

Higher Education Popular Again

HIGHER education is making a comeback. Oklahoma colleges and universities are showing gains in enrollment and students apparently are approaching classwork with the idea that there might be something worthwhile about it after all.

Expenses are going up, too, and at a faster rate. This is enough to motivate parents to give careful consideration to the investment they may make in the preparation of their offspring to face a highly unpredictable future.

One calculation showed that tuition, board, room and personal expenses for four years of college would amount to \$22,256. A fellow with a pocket calculator then figured that if he put that much money on deposit at 7.5 per cent interest, he would have almost three-quarters of a million dollars by the time he reached retirement age. He also would have developed a lot of will power if he managed not to spend any of the principal or interest by then.

A college education has cash value, too. Figures published a few weeks ago by U.S. News & World Report show that men who have completed college have average annual earnings two to three times higher than men with only grade-school education.

There are other values. Many educators take a dim view of going to college simply in order to earn more money, emphasizing aesthetic qualities that can add dimension to a person's life. They have good arguments, but since most of these aesthetic-minded individuals maintain a strong interest in receiving sizable pay checks with regularity, it may

be assumed that a good way of life and a good way of making a living are not incompatible.

Assertions are heard that college is not necessarily the road that all should take. The campus revolution of the past decade produced considerable evidence to support this proposition.

Entrance requirements were lowered by a number of institutions in an effort to bring in enrollees who were not prepared for college. Frothy and frivolous courses were initiated in order that these misguided students might graduate.

No doubt, those who acquired degrees under these lowered standards have learned by now that sociological adjustments are not necessarily adequate preparation for the competitive world of business. A degree may help to obtain an opportunity but it is performance that makes something of it, even in today's highly-regulated employment circum-

stances.

Rising costs have forced a number of private colleges to close and others are struggling to get enough revenue and gifts to maintain respectable faculties and facilities. State institutions also are frequently in financial straits, encountering difficulty in paying higher salaries, constructing new buildings and fielding football teams with stadium-packing power.

It is reported that there are now more than 9.3 million students enrolled in nearly 3,000 institutions of higher learning in the United States. Annual expenditures exceed \$32 billion, which is more than one-third of the \$90 billion spent on education.

Educators claim that it is impossible to measure the quality of education, but it can be shown that education pays off in cash, in personal achievements and in more useful lives.