another, or perhaps are near the end of their twenty-fourth year of age and therefore must leave the NYA list? What about those on NYA who have to get another job for room and board to make up that $30 budget? What about those who just want a job for spending money or because it's fashionable to work?

"Those kids can get jobs in the University offices, or around the Corner at the shops and restaurants," the old grad is likely to say.

No, not all of them can. The University, struggling with the most serious financial problem in its history, cannot hire enough help to do its work. The "supplemental fund," furnished by the state during the last two school years for the employment of students, has been discontinued. Last year this fund amounted to $20,000, and the year previous it was $10,000.

And jobs at the Corner and in town can't be had for the asking. It takes waiting, and knowing people, and getting a break.

I talked with Charles Miles, University Book Exchange manager, who gets about one hundred applications for work each summer and fall. He told me that he picks only one or two students—freshmen if possible—each year, and he usually has these chosen in the spring before they are to start work. He employs only eight or nine students, and most of the jobs last from one year to the next. Many of his boys go into the law school, so hold their jobs for six years. They are paid from $20 to $30 a month. It takes a year for a student to become thoroughly familiar with the book store and to become a valuable assistant. Those who are hired by Mr. Miles are fortunate, and gain useful experience. But they represent only a small percentage of the job-seeking throng that comes to Norman each August and September.

The Oklahoma Memorial Union has one of the largest student payrolls on the campus, with more than a hundred students working in the cafeteria kitchen, be-

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to his studies and to soliciting a job which may open up for him in his second semester or later.

Mr. Wadsack believes that high school commencement speakers who still say, "All it takes to go to college is ambition," should revamp their advice in the light of present conditions.

One of Mr. Wadsack's most disheartening duties, he says, is to face the students who come to his window with pink withdrawal cards—giving as the cause for leaving school the familiar "financial reasons." Already this fall, three weeks after school started, a number of these pink cards had appeared in the registry office files, testimony that their signers had fared badly in the competitive struggle for employment.

Fred Miller, Y.M.C.A. secretary, told me that he knew a number of boys who went home even before they registered. "They come here with $20 they had saved," he said, "because they've been told at home that these are the days to go to school and prepare to earn more money later."

Mr. Miller, who handles general employment for men, believes it is a good deal harder for a boy to find a job than it was a few years ago, and he believes, too, that parents are less willing to sacrifice for their children's education.

Mr. Miller had so many applicants thronging his office this fall that he was not able to give any attention to those who had been approved for NYA and then wanted a second job. He has placed about 55 men in "board jobs" that pay no money but do take care of the problem of meals.

This is an achievement, for Mr. Miller's last survey showed there are only 180 "board jobs" available at all the boarding houses and restaurants in Norman. And many of these are filled by the same students who had them last year. Mr. Miller also has placed a dozen men in jobs for room rent, and about a dozen in permanent jobs which pay cash, such as bookkeeping. He has found some two hundred "odd jobs" for boys, such as selling concessions at football games.

Miss Helen Ruth Holbrook told me she has interviewed this fall more than four hundred girls, and has placed about fifty of them in definite and permanent places where they get room and board. Since there is a shortage of domestic labor in Norman, she has little trouble in finding domestic work for girls—but that isn't what they want nor what they are trained for.

However, she reports, many girls who have learned shorthand and typing in high school cheerfully accept dishwashing and cooking duties when they can't find office work their first year. Several have found pleasant employment preparing dinner for various faculty women who have their own homes in Norman.

Miss Holbrook suggests that in recent years the high school commercial departments have assumed the duty of helping students prepare to earn their way through college by giving them office training, but that now the high school domestic science departments have something to offer too. A girl who can cook, and who can serve meals nicely can earn her way at the University—and the training will not be wasted after the diploma is received.

Miss Holbrook agrees that it is harder now to finance a college education by working. But she has much praise for the NYA program. She believes the fact that girls can hold NYA jobs and receive money for their work has raised the low scale of pay for domestic work in Norman.

Recalling the case with which I obtained a job as waitress in the women's residence halls in my junior year, I called Mrs. Nora Wells, business director of the halls, to find out the situation now.

Mrs. Wells received during the summer 39 more applications than she had jobs, received several more when school started, and at present has 11 girls on the waiting list for next semester. She says the demand for employment is twice as heavy as it was three years ago. Like others on the campus who hire students, she selects many of her workers from those who come to Norman in the spring and make application.

She has 14 girls, all freshmen, working in the dining hall, and 20 office girls. Nine more girls work in the kitchen, and four graduate students are employed as counselors. The work is split up to enable as many as possible to have jobs, and no one receives more than her board. Grades of those employed must be kept passing.

The working student of this college era isn't so much publicized as the workers of eight or ten years ago. Nor is he apt to be so sensitive about his lack of funds as we were before 1929. It's part of enrolment procedure now to fill out a work schedule as a study card.

But he doesn't have half the chance to get the jobs nor earn the amounts that once were easily made. Alumni called on to advise prospective students should state frankly what the situation is now, and not what it was when they were in school.

Heads newspaper

After handling the position of business manager on the Chandler News-Publicist for more than a year, Boyd Cowden, 28ex, has been named editor-manager of the paper.

Serving him as advertising manager is Bob Kinsey, 33ex, former secretary of the Wetumka Chamber of Commerce. He has worked on papers at Tishomingo, Lexington, Anadarko, Seminole, Shawnee and Ada. He was also employed on the Bee, Sacramento, California, and the Times-Picayune, New Orleans, Louisiana.