

Universities Recruiting Scholars, Too

COLLEGES and universities generally are regarded as educational and research institutions but many are better known for their big-time athletic departments than for academic achievements.

Large gate receipts and booster contributions enable independently budgeted sports departments to recruit athletes nationwide and foreign stars are now appearing in lineups.

Most colleges and universities have foundations or other arrangements to receive funds for recruitment and support of scholars. Not many have been able to recruit "brains" as aggressively as athletic coaches can recruit "brawn."

Efforts are being made to bring scholarship back into the forefront, with considerable success. This month I attended events at two Oklahoma universities where scouting for scholars was featured and benefactors of scholarship programs recognized.

East Central University at Ada invites alumni and friends to contribute \$200 each per year to a special

scholarship fund to enlist more students with serious educational goals. It is administered by East Central University Foundation, whose treasurer is Oscar L. Parker, long-time ECU business manager, now retired.

Donors are designated by Dr. Stanley P. Wagner, ECU president, as members of the President's Advisory Council, which meets annually. Wagner says response has been gratifying in the few years that this "quest for the best" plan has been in operation.

For the current school year, Dr. Gene Stephenson, vice president for academic affairs, reported that 184 scholarships were awarded. In some cases, they may have made the difference between a student being able to attend college or not.

East Central celebrated its 75th anniversary this month. It was established in 1909 as a state normal school to train teachers, acquiring university status a few years ago. It has an enrollment of approximately 4,500.

Larger universities with more

graduates and wider recognition always have had more scholarship funds available, but they also are seeking endowments to attract more outstanding students.

Oklahoma State University at Stillwater, under leadership of OSU President L.L. Boger, began a program for "President's Distinguished Scholarships" in 1975. These are endowed by contributions of \$25,000 each, with income from the funds awarded to qualifying students for four years at OSU.

First "PDS" awards were made to four students in 1977, OSU Foundation President Charles E. Platt said. The event this month added 20 students to a total of 93 scholarships funded.

Dr. Boger announced a goal of 1,000 President's Distinguished Scholarships by the university's centennial year in 1990.

Academic achievements still have a long way to go to catch up with semi-professional athletics that dominate many university campuses, but eventually the imbalance may be corrected.