Regulation of Student Activities

It is difficult to appraise the changes that have taken place in student life in recent years. The simplicity of student habits of a generation ago has passed away forever. Every day in college life is crowded with many forms of activities. The quiet meditation of the older times has given way to the mad rush to and from classes. Extra-curricular activities of all kinds, including athletics, fraternity meetings, and social gatherings, are contending constantly for a share of the student's time.

So serious has this situation become that the question is being raised: Is it possible for a student to acquire a share of the student's time.

Is the average college student capable of determining the proper use of his time without assistance? This question, in the form of administrative policy, is being answered quite differently in our institutions of higher learning. There are those who contend that students should possess sufficient discretion when they come to college to determine this matter for themselves. There are others who contend that students do not possess this discretion and that they need experienced counsel and wise guidance. Those who hold to the latter view have devised numerous expedients to assist the college student in getting well on his way to a college education. The so-called "Freshman Week" is one expression of this form of assistance.

But with all the expedients that have been used, it is a well known fact that many students waste their time in profitless activities while others burn the candle at both ends in an effort to participate in numerous activities and at the same time keep up with their class work.

Students, naturally, like to participate in many activities. The fact is that there are many false incentives to encourage this tendency. It looks good to see a long list of activities under one's name in the year book. Fraternities and sororities encourage their students to participate in athletics, sing in the glee club, edit the sport column of the college paper, hold an office in the student governing body and serve as dance manager for a fraternity or sorority. It goes without saying that no student can participate in all these activities and, at the same time, make adequate preparation for a normal amount of class work.

I believe it is the duty of the administrative officers and the several faculties of every educational institution to safeguard the interests of students from participation in so many activities as to retard or arrest their educational progress. I am fully aware that many students today are jealous of all kinds of restraint. I read sometime ago an editorial in a college paper in one of our larger universities in which the doctrine was laid down that students believed the faculty had completely discharged their duty to them when they had taught them the things they were expected to know in the class room and that for the balance of the time they were thoroughly capable of taking care of themselves. Of course, this was the expression of an immature mind but, after all, it reflects the opinion of some students in all of our institutions. I do not subscribe to this doctrine. I have assumed that it is the duty of the governing and administrative authorities of every educational institution to create wholesome conditions in college life and safeguard all students from wasting their time in frivolities. It is the duty of those who direct the policies of our educational institutions to create conditions that will make it possible for students to give adequate time for the preparation of class work. This means that certain restrictions must be placed upon social diversions.

The question of determining the number and nature of restrictions is a difficult one. A student body in an institution like the University of Oklahoma consists of an increasing number of mature students who know exactly why they are in college and do not need to be told what they shall do with their time. On the other hand, there is an increasing number of young students away from home for the first time. It is true that we do not hear as much about "mother's apron strings" as we did formerly but, after all, for most students it means a radical change when they come from the normal life of a community to the complex and unique life of a college community.

It is not easy to formulate rules that are equally applicable and essential to both groups. It is quite natural for the mature students to feel that rules are unnecessary, while the younger students, who have not found out what college life is all about, resist the restraints that deny to them the social diversions that naturally appeal to youth.

But, after all, this situation is not very different from what we find in the civic life of our people. There are many laws that are being passed that are needless in so far as the great majority of the citizenship is concerned but laws are passed to safeguard the interests of all citizens and to restrain or punish those who disregard their own best interests or interfere with the rights of others. That is exactly what rules and regulations in college life are intended to accomplish.

There may be a different opinion about the wisdom of some regulations that are passed by the governing authorities of an institution. It goes without saying that men who make these regulations are not infallible and those who administer them after they are passed may not always exercise the greatest wisdom, but again the analogy holds with reference to the laws passed by our legislative bodies. All of us may not agree with statutory provisions and sometimes we question the interpretation of them by the courts and the administration of them by our officials, but both our statute laws, as well as our college regulations, represent the collective judgment of those who have promulgated them. As a rule, the collective judgment is better than the individual judgment in matters of this kind.

A college community composed of several thousand students cannot operate successfully without reasonable regulations any more than any other community of citizens can get along without the observance of law. Stability of the social order is the objective to be obtained in either case. The fact is that there is no better training for the average college student than that of learning to obey the reasonable regulations in college as a preparation for
MOST of you are familiar with the various efforts that have been made in recent years to rehabilitate the University of Oklahoma Association and to establish an alumni publication. The following statement of the life membership plan tells you the status of the plan which has been adopted to accomplish these objectives.

As you know, the income from annual membership dues for the last several years has been insufficient to meet the obligations of our organization and, without a publication, the association has been unable to make any progress or to fulfill its obligations to you and the university.

This condition and the need for a publication has been recognized by the association’s executive board for some time and several plans to remedy the situation were considered. At the last spring meeting the board adopted the life membership plan for underwriting the obligations the association must assume in securing a full time secretary and establishing an alumni publication. Annual membership dues, which includes subscription to the publication, were increased to $3 and provision was made for life membership at $60, payable $5 quarterly in advance over a period of three years.

It was found, after securing very liberal assistance from the university, that a minimum of 105 life memberships would be required to underwrite the obligations the association must assume over a period of three years, during which time it is believed that the association can be placed on a sound financial basis. A few of those who were interested in the reorganization of this association began a campaign to secure the required quota. Those solicited were told that the funds thus secured would be used to underwrite the organization expense and that the pledges would not become valid or binding until the minimum amount had been secured.

By the first of September a sufficient number of life membership subscription pledges had been secured to indicate that the plan was feasible. Accordingly your secretary began his duties and The Sooner Magazine has been established. Since September the number of life memberships has been doubled and we are now only a few short of the minimum required.

Your secretary, also, is happy to be able to report that sufficient revenue has been secured from annual memberships and from advertising in The Sooner Magazine, so that it has not been necessary to use any of the payments on the life memberships for current expenses and if the present monthly increase in membership is maintained it will not be necessary to do this.

The income from life memberships is being placed in a separate trust account and only the income from it will be used for current expenses. This fund will form a permanent endowment for the association and you are thus assured that your life membership pays your dues and subscription for your life and not for the ‘Life of the association’ as one subscriber facetiously remarked.

An appropriate certificate showing life membership will be furnished when the entire amount has been paid. A list containing the names of those not herefore announced in The Sooner Magazine as life subscribers will be published in the next issue.

The university and loyal Sooners everywhere are grateful to the life subscribers for their assistance in making this organization and The Sooner Magazine possible. What may be accomplished by the association for the university and for its graduates and former students will be due largely to your support in making the organization and publication possible.

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It is true that some students violate college regulations but it is equally true that some citizens violate the laws of their country. The passage of a law against murder or theft does not guarantee that murder will not be committed or that property will not be stolen, but these laws do have the effect of reducing crime and safeguarding property. In a similar way, college regulations do not guarantee that no student will ever violate them but it does mean that it will promote better standards of conduct and create better conditions for study and recreation.

Contrary to general opinion, the number of regulations in the University of Oklahoma is not large. There is a regulation restraining students from keeping and operating an automobile in Norman. Hazing is prohibited and initiations in public places are not allowed. There is a so-called “no date” rule for four nights in the week. Students are expected to observe the reasonable social proprieties in their relations to each other. With the exception of these restrictions, students have the same freedom that they would enjoy in any other community of the state. The authorities of the university are committed to the policy of directing student life into wholesome channels and creating an atmosphere of scholarship and a genuine respect for law and order.

This is a typical office for student government

Various campus organizations and the student council have ample office room in the Oklahoma Union building, formally opened January 4.