

Ferdie J. Deering

# OSU Must Put Stress on Agriculture

**A**N unknown philosopher observed: "When you are looking for a bottleneck, look first at the top of the bottle."

Conversations with a number of people over the state indicate that many think the Board of Regents for Oklahoma State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges has been the principal generating force in current campus crises.

These include pressures that resulted in the resignation of President Robert B. Kamm, power struggles on the campus, lack of well-understood policies for direction, and administrative interference.

Four new members have been appointed and the new board of regents may be able to clear up these problems. If it does not, the person selected to succeed Kamm as president will either be a flexible political squire or he will face a frustrating task of administration that may please no one.

The purposes of OSU (originally

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College) are clearly established by both federal and state laws.

Because of growth of OSU in other divisions, pressure has developed on the campus and elsewhere to minimize these basic functions and make it a diversified university, similar to the University of Oklahoma.

Many OSU alumni feel that the Division of Agriculture either has been downgraded, neglected or deliberately suppressed, resulting in loss of prestige in agricultural circles.

Student enrollment in the OSU Division of Agriculture increased from 1,734 in the 1974-1975 school year to 1,922 this year.

The OSU Board of Regents became skittish after Langston University financial affairs became badly entangled and legislators threatened to hold them personally responsible.

Instead of seeking stronger administrators and pushing for results, regents apparently decided to exercise more detailed authority over person-

nel and expenditures at all institutions under their control. This is a big undertaking for a board that meets only one or two days a month.

Because of its cooperative agricultural extension service (county agents), partially financed by federal funds, OSU has a statewide network of personnel that may present tempting organization possibilities to ambitious politicians.

Certainly, OSU faces difficult times in the year ahead. Problems may be resolved if regents place proper emphasis upon the agricultural and mechanical arts, as required by law. Problems may be enlarged by attempts to make it into another University of Oklahoma, or if politicians are allowed to manipulate faculty appointments and influence policies for their own benefit.

Agriculture is Oklahoma's largest industry and it is the primary subject of study at OSU. It should remain that way.



**Bates Bros.**

M E N ' S      W E A R

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Mr. Ferdie J. Deering  
THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73100

Dear Mr. Deering:

Re: Your column on OSU and agriculture in the DAILY OKLAHOMAN  
Tuesday, April 13

Nearly everyone recognizes OSU's responsibility to agriculture as established by the Morrill Act. I know of no one who wants to diminish this role. Certainly, in view of world military and political considerations, the role of agriculture in Oklahoma and the nation is more important than ever before.

However, there are other important areas of academic interest also. Simply because these are recognized also at OSU does not mean that agricultural emphasis is being threatened. Unfortunately, many agriculturalists seem to take such a defensive position and tend to translate developing strength in other areas at OSU into a weakening of agriculture. This is unfortunate and demonstrates a narrow view of the goals and objectives of education.

The larger question, however, is the ominous threat of the intrusion of political influences into education. The danger of this has been clearly shown in the last several months. Ironically, the constitutional provision that the majority of the members of the OSU Board of Regents be composed of agriculturalists seems to have played into the politicians' hands with this governor.

With all due respect to the importance of agriculture, the legal structure of the Board of Regents almost insures that it will be composed now, more than ever, of political appointees and men of limited experience and unproven abilities. I believe this is too bad.

Is there any reason why the OSU Board of Regents should not have the services of the most capable, the most creative, and the most imaginative people? It seems a shame to deny the University this kind of leadership.

Yours very truly,

Sam W. Bates