The Modern University

By ERNIE HILL, ’33

MENTION the name of a familiar state university to almost any person picked at random and then get that person to tell you the things that flash through his mind first. Nine times out of ten, you will get something like this:

"Expansive, green, well-trimmed lawns. Students walking slowly between buildings and sitting in the warm sunshine. Well developed old trees sheltering buildings. The campus hang-out—full of smoke, loud music, loud talk, and ash-covered tables strewn with bent and chewed straws, salt, pepper, sugar, and rings of water. Dance music drifting across the countryside and the shuffling sound of dancers. The parked car. A football field with a wide end run in progress. The blare of a band. Fraternity house living rooms with horse laughs and horse play. Crowded picture shows on the corner with students window shopping on the way to the square. A New York City poet sitting moodily on the Union terrace. Winter sports on the lake."

So deep rooted in the sub-conscious are these pictures and memories of externals—the frills and nonsense—that too often the average person completely over- looks the more important phases of a university. He thinks of a student loafing or killing time in a number of different ways, but rarely does he remember those varied activities that a student concerns himself with day in and day out.

He too often forgets the intense practical training that a large part of the student body is subjected to daily. Evidence of this striving to give the university student real concrete, practical experience in the particular field of his interest are apparent in every department and college at the University of Oklahoma.

Where a handful of students are killing an evening in a campus hang-out, there are several hundred out on the campus sweating and working at a job as though they were bucking the stiffest competition the business world offers. For some reason or other, it is much easier to forget a picture of these students at work than it is to lose the memory of the serenely idle. Perhaps, there is something about them at work that suggests the commonplace, the everyday toiling world that lends no contrast. Yet, here are the real students of a university and here the real work of higher education is accomplished.

Running through the university—department by department, college by college—every division has its practical workshop, and it is difficult to remember that once upon a time theory and the classical education did not include these multi-forms of practical experience.

Consider the real working centers of the university. They are numerous. Whereas fraternity and sorority houses may once have been the center of interest, the hub around which students revolved, this is greatly changed today. The real dividing lines between groups of students are the fields in which they are studying. Dormitory and fraternal friends may be close, but the really close friendships and strong bonds created at a university are those that result from contacts within particular schools and departments.

Look at some of the units and the opportunities of practical experience offered them.

In the college of education, for instance, is the university high school which offers practice teaching experience to advanced students. Actual work in presenting courses, maintaining room discipline, organizing students and all other phases of teaching work. After all, a student who has spent a year, or part of a year, working with classes in a recognized school has a much better idea of the problems of a classroom than has the student who merely studied the theoretical technique.

From the journalism school comes a daily newspaper—editorials, sports, society, features, student-prepared and student-sold advertising copy. The quality of the work is certainly higher than that of many commercial newspapers. Students often step from the school of journalism into positions as minor editors. Also, a humor magazine and yearbook offers a slightly different kind of writing experience.

The university college of engineering holds national distinction for its practical work. An oil well was drilled by students on the campus this year. A wind tunnel is operated. Student surveyors are on the campus from fall to summer. Problems with real modern equipment, the same as that used in the industry today, are part of the work of the college.

In home economics practicality runs high. At the annual openhouse, the
general public sees dresses made by stu-
dents, cooking done by students and at
the practice house are seen rooms dressed
by students and rooms maintained by stu-
dent dressmakers. For young artists, this
also offers training for future mothers.

In dramatic art, the stage presenta-
tions speak for themselves. They are
well publicized and recognized. It is not
uncommon for a student actor, techni-
cian or designer to step right into profes-
sional work. The former student class
rolls of the school reveal that.

In the school of library science, the
major students get practical work in the
library university and few of them will
ever work in a larger and more extensive
library. Another phase of practical ex-
perience is given the major students each
spring when they go to various city li-
braries throughout the state to work for
several days.

In the school of law, the practice court
is an old institution. Advanced law stu-
dents prepare cases. One group is the
prosecution, the other the defense. The
judge is a law student.

In the medical school, the university
hospital offers experience for the ad-
vanced students. Thorough training in
caring for patients under the supervision
of veteran physicians is given. As in law,
the graduates rarely step high in their
professions when they leave school. Law
and medicine base much on seniority.
After all, the untrained person can find
no entrance at all into these professions.
The newly trained must start at the bot-
tom.

The art school has its student exhi-
bitions. The walls of many university
buildings show the decorative work of
students. Campus shops offer practical
work in mural painting. The difference
between the work of art students and
professional artists is a matter of quality.
The student does the same thing the
artist does. It is at least that practical.

The radio division of the university
is comparatively new yet it has made rapid
progress. Programs are presented during
afternoons and evenings from the one
thousand watt station. News commen-
tators, dramatists, musicians and humor-
stics go on the air with the tick of the
clock and off with similar precision in
a manner identical to that of professional
stations. Voice equipment is used for
correcting student voice faults.

Musical concerts are evidences of the
training of voice and instrumental mu-
sicians. I think it can be truly said of
music departments, however, that they
are less modern and less practical than
any one division in the universities of
today. Vocal and instrumental students
are given instruction in the classics. All
of their programs are of types of music
nine-tenths of the students will never use
for making a living. The classical work,
of course, is background and many of
the young women taking voice and piano
undoubtedly are training only to please
husbands and groups of friends.

However, there should be a place in
a university where a musician interested
in popular radio or stage work could get
more practical training. Engineering
professors, law professors, journalism pro-
fessors are forced to keep up with the
modern trends in their professions. I can
see no reason why the teachers of music
should remain dead and buried in the
music of fifty to one hundred years ago.
There are reasons, though, and they can
be made to sound very important and
convincing.

All in all, however, the modern uni-
versity is an extremely practical place
where work that will stand up with that
done in the professional world is com-
pleted.

Taking a cross-cut of the student body
at various hours during the day, you will
find that well more than two-thirds of
them are actively engaged in some pur-
suit that has a definite and signifi-
cant purpose. There are loafers, of
course, as there are in the world outside,
but few of them graduate as few as of
them ever succeed in a business way.

Yet, it is these who provide the gen-
eral public with the idea of what goes
on at a university. When a well pre-
pared, hard working student is graduated
and takes his place in the business world,
people are apt to say that he is just
naturally smart and had it in him.

But when a loafer quits school after a
year or two and goes home to become
one of the town's chronic dissipators, the
same people say, "Yep, that's what higher
education did to him."

Someone should add, "Higher educa-
tion had nothing at all to do with him.
He would have been the same had he
stayed home only it would have been con-
sidered just his natural inclinations com-
ing out."

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**Magazine Wins Awards**

**The Sooner Magazine** won two honorable mention awards in the annual prize competition for alumni magazines of colleges and universities of the country.

One of the awards was for the excel-
lence of a story appearing in magazines
dealing with an event of the campus.
The story that won the award was called
*A Goat There Was.* It dealt with the
quaint story of a goat that was tempo-
arily kidnapped by fraternity pledges and
the wrath of the owner. It was written
by the editor of *The Sooner Magazine.*

The other honorable mention was
given for the excellence of a book review
or book review page. The page that was
considered for the prize award was one
on which appeared a review of Kenneth
Kaufman's book of verse *Level Land.* It
was reviewed by Stanley Vestal and John
M. Oskison. Also on the page, was a
review of Dr. P. B. Sears' *Deserts on the
March,* by Mrs. A. C. Weesley. A picture
of David Milsten, '25, '28law, Tulsa,
whose book *An Appreciation of Will
Rogers* was about to appear, also was in-
cluded on the page.

The *Belles Lettres and Bell Ringers* has
been arranged, edited and often written
during the year by Elizabeth Ann Mc-
Murray, '35as.

**Dean Monnet Honored**

A good portion of the leader-
ship of Oklahoma's legal profession
dropped in on the university one warm
spring evening last month to honor Dean
Julien C. Monnet as he prepared to grad-
uate the twenty-fifth class from his school.

They came from almost every county
in Oklahoma and from several other
states to express their feeling that Dean
Monnet has done a remarkably fine piece
of work in establishing a law school that
offers thorough preparation and wise di-
rection to young men and women in-
terested in entering the legal profession.

They shared the feeling that Dean
Monnet for the past quarter of a century
has given his students more than instruc-
tion in law courses, that he likewise has
offered them a sound philosophy for liv-
ing and the practice of law.

The group, when it was packed into
the Memorial Union ballroom numbered
more than four hundred outstanding at-
torneys and law students.

The faculty of the law school was hon-
ored by the visitors and shared the speak-
er's table with Dean and Mrs. Monnet.
Lewis R. Morris, '15as, '15M.A., '17law,
was chairman. He introduced Archdyll
Young, senior student, who spoke for the
undergraduates; Supreme Court Justice
Orel Busby, '14law, who spoke for the
alumni: Dr. W. B. Bizzell, who told of
Dean Monnet's fine work in building the
school; and Dean Monnet who responded
to honors paid him.

A beautiful platinum watch was pre-
sented to the veteran dean by alumni,
while Mrs. Monnet was presented with a
charming silver service.

It was one of the most successful ban-
uquets ever held on the campus. An in-
formal reception was held in the large
meeting room at the south end of the
third floor of the Union.

Law students from many years back
took the opportunity to renew their ac-
quaintances with members of the faculty
and their wives. Many of their favorite
stories of the dean and on the history of
the law school were retold.

The graduates came from all parts of
Oklahoma and Texas to attend the Silver
Anniversary Reunion.