

COORDINATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN  
OKLAHOMA, 1907-1941

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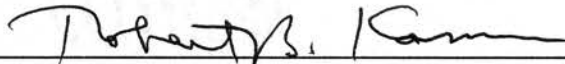
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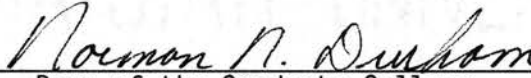


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by

Emily Patterson Harris

July, 1989

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
II. MANY DIRECTIONS . . . . .	6
III. THE MURRAY YEARS. . . . .	39
IV. ONE STATE . . . . .	64
V. SUMMARY . . . . .	78
Further Areas of Research. . . . .	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	88
APPENDIX . . . . .	92

FIGURE

Figure	Page
1. Governors' Management Styles. . . . .	82



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1941, the Coordinating Board of Oklahoma defined coordination as "the condition resulting from action which arises out of some form of regulation and control."<sup>1</sup> The history of coordination of higher education in Oklahoma, 1907 to 1941, consisted of two major periods. The first period, 1911 to 1939, focused on institutions. Two governors, Lee Cruce and Robert L. Williams, emphasized closing institutions. The elimination of unnecessary duplication was the major reason Cruce and Williams wanted some institutions closed and was the catalyst for those governors' attempts to regulate higher education. Governor William H. Murray wanted to determine the programs of study for higher education institutions. Murray also promoted the creation of a new institution--the Greater University. The Greater University would have united the state's higher education institutions in one overall governance structure. Formal coordination was discussed in the state as early as 1922. Two coordinating board bills passed the state legislature in 1929 and 1933. The first coordinating board legislation was never enacted. The second coordinating board met, gathered data, and formulated the Greater University.

It was not until 1939, the second period, that formal coordination was emphasized. Governor Leon Phillips reactivated the second coordinating board. The members of this board proposed a constitutional amendment creating a state system of higher education and a coordination

agency. The governor submitted this proposal to the legislature. In turn, a constitutional amendment was submitted to the people. The people approved the Oklahoma State System and State Regents for Higher Education in March, 1941.

The role of the governor was crucial in the discussion of higher education coordination in Oklahoma from 1907 to 1941. Gubernatorial influence and interference in the business of higher education began in the territorial days of Oklahoma. The President of the United States appointed the territorial governors. As a result, all of the territorial governors were Republican, except for one Democrat. In this atmosphere, politics were important in the appointment of persons to public positions. The territorial governors fired presidents of higher education institutions without due process<sup>2</sup> and replaced and appointed governing board members solely on their political affiliation.<sup>3</sup> The territorial governor also served as a member of the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the Oklahoma University Preparatory School governing boards.<sup>4</sup> With the territorial governor's legacy, it is not difficult to understand why a state governor would consider it his responsibility to organize and direct higher education.

The founding of the first higher education institutions in Oklahoma Territory was approached as a political program instead of as a service of the government. The location of an institution was a political reward. Although bills for higher education institutions were introduced early during the first territorial legislature in 1890, no action was taken while the competition for the location of the territorial capital took place. Guthrie representatives wanted the capital in their town and offered their competitors in Oklahoma City a combined institution. The institution would have included university, agricultural and mechanical

college, and normal school components. The Oklahoma City contingent rejected the offer. So although Guthrie became capital of the territory, Oklahoma City did not receive a combined institution. Instead of a combined institution, three institutions in three locations were founded in 1890--the University of Oklahoma in Norman, the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in Stillwater, and a normal school in Edmond. Each institution had its own board of regents.<sup>5</sup>

After the founding of the first three institutions, the territorial legislature established four additional institutions. Normal schools were founded in Alva and Weatherford with all three normal schools sharing a board of regents. A university preparatory school was located in Tonkawa with its own board of regents. The Colored Agricultural and Normal University in Langston also had its own board of regents.<sup>6</sup>

Oklahoma became a state in 1907, and the emphasis in higher education during the term of the first governor of the state, Charles Haskell, was the establishment of institutions in what was formerly Indian Territory. The Industrial Institute and College for Girls in Chickasha and the School of Mines and Metallurgy in Wilburton were created in 1908 with separate boards of regents. The regents of the School of Mines and Metallurgy were selected from the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College board, for originally the School of Mines and Metallurgy was viewed as a counterpart to the University of Oklahoma. Also in 1908, the legislature founded six secondary agricultural schools. The State Board of Agriculture governed these schools and assumed responsibility for Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1909. Because the former Oklahoma Territory had three normal schools and a preparatory school, three normal schools and a preparatory school were located in the former Indian Territory. The same board governed all of the state's normal

schools. At the end of Governor Haskell's term, the state supported 19 institutions.<sup>7</sup> At various times, many of these institutions offered levels of coursework beyond their original purpose. All of the normal, secondary agricultural, and university preparatory schools, with the exception of secondary agricultural schools in Broken Arrow and Helena, evolved into postsecondary institutions.

Higher education institutions in the state of Oklahoma had been established as a response to the general need for higher education, a perceived necessity to establish institutions in the eastern area of the state to equal those already in the western area of the state, and as political rewards. After the initial founding of the higher education institutions during the territorial period and early statehood, an array of governing boards governed the institutions. The idea that all of these state institutions needed to be a part of some kind of system began with the second state governor.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>State Coordinating Board. A System of Higher Education for Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1941), 18.

<sup>2</sup>T. B. Ferguson to Frank W. Madison, 11 March 1902; F. C. Langley to E. A. Hitchcock, 17 March 1902; T. B. Ferguson to E. A. Hitchcock, 25 March 1902, Reel 2, Territorial Papers of Oklahoma, 1889-1912, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>3</sup>Daily Leader (Guthrie), 3 August 1893.

<sup>4</sup>E. T. Dunlap, "The History of Legal Controls of Public Higher Education in Oklahoma" (Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1956), 8, 13, 23.

<sup>5</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 69-70.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, 70-71.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 71-73.

## CHAPTER II

### MANY DIRECTIONS

The early years of statehood were turbulent ones for higher education. Gubernatorial interference in management and personnel was rampant, but some governors recognized the need to develop long-term policies for higher education institutions to benefit the common good. Their approaches to the situation differed. The most active governors between 1907 and 1929 were Lee Cruce and Robert L. Williams. The Cruce administration attempted to conform Oklahoma's higher education structure to those of other states. The Williams administration was determined to reduce the number of publicly supported higher education institutions. Other governors also contributed to the history of coordination. A survey, ordered by Governor J. B. A. Robertson, provided valuable information about the status of higher education in the 1920s. Just prior to the catastrophic Crash of '29, another governor, William Holloway, presented a coordination plan to the legislature.

The second governor of Oklahoma was born in Kentucky in 1863. Lee Cruce studied law in his brother's office in Kentucky and later joined his brother in an office in Indian Territory. Cruce became a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation after he married a lady of Chickasaw heritage. In 1899, Cruce won an alderman post in the town of Ardmore, but two years later he changed to business as a career. By 1903, Cruce was president of Ardmore National Bank. As a businessman Cruce continued his political activities. He supported the formation of a single state which included

both Indian and Oklahoma Territories. His supporters encouraged Cruce to campaign for the office of first governor of Oklahoma. As a gubernatorial candidate, some of Cruce's promises were free state schools, separation of Blacks in schools and transportation, and the enforcement of laws or their repeal. Charles Haskell, a Constitutional Convention participant, defeated Cruce in the 1907 primary--but Haskell later appointed Cruce as the University of Oklahoma board of regents' president. When Cruce later decided to seek the governor's office again, his two primary opponents were William H. Murray and J. B. A. Robertson. Both Murray and Robertson became governor of Oklahoma in later years, but Cruce defeated them in 1910. Throughout his campaign, Cruce emphasized the racial issue and promised to keep Black people out of the government. Like his predecessor, Cruce defeated the Republican candidate for governor.<sup>1</sup>

Lee Cruce has been described as "reserved, cautious . . . and suspicious of others' disorder and extravagance."<sup>2</sup> These qualities served him well in his role as reformer. Apparently Cruce viewed himself as a moral and educational reformer.<sup>3</sup>

The role of the governor as an agent of coordination of higher education began with Lee Cruce. The impact of Cruce's concern for higher education in Oklahoma was felt early in his administration. Immediately following his inauguration on January 9, 1911, he made his concerns known in his "First Message" to the Oklahoma legislature. Education was the first topic he discussed.<sup>4</sup>

Cruce was concerned in particular about coordination of higher education. "Duplication of work and wasteful extravagance" were the results of noncoordination, he believed.<sup>5</sup> Article 13 of the State Constitution provided a board of education to supervise public schools. The superintendent of public instruction served as president of the board

while the governor, secretary of state, and attorney general were ex-officio members. Cruce urged the legislature to outline the responsibilities of that board.<sup>6</sup> Even though Cruce was aware of the importance of higher education in the state, the board he described would not be limited to higher education. Apparently, he did not think higher education needed a separate board, or perhaps he thought that a separate board would be unwelcome.

Cruce's recommendations met little opposition in the legislature. The 1911 Senate Bill 132 prescribed the board's powers and duties. It established a seven-member board which, per the Oklahoma Constitution, included the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The bill removed the governor, attorney general, and secretary of state from the board and required the governor to appoint six members with senate approval. Each term was for six years. At least two of the members were to be "practical school men who have had at least four years experience in actual school work, two years of which shall have been in the State of Oklahoma."<sup>7</sup> Those first members received six dollars per day and per diem expense. There was a stipulation that they could only be removed with cause, but there was no definition of what constituted a reason for removal.<sup>8</sup>

This new State Board of Education replaced several existing agencies. The State Text Commission, the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma, the Board of Regents of the two university preparatory schools, the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Industrial Institute and College for Girls, the Board of Regents for the School of Mines and Metallurgy, the Board of Regents for the Colored Agricultural and Normal University, and several boards of control of other state institutions



were all abolished. The array of institutions governed by this State Board of Education began the process of centralization.<sup>9</sup>

The State Board of Education's newly prescribed duties were as varied as the institutions it served. Its responsibilities included: supervision of public schools, development of guidelines and examinations for public school teachers, preparation of examinations for public school teachers, preparation of examinations for eighth grade graduates, development and selection of materials for reading circles and preparation of questions for reading circle certificate examinations, and supervision of commercial and business colleges. Its specific responsibilities for higher education were to design courses, select textbooks, and accredit high schools offering college preparatory work. It was also to prepare a budget for each public institution and a biennial report.<sup>10</sup>

In a few years, the State Board of Education reported to the governor that it had fulfilled its mission to eliminate "all unnecessary duplications from the courses of study of the various State Institutions and has assigned to these schools their proper scope."<sup>11</sup> The Board also reported that it had saved the state thousands of dollars because of this new efficiency. The Board alleged that each kind of school (normal, preparatory, university, and agricultural) had been purged of those tasks not relevant to its original purpose.<sup>12</sup>

The governor's interest in elimination of duplication extended beyond the state board of education. In accordance with Cruce's wishes, Representative Oliver Aiken of Cleveland County filed a referendum petition in November of 1911 to abolish East Central Normal School, Eastern Oklahoma University Preparatory School, Industrial Institute and College for Girls, Normal Schools for Teachers in Alva and Weatherford, Northeastern Normal School, Oklahoma University Preparatory School, School of

Mines and Metallurgy, and the State Agricultural Schools in Broken Arrow, Goodwell, Helena, Lawton, Tishomingo, and Warner. Additionally, the University of Oklahoma was asked to absorb the School of Mines and Metallurgy, and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College was asked to absorb the Industrial Institute and College for Girls. Other schools would receive monies from the sale or lease of the closed school land.<sup>13</sup>

Reaction among the institutions to the Aiken bill was bitter. The bill was described as one "of lowly origin" and as one which had "stirred Oklahoma from center to circumference."<sup>14</sup> Opponents to the bill reasoned that tax savings would be minimal, thus eliminating any economic benefit. Other arguments against the bill were the United States Constitution and the Enabling Act. The Constitution directed: No state shall pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts. The Enabling Act of 1906 granted land to the University of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma University Preparatory School, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Colored Agricultural and Normal University, and the normal schools. Oklahoma had accepted the land, thus entering into, according to the argument, a contract to support those institutions. Once a school was established, the state would violate the people's trust and in some cases the people's deeds of land by closing those schools.<sup>15</sup> Representative Aiken himself added to the controversy.<sup>16</sup> He wrote to the presidents of the schools that would not be affected and directed them to send him money for legal fees. If the money were not forthcoming, Aiken promised that any positive feelings toward the schools would become negative ones.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the bill failed.<sup>18</sup>

Higher education reform continued to be of great interest to Governor Cruce, and he decided to seek professional advice from the nation's leading colleges and universities, the Carnegie Foundation for the

Advancement of Teaching, the Education Commissioner for the State of New York, and the Bureau of Education in Washington, D.C. The governor wanted to know if the elimination of institutions would help the state. His previous investigation had revealed that Oklahoma had the largest number of state-supported institutions of higher education in the nation. Cruce characterized the public schools (common schools) as "splendid" and "easily accessible."<sup>19</sup> In one of his letters, it was clear that he felt it was the governor's responsibility "to work out for Oklahoma a sensible, permanent school system."<sup>20</sup>

Cruce received many responses. The majority favored an overall reduction in the number of schools, a reduction in the state normal schools from six to two, the elimination of the two university preparatory schools, and the absorption of the School of Mines and Metallurgy by the University of Oklahoma. One president recommended that each normal school have a special training field and one management system.<sup>21</sup> Several presidents suggested consolidation of the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the School of Mines and Metallurgy. David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, suggested combining the Industrial Institute and College for Girls, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the University of Oklahoma.<sup>22</sup> The combined institution, according to Jordan, should be near a city, but with a model farm.<sup>23</sup> Another president recommended that the University of Oklahoma absorb everything--except the school for colored boys.<sup>24</sup> Only one president, W. O. Thompson of Ohio State University, specifically commented on the separation of Blacks in the education system. He recognized the "southern sentiment" on such a question.<sup>25</sup>

A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard University sent a succinct reply. His opinions reflected those of the majority. Acknowledging a lack of

knowledge about Oklahoma's needs, Lowell advised reducing the number of state schools, creating two normal schools of "first-rate quality," eliminating university preparatory schools and the School of Mines and Metallurgy, and absorbing the Industrial Institute and College for Girls by Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (only if girls already attended Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College).<sup>26</sup>

Some responses commented on the character of the state. Jordan sent a spirited response in which he wrote "to scatter state funds among all these schools is to condemn the whole system to mediocrity."<sup>27</sup> James H. Baker, University of Colorado president, voiced a similar opinion:

No greater mistake in the history of this country has been made than the scattering of educational institutions on account of political or local interests, and you never will have in Oklahoma a strong educational institution of any class until you have made the changes proposed by this bill.<sup>28</sup>

The president of Indiana University, W. L. Bryan, wrote that one of his faculty had visited the University of Oklahoma and concluded that it did not matter what Oklahoma did until they removed politics from education.<sup>29</sup>

The respondents were more than happy to offer detailed advice. The structure of teacher-training programs, the number of students necessary for a successful normal school, the best kind of agricultural education, and the division of state revenue were some of the topics discussed. Only H. H. Seerley, president of Iowa State Teachers College, addressed the need for coordination. He recommended a unit board which would supervise and control all state educational institutions. Seerly thought this would eliminate competition for state revenue.<sup>30</sup>

Among the responses there was a clear inclination toward the positive effects of consolidation of institutional missions. The president of Yale University, Arthur T. Hadley, prophetically recognized the

political reality of local interests thwarting such reform.<sup>31</sup> Other replies were received from the Armour Institute of Technology, the Bureau of Education in the Department of the Interior, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Commissioner of Education for the State of New York, Cornell University, South Dakota State College, State University of Iowa, University of Chicago, University of Montana, University of Pennsylvania, University of South Dakota, and University of Wisconsin. The leading educators of the nation had given Cruce plenty of information to ponder. Their responses came at a time when the basic structure of the American university had become stable, with few new ideas advanced after the early 1900s.<sup>32</sup>

Lynn Glover, president of the Oklahoma University Preparatory School in Tonkawa, notified Governor Cruce that he had also collected opinions from national educators.<sup>33</sup> The tone of Glover's letter was quite different than Cruce's. Included in the former's letter was an outline of the higher education institutions in the state and some statistics. According to Glover, the governor would ask the next legislature to abolish 10 schools, even though a similar proposal, the Aiken bill, had failed earlier. He thought a number of schools would be attacked, and wrote: "The Governor claims that our State Normals are not performing the true function of the normal, primarily because of the fact that they admit students in the ninth grade."<sup>34</sup> Although Glover expressed concern for the normal school, his experience had taught him that the governor would attack the preparatory schools as well.

The replies to Glover's letter were also different than Cruce's.<sup>35</sup> The president of a normal school in Missouri advised "some freedom" for Oklahoma's institutions. Elimination of institutions would be a great mistake, he advised, and would limit Oklahoma's growth. Institutions

should not be limited to their original purpose. Normal schools could also provide agricultural education, agricultural schools could prepare rural school teachers, and university preparatory schools could do some of it all. Retention of all institutions would make Oklahoma a great state. Glover was advised to "move slowly."<sup>36</sup> The president of a normal school in Illinois wrote that elimination of institutions would be harmful and that no state had ever suffered "from having too many attractions of this kind."<sup>37</sup>

On January 7, 1913, Governor Cruce addressed the Fourth Legislature concerning closing some institutions. This address was more critical than the one made two years earlier. He accused "self-interested individuals" of stealing from the taxpayers.<sup>38</sup> He added:

The number of well informed men in this State who believe that the number of higher educational institutions we now have are necessary, is so small as to be inconsiderable. There is almost uniform agreement on the part of the people that some of these schools should be abolished. The trouble is, however, that there are few men in public life who have undertaken to designate the schools that should be eliminated.<sup>39</sup>

Cruce recommended the closure of three state normal schools, the university preparatory schools, and five agricultural schools. He also recommended that the University of Oklahoma absorb the School of Mines and Metallurgy. The only school he specifically recommended to remain open was the Panhandle Agricultural School in Goodwell, because of its location, climate, and soil.<sup>40</sup>

The address provoked a great deal of legislative activity. The Senate immediately ordered an investigation of all educational institutions, although the object of the investigation was unclear.<sup>41</sup> Representative Berry of McIntosh County introduced a bill to abolish the normal schools in Ada, Durant, and Weatherford.<sup>42</sup> Representative Pruett of Caddo County introduced a creative resolution to house the School for

the Blind and the Home for Orphan Girls and similar state institutions at one of the agricultural schools Cruce proposed to close. This resolution required the representative of that school's district to volunteer his agricultural school, which would have been tantamount to the representative saying the school was unnecessary.<sup>43</sup> Obviously, such an admission would have been political suicide. In another vein, Representative Peters of Osage County entered a resolution which required towns where smaller institutions were located to pay the light and water bills,<sup>44</sup> which would have forced some of the state's responsibilities onto the local communities.

Other legislative activity centered on the consolidation of the School of Mines and Metallurgy and the University of Oklahoma. House Bill 626 proposed the merger. Dr. Stratton D. Brooks, president of the University of Oklahoma, supported the consolidation because the university already offered those courses in its College of Engineering. This would save money, and the School of Mines would be more prestigious if it were associated with the university. P. R. Allen, President of the State Mining Board, also endorsed the bill. Another supporter was Dr. George E. Ladd, president of the School of Mines and Metallurgy. The three men concluded that mining education, including extension work and research, would improve.<sup>45</sup>

In an address to the House Committee on Education in February, 1913, Ladd explained that many states located their schools of mining within a university. House Bill 626 would transfer the first two years to the University of Oklahoma and make the School of Mines and Metallurgy a college within the university. This would eliminate duplication but would not abolish the school. Change was needed because the school did not have high enrollment, and consolidation would help make it more

competitive. Ladd said that the miners did not support the bill because they did not understand the bill. Although parts of the school would transfer to Norman, Ladd assured the miners that the remaining school in Wilburton would continue extension work with the miners. Oklahoma would continue its tradition of working closely with the miners. According to Ladd, the entire faculty and student body favored the bill. He urged all to look beyond local interests to the welfare of the entire state.<sup>46</sup>

A group of citizens, called the "Wilburton Improvement League," accused Ladd of secretly creating the plan to merge the School of Mines and Metallurgy with the university. He had not consulted the representative and senator from Latimer County, the League said Ladd misrepresented the facts at Wilburton and accused him of trying to control local politics. In conclusion, the League said he was ruining the School of Mines and Metallurgy.<sup>47</sup>

Ladd replied that the people of Wilburton did not understand mining education; his concern was for the miner. Previously, he learned that appropriations would be cut and that would have surely ended the school. People had attacked him, according to Ladd, because they could not attack the bill.<sup>48</sup> Even with the support of the presidents of both institutions, the Wilburton community triumphed. The two institutions did not merge. Change was successfully resisted.

Other plans for change also met resistance. A Committee on General Appropriations submitted a majority report to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in February, 1913, which supported 23 institutions. Funds would be appropriated for maintenance and some improvements in all of these institutions. A minority report proposed the elimination of 12 institutions:<sup>49</sup> the university preparatory schools; the normal schools in Durant, Tahlequah, and Weatherford; the School of Mines and



Metallurgy; and the agricultural schools in Broken Arrow, Helena, Lawton, Tishomingo, and Warner.<sup>50</sup>

Some of the presidents of the normal schools published a defense of their institutions.<sup>51</sup> The defense compared Oklahoma's normal school standards with those of other states and found Oklahoma equal to or superior to those states. Centralization of normal school function was found undesirable because it was more expensive. The closed institution's grounds would be of no value to the state, and the remaining institutions would need to add to their physical plants to accommodate additional students. The state was in dire need of teachers, argued the presidents, and this meant the state needed its normal schools. If the normal schools were not perfect, neither were any of Oklahoma's other higher education institutions. The defense also discussed the advice national educators gave Governor Cruce and dismissed any arguments favorable to centralization because the "heads of great universities" were not qualified to give advice about normal schools. This, the defense argued, should be left to the leaders of the elementary school system. Although the report was uneven--for example it gave detailed information about some states but not others--it did represent a willingness to cooperate to defeat a common enemy--the governor.<sup>52</sup>

Various factions voiced opinions about the proposed abolition of some institutions, and a dramatic confrontation took place in the House. Some wanted institutions closed; some did not. Some wanted to vote on one appropriations bill while others wanted to vote on separate bills for each institution. Representative H. H. Smith of Pottawatomie County said the present system was "outrageous and indefensible."<sup>53</sup> Representative W. A. Durant<sup>54</sup> of Bryan County, the location of Southeastern State Normal School, said "public service corporations, special interests and a few

millionaires in Oklahoma City were responsible for the agitation against the state schools."<sup>55</sup> The battle lines were drawn. As Smith spoke in the House on March 1, 1913, people in the galleries enthusiastically voiced their support. Smith said:

It has been charged that the people do not want to abolish any schools. If that be so, I dare any of you to vote for a bill that is on this calendar to refer the matter to a vote of the people. My future has been threatened if I raise my voice against this nasty political scheme to get the taxpayers' money under the guise of educating our children. How many more times have I got to stand here and plead for the people against the machine that controls this house?<sup>56</sup>

Representative A. Bond of Rogers County said that Smith himself had tried to form a machine in the House and that Smith was angry because he had lost his bid for Speaker of the House. Then Bond introduced a letter Smith had written to former Speaker of the House William H. Murray as proof of Bond's allegations.<sup>57</sup> This incident was "one of the most bitter debates ever witnessed on the floor" of the House.<sup>58</sup>

The attempt to refer the abolition of institutions to the people was in the form of the Woodward Resolution. Representative W. W. Woodward of Swanson County proposed a question for the people.<sup>59</sup> It asked them to approve abolition of: agricultural schools in Broken Arrow, Helena, Lawton, Tishomingo, and Warner; the preparatory schools; the Industrial Institute and College for Women; the School of Mines and Metallurgy; and three normal schools.<sup>60</sup> The resolution failed to receive the necessary legislative support but was revived after the governor became involved.<sup>61</sup>

As no action on appropriations had been taken, Cruce recommended that the question be submitted to the people. If the institutions were continued, he said, they should receive adequate appropriations. Each institution, he continued, should be judged on its own merit. He suggested appropriations to help the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma

Agricultural and Mechanical College become competitive with institutions in other states. If the legislature submitted such a question to the people, Cruce vowed to support appropriations for all of the higher education institutions.<sup>62</sup> The Woodward Resolution failed once again in the legislature,<sup>63</sup> but Cruce signed appropriation bills for the institutions anyway.<sup>64</sup> In Cruce's term as governor, no higher education institutions were closed.<sup>65</sup> The governor had failed in his vision of reforming the system for Oklahoma.

Robert L. Williams, the third governor of Oklahoma, was born in 1868 in Alabama and was raised on a farm in a religious atmosphere. After attending a university and studying law, he moved to Oklahoma Territory. His move was unsuccessful financially, and he returned to Alabama. Williams then became a minister but decided that he was not suited to that profession. In 1896, he moved to Indian Territory<sup>66</sup> where he prospered as a landowner and corporation lawyer for the railroads.<sup>67</sup> Also, he became involved in the Democrat Party. He favored the combination of Indian and Oklahoma Territories as one state and served as a representative to the Constitutional Convention. Appointed as the first Chief Justice of Oklahoma, Williams later decided to seek the governor's office.<sup>68</sup> Throughout his career, Williams was able to shift political positions, but he was generally known as a conservative Democrat. These qualities served him particularly well as a gubernatorial candidate at a time when the Socialist Party seemed a viable choice to the voters in the state. After a well organized campaign, Williams was successful.<sup>69</sup>

At a time when national attention focused on the United States' entry into World War I, Governor Robert L. Williams provided Oklahomans with education-related topics for debate. As Chief Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, Williams followed the appropriation debates during

Cruce's term as governor.<sup>70</sup> After Williams resigned as Chief Justice and became governor in 1915, he was very active in efforts to define institutional missions and to reduce the number of publicly supported institutions in the state.

Cruce had unsuccessfully tried to reduce the number of normal schools; Williams took a different approach. While Williams campaigned for governor, he was advised to advocate the retention of normal schools.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, he knew from Cruce's experience and from others' advice that the closure of normal schools would be bitterly opposed. Instead of recommending that the schools close, Williams recommended that the normal schools serve certain districts.<sup>72</sup> This suggestion may not have been as unusual as it appears. The agricultural schools had been formed initially to serve each Supreme Court judicial district.<sup>73</sup> On January 6, 1917, E. A. MacMillan of the Department of Biology and Agriculture at East Central State Normal informed Williams of his support for districts for normal schools. MacMillan hoped to reduce duplication. Apparently, another normal school had vigorously competed for East Central's students, and MacMillan did not like it. He wrote that one of the normal school's "literature . . . literally floods the state."<sup>74</sup> Most educators in the state agreed with the governor's views, according to MacMillan.<sup>75</sup>

During Williams' term, Senate Bill 141 divided the state into six districts and assigned counties to each one. There was a normal school for each district. No tuition was charged if a student attended the normal school in his district, but if a student attended a normal school in another district, there was a registration fee of four dollars. If a president of any of the schools allowed a student from another district to attend without paying the fee, the president would be guilty of a

misdemeanor and fined between \$10 and \$100. The State Board of Education would then remove the president from office. This provision reflected both on-going interference in educational institutions and the governors' wish to exercise control. The State Board of Education was directed to require consistent standards and courses.<sup>76</sup> The Board directed the schools to limit their activities to their districts. These districts lasted at least through Williams' term.<sup>77</sup>

In a message on House Bill 407, a bill providing appropriations for the Panhandle State School of Agriculture, Williams' views of the state normal schools and school mission became clear. Williams excluded monies for the summer normal school at Panhandle, concluding that six normal schools were more than enough. Those people living in Beaver, Cimarron, and Texas counties who wished to become teachers could attend the Northwestern Normal School in Alva.<sup>78</sup>

Governor Williams did not limit his interests to the normal schools; he also took action of a more serious nature on the agricultural schools. On February 28, 1917, he vetoed House Bill 173 without comment. This bill provided appropriations for the Connell State School of Agriculture in Helena.<sup>79</sup> Later that week, the House, per Williams' recommendation, passed a bill which converted the Haskell District Agricultural School in Broken Arrow<sup>80</sup> into a home for the indigent and infirm.<sup>81</sup> Williams approved appropriations for the other four agricultural schools, but with misgivings.<sup>82</sup>

Frank M. Gault, president of the State Board of Agriculture, the constitutionally mandated governing board for all agricultural institutions, opposed the closing of the schools in Broken Arrow and Helena. Gault said those schools produced more "practical farmers" than the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.<sup>83</sup> He reminded the governor

that southern states, such as Alabama and Arkansas, supported this kind of education and as a result had saved abandoned land. He called Oklahoma "the greatest agricultural state in the union."<sup>84</sup> Scientific farming methods were crucial to reduce the cost of living. Further, Gault did not agree with Williams' arguments that the school in Helena was too close to the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and that closure would save money. Gault predicted a tenfold increase in agricultural schools in the future.<sup>85</sup> He was wrong. The Broken Arrow and Helena schools never reopened.

The preparatory schools also did not escape the Williams' axe. He vetoed appropriations for the Eastern University Preparatory School without comment. In March, 1917, he sent a message to the House outlining appropriations for 10 institutions. All were approved except the appropriation for the Oklahoma University Preparatory School. Lynn Glover's earlier fears had come true. Williams explained why he failed to approve that appropriation by saying that the school was founded because there were no high schools in Oklahoma to prepare students for the university in Norman. That situation no longer existed--there were now high schools in the state. The only rationale for the continuance of the Oklahoma University Preparatory School would be to locate it in Norman, where it would serve students from districts with no high school. The Oklahoma University Preparatory School would also serve as a training department for teachers.<sup>86</sup> Apparently, a Senate Bill was introduced without success in June, 1917, to relocate the school in Norman.<sup>87</sup>

The appropriation bill for the Oklahoma University Preparatory School contained the clause: "provided that the State Board of Education shall have authority to extend the function of said institution."<sup>88</sup> Williams said this violated provisions of the Enabling Act, which

specifically gave land to the university and the preparatory school. To extend the Oklahoma University Preparatory School's function would not be what the act intended. In addition, Williams referred to the Democrat Party platform, which promised economy: "Our state institutions and schools must be reasonably maintained and supported with a view of attaining the objects for which they were created."<sup>89</sup> If the Oklahoma University Preparatory School became another state university, Williams said the University of Oklahoma might suffer financially.<sup>90</sup>

Opposition to Williams' veto mounted quickly. A group of Tonkawa citizens and Representative Henry W. Headley of Kay County appealed to the governor to keep the Oklahoma University Preparatory School open.<sup>91</sup> Craftily, Williams responded to his critics in the state's newspapers. He referred the question of appropriations to the people and asked for their opinions about his vetoes.<sup>92</sup> The president of the school, W. C. French, appealed to the people not to send letters which supported closing the school. French explained that the school in Tonkawa had one of the largest enrollments in the state--415--and included students from all over the state. The school only wanted the income from its land (New College Fund) granted by the Enabling Act; it was not supported by taxes.<sup>93</sup> The governor received hundreds of letters. One report estimated that 90% approved terminating the schools in Broken Arrow and Helena and supported more closings. Some of the letters mentioned Claremore, Tonkawa, and Wilburton specifically.<sup>94</sup> Lynn Glover, then president of the School of Mines and Metallurgy, suggested that University of Oklahoma faculty and residents of Norman, Oklahoma City, and Stillwater had written a number of the letters.<sup>95</sup> Closed schools would perhaps mean more students for the institutions in Norman and Stillwater.

The people in Wilburton sensed what was coming for the School of Mines and Metallurgy and made plans. The Wilburton Commercial Club and Booster League appealed to citizens to donate money to operate the school until the next legislative session. An appeal to the United Mine Workers of America was also planned.<sup>96</sup> The fears in Wilburton were well-founded. In 1917, Governor Williams did not approve Senate Bill 223, which provided appropriations for the School of Mines and Metallurgy. The governor said mining engineering was important, but it would be offered at the university or the agricultural and mechanical college. Either of those institutions or the Vocational Board could arrange extension work for miners. Defensively, Williams said:

None of the friends of said institution locally who talked to me about it contended that said institution could be made a success exclusively as a school of mines; but their plan was to convert it into a school of technology or junior college.<sup>97</sup>

According to Williams, Oklahoma certainly did not need anymore schools such as that any more.<sup>98</sup>

Former Speaker of the House, William H. Murray, expressed his views about Williams' actions. Murray supported maintenance of all of the educational institutions. The normal schools were necessary to train desperately needed teachers, and the agricultural schools produced educated farmers. If the preparatory schools no longer fulfilled their original purpose, other assignments could be made. The state had invested a large sum of money in the institutions. He warned that no institution was safe from the "despotic" Williams veto.<sup>99</sup>

Governor Williams successfully closed five institutions in 1917: the agricultural schools in Broken Arrow and Helena; the School of Mines and Metallurgy in Wilburton; and the preparatory schools in Claremore and Tonkawa. His actions left many people dissatisfied and of course, he



left opponents in the legislature. Citizens in the towns of those institutions wanted them reopened.<sup>100</sup> There was dissatisfaction with his use of the veto.<sup>101</sup>

As the Williams' vetoes affected 1918-1919 budgets, nothing could be done to reopen the closed schools until 1919. In that year, the legislature did not lose any time dismantling the work of Cruce and Williams. Governor J. B. A. Robertson offered no resistance. He had indicated earlier that he was not opposed to the maintenance of Oklahoma's educational institutions.<sup>102</sup> Appropriations, given to the School of Mines and Metallurgy and the Oklahoma University Preparatory School, effectively reopened both schools.<sup>103</sup> Separate Boards of Regents were created for each of them. Separate boards were also created for the Colored Agricultural and Normal University, the Oklahoma College for Women, and the University of Oklahoma.<sup>104</sup> Although a bill was introduced to revive the Broken Arrow school, it failed.<sup>105</sup> Representative H. T. Kight of Rogers County proposed a bill for the Oklahoma Military Academy to be located where the Eastern University Preparatory School had been. The bill passed, and the academy had its own board of regents.<sup>106</sup>

In addition to the three reopened institutions, a new one was founded in the same year. The Miami Chamber of Commerce invited the Senate to inspect lead and zinc mines before it voted on a bill for a second School of Mines. Senator J. J. Smith of Miami, the sponsor of the bill, and others went to Miami. The bill passed, with some difficulty, shortly afterward. The Miami school also had its own board.<sup>107</sup>

In 1921, Senate Bill 19 created a Commission of Educational Survey. The bill directed the commission to employ education experts from other states and the National Bureau of Education to conduct a survey of the efficiency of Oklahoma's public education. Governor Robertson was

responsible for appointment of all its members, except for the State Superintendent. In the selection of commission members, Robertson looked for the following:

I do not want any school or faction or business interest or any other one element to dominate or control the commission. I want broad-minded men of vision sufficient to comprehend the needs of all classes of people as well as all interests of the state, itself.<sup>108</sup>

After a thorough investigation, a number of recommendations were made. These general recommendations were: coordination, reorganization of the State Board of Education, unification of general control, determination of objectives, definition of functions and responsibilities, determination of standards, adequate financial support, preparation of the budget, progressive development, improvement of structure and composition of boards, and attention to educational leaders. Clearly, Oklahoma's higher education was in critical need of reform. The commission's general observations indicated a lack of mission and direction. Specifically, the report recommended a reduction of boards and some commonality of purpose for institutions governed by the same board. Without explanation, the survey stated that one single board was not advisable. The following model was suggested:

- 1) Board of Regents for the University of Oklahoma, which would supervise any junior colleges and have authority to approve any planned junior colleges;
- 2) Board of Regents for the agricultural colleges;
- 3) Board of Regents for the state teachers' colleges;
- 4) Board of Regents for the Oklahoma College for Women, with some women as members.<sup>109</sup>

The survey suggested some mechanism for communication and coordination among the boards. Oklahoma needed some kind of coordination agency. Other specific suggestions were: closure of some institutions, repeal of the constitution to remove the State Board of Agriculture as the board of

control of the agricultural colleges, the State Board of Education should be a regulatory board only, removal of the State Board of Public Affairs as financial manager, no ex-officio members on boards to avoid blatant political interference, and discontinue removal of presidents for political reasons.<sup>110</sup> These suggestions were directed toward the single goal of removing, as much as possible, politics from education. Overall, the survey findings led to the need for some kind of coordination agency.

In 1922, the thoughtful survey received little publicity and the governor who commissioned it was no longer in office. Reaction to it focused on school finance, but there was some interest in the higher education findings. Characteristically, there was interest in the recommendations to close some institutions. The report identified the agricultural schools, the Oklahoma Military Academy, the School of Mines and Metallurgy in Wilburton, and the Oklahoma University Preparatory School as candidates. Attention was also given to the suggestion for four boards and the removal of the State Board of Agriculture as a board for agricultural institutions.<sup>111</sup> Interest in the survey was limited to discussion. The state quickly became embroiled in the controversy surrounding the new governor.

Jack Walton was elected governor in 1922 and during his term of office provided the most blatant example of the use of patronage. The state inherited the patronage system from the territorial administrations, and the higher education institutions were not exempt. Patronage certainly influenced educators' attitudes toward both the governor's office and that office's ability to interfere in educational matters. The histories of individual institutions demonstrated the effect of the governor's powers.<sup>112</sup> The presidents of institutions changed frequently. For example, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College had 11

presidents between 1891 and 1923.<sup>113</sup> Walton replaced most of the members of every board, except for the State Board of Education, and four presidents.<sup>114</sup> Like Cruce and Williams before him, Walton planned to close the preparatory school in Tonkawa. It appeared that Walton's plan was abandoned after a group of Tonkawa citizens helped pay for his inaugural party.<sup>115</sup> In addition to his interference in higher education, Walton alienated other people. Finally, after he tried to control the prominent Ku Klux Klan through martial law, he was impeached. It is little wonder that the Educational Survey Commission report did not capture sustained public interest.<sup>116</sup>

Although politicians did not appear concerned about coordination of higher education, educators in the state were concerned. Henry G. Bennett, president of Southeastern Teachers College, addressed this issue in his 1926 dissertation. He continually stressed the inadequacies of a number of uncoordinated boards. He recommended three governing boards for the state. The institutions governed by each board would have similar missions. Perhaps the Educational Survey Commission report influenced him in this respect. The first board would govern the university, the Oklahoma College for Women, and junior colleges. The agricultural institutions would have their own board. The Board of Regents for Teachers Colleges would govern all teachers colleges. Bennett also recommended longer terms of office for board members to reduce political influence. A member could be removed for cause only. He recognized the importance of the governor's role in higher education:

With each change in administration of the state government it becomes possible for the Governor, if he so desires, to change the membership of every board of control at once with the exceptions of the State Board of Education.<sup>117</sup>

Bennett was the first to outline a central coordinating system for Oklahoma. Some duties of such an agency were: financial studies of higher educational institutions; various councils, such as a president's council, to exchange information; approval of curriculum; approval of missions of institutions; and establishment of new institutions. The benefits of his system were better relationships, planning, and overall functioning.<sup>118</sup>

Unlike the 1922 survey recommendation that the State Board of Education be regulatory only, Bennett suggested it as the central agency for the state system. He felt this was in tandem with the state constitution. The board had been given more authority in 1917, when the legislature provided for the board to approve the granting of degrees. The people respected the board, and it was conveniently located. Governing boards would supervise the management of institutions, but the State Board of Education would have overall responsibility.<sup>119</sup>

While Henry G. Bennett was an upperclassman at Ouachita College in Arkansas, he befriended a younger student named William Holloway. The two friends would later help each others' careers. When Holloway moved to Oklahoma, Bennett assisted him in obtaining a position as an elementary school principal. Later Bennett became a superintendent and appointed Holloway as a high school principal. Holloway decided to change careers and became a lawyer and then served in succession as a prosecuting attorney, state senator, acting governor, and lieutenant governor. In the latter position, Holloway was instrumental in Bennett's appointment as Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College president. While Holloway was lieutenant governor, the governor was impeached after two years of an acrimonious relationship with the legislature. Governor Henry S. Johnston's impeachment catapulted Holloway into the governor's

mansion in 1929. It is generally accepted that Holloway was well liked and brought some stability to Oklahoma government during his two years as governor. As governor of the state, Holloway was once again in a position to help Henry G. Bennett.<sup>120</sup>

Governor William Holloway adopted Bennett's coordination proposals. In a message to the Twelfth Legislature, Holloway advocated a single system of higher education. He noted that there had been no coordination of efforts and encouraged cooperation instead of competition. He recommended the Bennett plan of three boards. Holloway hoped the question of the State Board of Agriculture's participation in education would be submitted to the people. Because the governor could remove members of this board, its separation from educational matters would mean less political interference. The legislature was assured that this was not an attempt to diminish the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. Four duties of a central coordination agency were outlined: fact-finding; interpretation and definition of functions; promotion of cooperative work relations; and development of an overall plan for the state.<sup>121</sup> These duties were a distillation of Bennett's overall plan. The message was "warmly" received in the legislature.<sup>122</sup>

The legislature passed the first coordination law two months later. The coordinating board members included the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, five state presidents, and two governor-designated appointees. The four duties of the coordinating board were the exact ones Holloway had outlined earlier. The board was to report annually to the governor, providing information on the costs of higher education and the present and future needs of the state institutions. The board would be responsible for articulation of institutional missions and would prevent unnecessary duplication of courses and programs. The councils, as

Bennett planned, would promote cooperation among institutions. Overall, the board would unify and provide direction for higher education.<sup>123</sup>

Although the bill passed, the board never met. The governor never named any appointees. Perhaps the board was not formed because the State Superintendent of Public Instructions' main interest was the common schools, and many presidents felt their programs would be limited.<sup>124</sup> Bennett later implied that the Crash of '29 was responsible for Governor Holloway's inaction.<sup>125</sup>

The Oklahoma College Association was another attempt to foster voluntary coordination. Formed in 1929 after Holloway's speech, the organization had an ambitious program. Some goals of the organization were the cooperation of higher education institutions with junior colleges and high schools, statewide cooperation among college administrators, and statewide preparation of college-bound students.<sup>126</sup> The association appears to have met only sporadically but was still significant for two major reasons. It prepared institutional presidents for the next, more active stage of coordination of higher education, and it also served as a forum for Francis C. Kelley, Bishop of Oklahoma, who advocated public and private cooperation.<sup>127</sup> His ideas would be important to coordination of higher education in the state. Bishop Kelly would become a major architect of the next coordination of higher education plan.

In light of the above, it can be seen that Oklahoma went from decentralization to centralization to decentralization in a period of only 22 years, 1907-1929. The failure of the governor to activate the coordinating board in 1929 kept the higher education institutions operating with a number of boards of regents, there was no agency actively coordinating activities, and there was no general plan for the direction of

higher education. Oklahoma had gone in many directions in a few years. Yet, there were those who would not forget the lessons of this time.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., Oklahoma's Governors, 1907-1929: Turbulent Politics (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1981), 49-53.

<sup>2</sup>James R. Scales and Danney Goble, Oklahoma Politics: A History (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 52.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 53-54.

<sup>4</sup>First Message to the Third Legislature, 10 January 1911, Lee Cruce Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Senate Bill Number 132, 2 March 1911, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>State Board of Education to Lee Cruce [n.d.], Robert L. Williams Papers, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 28 November 1911.

<sup>14</sup>Crimson Rambler (Tonkawa), December 1911.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>On November 21, 1912 the Tonkawa News reported that Aiken had been arrested in California for "bad checks."

<sup>17</sup>Oliver H. Aiken to Edmund D. Murdaugh, 30 April 1912, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>18</sup>Lynn Glover to Cruce, 23 November 1912, Cruce Papers.

<sup>19</sup>Cruce to F. W. Gunsaulus, 21 December 1911, *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

- <sup>21</sup>H. H. Seerley to Cruce, 26 December 1911, *ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup>Jordan spoke at the Oklahoma University Preparatory School in June 1914, although he recommended closure of any preparatory schools. See Mac Hefton Bradley, From UPS to NOC: 1901-1976 (Tonkawa, OK: Northern Oklahoma College, 1976), 46.
- <sup>23</sup>David Starr Jordan to Cruce, 28 December 1911, Cruce Papers.
- <sup>24</sup>[A. S. Draper?] to Cruce, 26 December 1911, *ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup>W. O. Thompson to Cruce, 8 January 1912, *ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup>A. Lawrence Lowell to Cruce, 26 December 1911, *ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup>Jordan to Cruce, 28 December 1911, *ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup>James H. Baker to Cruce, 26 December 1911, *ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup>W. L. Bryan to Cruce, 9 January 1912, *ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup>H. H. Seerley to Cruce, 26 December 1911, *ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup>Arthur T. Hadley to Cruce, 26 December 1911, *ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup>Laurence R. Veysey, The Emergence of the American University (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 338.
- <sup>33</sup>Glover to Cruce, 23 November 1912, Cruce Papers.
- <sup>34</sup>Glover to "Dear Sir," 1912, *ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup>Only two replies are in the Cruce papers and there are no Glover papers at Northern Oklahoma College.
- <sup>36</sup>W. T. Carrington to Glover, 19 November 1912, Cruce Papers.
- <sup>37</sup>D. B. Parkinson to Glover, 20 November 1912, *ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup>Message to the Fourth Legislature, 7 January 1913, State Coordinating Board, System, 95-96.
- <sup>39</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 12 January 1913.
- <sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 16 January 1913.
- <sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 18 January 1913.
- <sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 8 February 1913.
- <sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 12 February 1913; 16 February 1913.
- <sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 19 February 1913.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 22 February 1913.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 24 February 1913.

<sup>49</sup>The report also suggested closure of the Negro Institute for the Deaf and Blind at Taft.

<sup>50</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 2 March 1913.

<sup>51</sup>No authors' names are identified in the document.

<sup>52</sup>A Defense of the Oklahoma Normal Schools by the Presidents [n.d.], Department of Social Sciences Papers, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, Oklahoma.

<sup>53</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 1 March 1913.

<sup>54</sup>Durant was a hero at Southeastern Normal School for his efforts in keeping the school open. See L. David Norris, A History of Southeastern Oklahoma State University Since 1909, 2 vols. (Durant, OK: Mesa Publishing, 1986), I:78-79.

<sup>55</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 1 March 1913.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 2 March 1913; Daily Oklahoman, 2 March 1913.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Norris, Southeastern, I:78.

<sup>59</sup>Swanson County was a temporary county with representatives in the 1911 and 1913 legislatures only.

<sup>60</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 4 March 1913.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 17 April, 1913.

<sup>62</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 19 March 1913.

<sup>63</sup>Norris, Southeastern, I:81-82.

<sup>64</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 26 April 1913; 6 May 1913.

<sup>65</sup>At the end of his term, the legislature attempted to impeach Cruce. See Scales and Goble, Politics, 58.

<sup>66</sup>Fischer, Governors, 1907-1929, 67-69.

<sup>67</sup>Scales and Goble, Politics, 73.

<sup>68</sup>Fischer, Governors, 1907-1929, 69-71.

<sup>69</sup>Scales and Goble, Politics, 74-75.

<sup>70</sup>C. C. Hatchett to Robert L. Williams, 13 March 1913, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>71</sup>J. W. Bolen to Williams, 16 June 1914, *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>E. A. MacMillan to Williams, 6 January 1917, Robert L. Williams Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>73</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 79.

<sup>74</sup>MacMillan to Williams, 6 January 1917, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup>Senate Bill Number 141 [n.d.], *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup>John A. Walker, ed., The East Central Story: From Normal School to University, 1909-1984 (Ada, OK: East Central University Foundation, 1984), 17.

<sup>78</sup>House Bill Number 407, 31 March 1917, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>79</sup>List of Appropriations Disapproved by the Governor [n.d.], *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup>The land was deeded to a school district in Tulsa County. See State Coordinating Board, System, 96.

<sup>81</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 3 March 1917.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 1 April 1917.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 4 March 1917.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup>Message to the Sixth Legislature, 14 March 1917, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>87</sup>Senate Bill, 30 June 1917, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>88</sup>Message to the Sixth Legislature, 14 March 1917, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 16 March 1917.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, 19 March 1917.

- <sup>93</sup>Ibid., 25 March 1917.
- <sup>94</sup>Ibid., 26 March 1917.
- <sup>95</sup>Glover to Williams, 2 April 1917, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- <sup>96</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 25 March 1917.
- <sup>97</sup>School of Mines [n.d.], Williams Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- <sup>98</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>99</sup>Press Release, 10 April 1917, William H. Murray Papers, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- <sup>100</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 8 April 1917.
- <sup>101</sup>Ibid., 4 April 1917.
- <sup>102</sup>Bolen to Williams, 16 June 1914, Williams Papers, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- <sup>103</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 24 January 1919; Henry G. Bennett, The Coordination of the State Institutions for Higher Education in Oklahoma (Durant, OK: Southeastern Teachers College, 1926), 97.
- <sup>104</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>105</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 15 February 1919.
- <sup>106</sup>Ibid., 17 January 1919.
- <sup>107</sup>Bennett, Coordination, 97.
- <sup>108</sup>J. B. A. Robertson to Bishop E. E. Mouzon, 22 June 1921, J. B. A. Robertson Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- <sup>109</sup>Bureau of Education, Public Education in Oklahoma, A Report of a Survey of Public Education in the State of Oklahoma (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1922), 121-141.
- <sup>110</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>111</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 24 December 1922.
- <sup>112</sup>See Norris, Southeastern; Philip Reed Rulon, Oklahoma State University Since 1890 (Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University Press, 1976.)
- <sup>113</sup>Bennett, Coordination, 62-63.
- <sup>114</sup>Ibid., 59.

- 115 Fischer, Governors, 1907-1929, 138.
- 116 Scales and Goble, Politics, 118-134.
- 117 Ibid., 109-113.
- 118 Ibid., 114-116.
- 119 Ibid., 118-121.
- 120 LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., Oklahoma's Governors, 1929-1955: Depression to Prosperity (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1983), 31-51.
- 121 Schiller Scroggs and Henry G. Bennett, The Beginnings of Coordination in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Office of the State Coordinating Board for Higher Education, 1934), 17-18.
- 122 Daily Oklahoman, 17 May 1929.
- 123 Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 19.
- 124 State Coordinating Board, System, 102.
- 125 Henry Garland Bennett, "Some Implications of the Coordination of Higher Education," Bulletin of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 30 (4 September 1933), 5.
- 126 Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 20-22.
- 127 Ibid., 23-25.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MURRAY YEARS

The year 1933 was a significant one for the coordination of higher education in the state of Oklahoma. In that year, events precipitated by Governor William H. Murray led to the first operative coordinating board in the state. The progress toward formal coordination of higher education took place as Oklahoma and the nation searched for ways to economize during the Great Depression. Henry G. Bennett told his faculty at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College that the public would demand consolidation of effort and elimination of costly rivalries.<sup>1</sup> In 1933, Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, the Depression, and higher education combined in an unlikely trio to hasten coordination.

Born and raised in Texas, William H. Murray left home at an early age. After working in a variety of jobs, he attended College Hill Institute and became a teacher for a short time. While a teacher, Murray unsuccessfully sought a state senate position. Then he decided to study law and became a newspaperman. He first practiced law in Texas and then moved to Indian Territory. Just as many men did, Murray obtained Indian citizenship through marriage and received a parcel of land. He was very active professionally in the Chickasaw Nation, worked for the Chickasaw Legislature, and was the Nation's representative at the Sequoyah Constitutional Convention in 1905. The next year Murray was president of the Constitutional Convention. In the state's first legislature, Murray served as a representative and Speaker of the House, but numerous defeats

followed his earlier successes in Oklahoma politics. His political defeats prompted Murray to move to South America, but the failure of his colony in Bolivia persuaded him to return to Oklahoma in 1929.<sup>2</sup>

Upon his return to the state, Murray decided to seek the governor's office. Defeated in his bids for governor in 1910 and 1918 and for Congress in 1916, and given his absence from Oklahoma, Murray's candidacy was not taken seriously. But Murray campaigned heartily and gained strong rural support. His experience as a newspaperman now helped his political ambitions. Skillfully, he used The Blue Valley Farmer to publicize his candidacy. Also, in the Depression his appeals to the poor were well received. At 61 years of age, William H. Murray won the governor's seat by a large margin.<sup>3</sup>

Indicative of his rural support, Murray was an agrarian.<sup>4</sup> Also, as president of the Constitutional Convention, he was known as the Father of the Constitution.<sup>5</sup> The constitution was considered to be a progressive document, which included provisions such as direct citizen participation in the government through the initiative and referendum. These attributes helped Murray become governor in 1931.<sup>6</sup>

Murray's long political career helped formulate his ideas for education in Oklahoma. As Speaker of the House in the First Legislature, Murray witnessed the establishment of quite a few state institutions and was involved in community maneuvering for the award of those institutions. He said that he and his friends were responsible for the selection of Ada as the site for a normal school. He then saw Governor Williams "destroy" the agricultural schools in Broken Arrow and Helena. According to Murray, Williams closed the schools simply because he disliked the town or the name of the school. These events and others



affected Murray's decision to become involved in the affairs of higher education.<sup>7</sup>

In a time when the people wanted immediate solutions, the political tool Murray used most was the executive order. Supporters of Murray defended this tactic as something most people were pleased with because of their distrust of traditional government. The Oklahoma Constitution gave the governor supreme executive authority, and he exercised it. To take a matter to court or to call a special session of the legislature was time consuming. Emergencies called for swift action.<sup>8</sup> Murray did not hesitate to use the executive order for any kind of situation. No problem was too small or too large. For example, in December of 1932 he issued an order which revoked the expulsion from the University of Oklahoma of 14 young men involved in an altercation. If any of them were convicted in the future in relation to this incident, Murray promised to pardon them.<sup>9</sup>

The governor's interference in educational matters went beyond the executive order. He was not above the use of a threat. In a speech to the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College faculty, he said, "No one is going to remain on the state payroll and continue to slander the governor."<sup>10</sup> Teachers' jobs were also threatened if they did not subscribe to Murray's newspaper, The Blue Valley Farmer.<sup>11</sup> The institutions constantly faced Murray's efforts to reduce budgets drastically.<sup>12</sup> The education system had already suffered financially, along with other agencies, and the budgets were not extravagant.<sup>13</sup> This was the atmosphere the governor created in higher education.

On March 13, 1933, Governor Murray issued an "Educational Executive Order." The order began:

Whereas, much duplication of educational work in the several higher institutions is indulged in, creating small classes with large salaried teachers of such classes at great cost to the taxpayers, it therefore becomes necessary to eliminate such duplication by some rigid method that will effectively remove the duplication, and thereby the excess expense upon the people.<sup>14</sup>

The presidents and boards of regents of the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College were directed to eliminate education classes: transfer engineering, home economics, and pathology from the university to the agricultural and mechanical college; and transfer pre-medical, pre-law, and geology from the agricultural and mechanical college to the university, effective July 1, 1933. Any faculty employed in those fields in the institution losing the program were to be dismissed.<sup>15</sup>

Reaction to the order was expressed during the following weeks. One unnamed regent was quoted as saying "[Murray] seems to be hewing to the line in the interest of economy."<sup>16</sup> An editorial in the Tulsa Daily World said the order was enthusiastically received by the people because there was unnecessary duplication and useless departments, waste and confusion in the absence of a system of education. An emergency existed in education. The main reason the order was supported was that elimination of duplication was economical.<sup>17</sup> The Waurika News Democrat agreed with the governor. The Ponca City News suggested that he had not gone far enough in consolidating and reducing expenditures. The Lawton Constitution felt that the people would agree with the order but hedged its bets with the comment that it "may not have been entirely correct in all details."<sup>18</sup> The Enid Events seemed to say that the education system would survive Murray. The Oklahoma City Times called him a "dictator" and said people in education should handle decisions in education. It added that his actions were "ruthless" and "arbitrary."<sup>19</sup> Further, the

order was an insult to the two boards of regents. Although the Oklahoma City Times supported changes, the manner was unacceptable. The Daily Oklahoman called Murray a "bomb thrower" and said he would destroy the university's petroleum engineering program.<sup>20</sup> The Wichita Eagle said that Murray was giving Oklahoma a "new shuffle" instead of a "new deal."<sup>21</sup>

Immediately, Murray appointed a committee of nine to study duplication of programs and to implement the executive order.<sup>22</sup> It was expected that the committee would also consider elimination of extension courses. Specifically, Murray wanted elimination of many of the agricultural courses at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. Those courses could be offered at other agricultural colleges. The committee was empowered to call witnesses and make any changes it deemed necessary. The governor would pay for the committee's expenses from a fund for "extraordinary protection of the state."<sup>23</sup>

Murray's committee met and recommended a law creating a coordinating board. The law would give the board authority to study public institutions and to coordinate a state system. The committee offered to conduct a long-term study of the institutions.<sup>24</sup>

The committee extended the work of the Educational Executive Order when it made specific recommendations. Those recommendations were:

- 1) Although undergraduate work in education was restricted to the normal schools, exceptions were recommended. The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College would offer graduate work in teacher education in the fields of agriculture, home economics, and vocational education. The University of Oklahoma would offer geological and petroleum engineering;
- 2) any other graduate work in education would be offered by the University of Oklahoma;
- 3) the University of Oklahoma would exclusively offer journalism;

- 4) no work in home economics would be offered at the University of Oklahoma;
- 5) although geology was restricted to the University of Oklahoma, the teachers colleges could offer elementary geology;
- 6) students would pay for any individual art and music lessons;
- 7) in addition to pre-law and medicine, any undergraduate courses for pharmacy were restricted to the University of Oklahoma;
- 8) the only extension work at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College would be in agriculture and home economics. All other institutions were to offer extension if state funds were not used to finance the courses.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, in one meeting the committee made drastic recommendations based on no research whatsoever. Murray incorporated the recommendations verbatim and added in another executive order that the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College could offer graduate work in any of their undergraduate fields.<sup>26</sup>

The committee also made recommendations for a governing board structure. The Board of Regents for the University of Oklahoma would assume control of Eastern Oklahoma College, Wilburton, Northeastern Oklahoma Junior College, Miami, and Oklahoma State Business academy, Tonkawa. The State Board of Education would assume responsibility for the Oklahoma College for Women. The State Board of Agriculture still controlled the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. The Agricultural and Normal University in Langston and the Oklahoma Military Academy were excluded from this three-board structure.<sup>27</sup>

Although the committee did not elaborate on its rationale for the suggested board structure, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching identified, in 1933, the move toward fewer governing boards as a national trend. In 1900, the most used board model was the president of each institution reporting to the institution's own board of regents. By

1925, the model had changed, for presidents of several institutions reported to a single board of regents. By 1932, the position of chancellor appeared. The presidents of several institutions reported to a chancellor, who reported to a single board of regents. The economic climate was identified as one factor in the trend toward consolidation.<sup>28</sup> At the time of the Carnegie survey, Oklahoma had nine governing boards. The nine boards were responsible for 23 higher education institutions.<sup>29</sup> The Board of Public Affairs maintained responsibility for finances, except for the agricultural colleges.<sup>30</sup> This structure would not change until 1939.<sup>31</sup> Oklahoma, in 1933, continued to have a dispersed governance structure, when some states had centralized governance systems.

Three days after the committee report was written, Murray sent a message to the legislature. The message included the committee's bill:

An act to provide for the appointment of a Board, to be known as the 'Co-ordinating Board,' and such Board to be charged with the duty of coordinating and unifying the system of higher education, et cetera.<sup>32</sup>

The governor explained why the previous coordinating board had not been effective. The board was "composed of all the heads of the higher institutions, which meant nothing would be done, and, indeed, nothing has been done."<sup>33</sup> Actually, only five presidents were to have served on the previous board.<sup>34</sup> The governor's explanation of the previous failure, therefore, revealed more about his attitude toward the higher institutional presidents. The governor also forwarded to the legislature bills which would have reduced the number of governing boards from nine to five.<sup>35</sup>

The plans Murray had for higher education went beyond the transfer of programs when he became acquainted with the Bishop of Oklahoma, Francis C. Kelley. The most important goal of education, according to

Kelley, was the development of the Christian citizen. Changes in society made it necessary for colleges to assist the family, church, and common schools in the development of that citizen. The Bishop's immediate concern was the effect of the depression on private colleges. The religious atmosphere necessary for the training of a Christian citizen would be lost without the denominational college. He called upon the University of Oklahoma to serve as a leader for all of the smaller colleges--public and private--to maintain academic standards, while denominational colleges would maintain authority in religious matters.<sup>36</sup>

Kelley urged the state to help.<sup>37</sup> As a member of the North American Conference on Higher Education and Religion, an organization which included Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and sectarian education representatives, Kelley became interested in the collaboration of public and private education. The purpose of the organization was development of interest in religion in public education. When the organization failed to garner widespread support, Kelley became interested in the collaboration of public and private education at the state level.<sup>38</sup> He outlined a plan for higher education in Oklahoma:

- 1) The presidents of affiliated colleges would form a Board of Regents. The Board would be responsible for academic standards at the University of Oklahoma. The Chancellor of the Board would also be ex-officio president of the University of Oklahoma;
- 2) affiliated colleges would recommend candidates for degrees, and the Board would grant them;
- 3) the University would maintain a College of Liberal Arts, the graduate and professional schools, and a research institute. All other students would go to other colleges. The University of Oklahoma would not compete financially with those colleges;
- 4) the Board would loan affiliated college resources such as professors and books;

- 5) the Board would be responsible for actual property but would not intrude in academic matters--'leaving education entirely to educators.'<sup>39</sup>

Kelley found many advantages to his plan. The private denominational colleges would be responsible for education not offered by the university. Although Kelley did not outline the state college's role, his plan included them. One can assume the state college would also be responsible for courses not offered by the university. Collaboration would help the private denominational colleges remain open. This would help the entire state, because if those colleges closed, the state would need new buildings to educate more students since students would be attracted to a regents' degree. The assignment of professors where they were most needed would increase their quality. The private denominational colleges would benefit from the loan of those professors and other resources.<sup>40</sup> In addition to improvement of the quality of education and the financial situation in education, public and private cooperation would increase interest in religious studies. Concepts from Canadian, East Indian, and European universities were included in Kelley's Greater University. For example, the affiliation of independent institutions was a British concept.<sup>41</sup>

In April, 1932, Kelley presented his plan to the Oklahoma College Association. They were receptive to his proposals and appointed a committee to study them. Henry G. Bennett was chairman of the committee and in this position distributed Kelley's proposals throughout the state. The Association was then instrumental in introducing Kelley to Governor Murray. I. N. McCash of Phillips University, Eugene Antrim of Oklahoma City University, and Kelley met with the governor in April, 1933. McCash, Antrim, and Kelley presented the latter's plan for a coordination

system that would not burden the taxpayer. Murray was impressed and adopted the idea as his own.<sup>42</sup>

In that same month, Murray added five people, presidents of four private universities and Bishop Kelley, to the committee which was to study duplication and outlined "his" plan for the committee. The structure for Murray's plan was the Greater University of Oklahoma. The Greater University consisted of graduate and professional schools only. Any undergraduate education was at a College of Liberal Arts--which was not a part of the university. The Greater University would facilitate cooperation among educators. Healthy competition would replace rivalry. Murray said taxpayers would have increased educational standards, without added taxes.<sup>43</sup>

Murray outlined a new governance structure. A coordinating board, which consisted of eight members appointed by the governor and three members from private institutions, would have governed the Greater University. The coordinating board was responsible for granting degrees and supervising grades. Presidents of public colleges served on one auxiliary board, and another board would be composed of private institution presidents. These sub-boards controlled management and academic affairs, but they might have cooperated on matters such as tuition.<sup>44</sup>

The private college, of course, had a key role in the Greater University. Murray explained that the private college had done a great deal for Oklahoma--many of the state's leading citizens were educated in private colleges. Therefore, Oklahoma was indebted to the private colleges. Competition and the Depression threatened the private college's existence. Because of the Depression, the state was not financially able to assume responsibility for any additional students. The state needed to cooperate with and help private colleges survive. Everyone would benefit



from the Greater University. The state would loan private colleges resources, and the taxpayer would avoid the extra taxes needed to educate more students if private colleges closed.<sup>45</sup>

Bishop Kelley gave a detailed response. The functions of the Greater University, according to Kelley, were coordination of higher education, economy, recognition of private colleges, and improvement of education. He said the plan was not new or revolutionary. It was a combination of traditions from all over the world. Although Bishop Kelley, a Canadian, and Governor Murray, a Texan, had completely different backgrounds, they shared a belief in classical education. Kelley said:

The real university stands high and stands alone. It is high enough to be above mere utilitarianism. But the men, or women, upon whom it has worked are ready for anything in a big way. . . . It is out of such an education that statesmen, writers, orators, philosophers, are born.<sup>46</sup>

The governor and the bishop found common ground in the possibility of the Greater University. Neither man was an educator, but both were in positions of authority and did not hesitate to use that authority to disseminate their views.

Kelley explained some of the other functions of the Greater University.<sup>47</sup> There was an examination component of the plan. Students from the member institutions would be examined for university degrees. Committees would evaluate the examinations. Graduation might take place at different intervals because a student could graduate any time he or she passed the proper examination.<sup>48</sup> If the examinations reduced the numbers of students, this would only serve to retain those who sincerely wanted an education. Some students would be encouraged rather than discouraged. Higher education's responsibility was not to produce a large number of graduates, according to Kelley, but to produce "a limited number of responsible and well-equipped leaders."<sup>49</sup> Further, Kelley believed the

regents' degrees given by the Greater University would assure Oklahoma's educational superiority. The accrediting agencies had taken control of education and produced mediocrity. If the Greater University did not meet those agencies' requirements, Kelley predicted they would find themselves without members. Oklahoma would have "wiser standards and fairer tests," all under the aegis of the Greater University.<sup>50</sup>

The governor's adoption of the Greater University provided a public forum for educators in the state. The bishop was able to convince the Daily Oklahoman, which was unusually critical of Murray's policies, to remain neutral toward the Greater University.<sup>51</sup> As a result, those appointed to Murray's committee were quoted at length in the Daily Oklahoman. They were enthusiastic about the Greater University, but they all agreed that religion and state should remain separate.<sup>52</sup>

Dr. I. N. McCash, president of Phillips University, saw the plan as a beacon for other states and felt that tuition would be good for Oklahoma. Tuition would help with expenses previously paid for entirely by taxes. He thought the plan would reduce duplication and competition among higher education institutions. Economy, improved management, efficiency, and character building were perceived benefits.<sup>53</sup>

Dr. Eugene Antrim, president of Oklahoma City University, said the plan was "statesmanlike."<sup>54</sup> The idea of all higher education institutions as part of the Greater University would be a pioneer for the country. The trend was toward coordination, and he cited North Carolina as an example. He described the Greater University's proposed educational council, where private and public institution presidents were members and decided on academic requirements, standardization, and elimination of duplication. The private institutions' vice-chancellor served on both the coordinating board and the educational council. The private

institutions' privacy was maintained, as the institutions received no tax support. The public institutions also had a vice-chancellor. The boards of regents in existence were to continue being responsible for faculties, budgets, physical plants, and discipline. All public institutions charged tuition in the new plan. Antrim said tuition-free public education had been unfair in Oklahoma, when the majority (44 of 48 states) of states charged tuition. Tuition for all would equalize institutions.<sup>55</sup>

The chancellor of the University of Tulsa, Dr. John D. Finlayson, said the Greater University was "one of the most significant educational suggestions made anywhere during the present century."<sup>56</sup> Of course, the century was fairly young at the time. Although Finlayson's remarks were laudatory, he expressed concern about planning the new system. He supported the inclusion of private institutions because the state benefited as much from those institutions as from public ones. The plan, he said, "if rightly executed," would increase private giving and promote the public's appreciation of the private institution.<sup>57</sup> The general tone of his remarks was reserved and displayed concern.<sup>58</sup>

Dr. Hale Davis of Oklahoma Baptist University called the plan sincere and was appreciative of any attempt to help the struggling, private college. But Davis asked these critical questions:

Should the taxpayer bear the entire burden of the cost of higher education?

Should the taxpayer pay the educational bill for the limited few who seek technical training?

Should education in liberal arts be treated the same as education in technical courses?

Should we have eighteen higher educational institutions in Oklahoma while other larger states have only three or four?

Should our state educational institutions be placed upon a more self-sustaining basis?

Should out-of-state students be allowed to attend our educational institutions without paying tuition at a serious per capita loss to the taxpayer?

Is it equitable to permit state institutions to compete on the present basis with institutions like O.B.U., which must charge tuition?<sup>59</sup>

Like other private university presidents, he was particularly concerned with tuition. Thousands of students had come to Oklahoma for tuition-free education, according to Davis. The taxpayer paid the price. He estimated that one state institution's enrollment consisted of 60% out-of-state students. Oklahoma supported education for other states' children, while her private colleges struggled.<sup>60</sup> Davis' questions and concerns were an excellent example of the kinds of issues Oklahoma needed to address through some kind of coordination agency.

The Greater University had received a great deal of publicity when the second coordinating board was created. Leon C. Phillips, representative from Okfuskee County, sponsored House Bill 686, which passed the House and Senate on April 21, 1933. The board consisted of 15 members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. Since their terms were the same as the governor's, there was already a weakness in the system. Because the members' terms were linked to the governor's, there was no continuity. The board was given authority to create any rules and regulations necessary to coordinate and unify higher education.<sup>61</sup>

The duties of the board were the same as those of the previous board. The first duty required the board to assemble financial information. These data would then be used to determine present and future costs at the institutions. An annual report was to be submitted to the governor. The board was also responsible for the articulation of institutional mission. In this capacity, the board was to regulate any changes in mission. The purpose of regulating institutional mission was

to bring order and consistency to programs and courses. Duplication of courses at different kinds of institutions had been a consistent problem. The improvement of communication among institutions was another board responsibility. The board was specifically directed to create councils to facilitate communication. The board's most important responsibility was the unification of a state system of public higher education. This goal was to be accomplished "through the determination of an intelligent plan for their further development."<sup>62</sup> If the board could accomplish the above, coordination would truly have begun in Oklahoma.

Governor Murray appointed members to the coordinating board. Bishop Kelley and Henry G. Bennett, then president of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, were among those appointed.<sup>63</sup> Kelley had suggested coordination of public and private education as a key part of the system, with the University of Oklahoma as an academic leader. Bennett's views were certainly included in the board's duties, but the key part of his plan was unification of purpose for the state as a system. Certainly Bennett, although he supported coordination, had no intention of supporting the predominance of the University of Oklahoma. Yet, it was necessary for both men to serve on the board for their views to have some impact.

When the new coordinating board met, it was the first time that educators had discussed higher education coordination officially. The board established 12 principles, the most important of which was that a central agency was necessary to coordinate higher education in a state-wide system. The system was to be financially efficient. In order to achieve this efficiency, no one institution would attempt to offer all programs and/or courses. The board would determine the best location for a particular program. Other principles included general and regional

cooperation. Thus, some needs would be assessed according to programs offered in different regions of the state. Board principles assured due process for individuals and institutions affected by board decisions. Service to the state was the ultimate goal for each institution, and the state determined what was best for public institutions. The Greater University was the main structure of the system. In the spirit in which the board was formed, there was a provision for voluntary private institution participation without loss of autonomy.<sup>64</sup> The above principles were designed to focus public institutions on the overall purpose of higher education in the state instead of on local interests. This ambitious goal could never be fully realized, because it was impossible to remove people (laymen, politicians) from the educational decision-making process. The articulation of this goal, however, was necessary for any progress in coordination.

Several organizational plans were submitted to the board. Dr. O. D. Foster, a Congregational minister, wrote two of the plans. Dr. Foster had organized the North American Conference on Higher Education and Religion. He and Kelley had worked together with the conference for two years.<sup>65</sup> Foster's first plan was the bare outline of Kelley's Greater University. This plan included a board of governors, a chancellor, an education council, a conference on educational and cultural planning, and a committee on character influence and agencies. The second plan had the same structure but discussed specific policies and procedures. Both plans gave private institutions equal status with state institutions. A third plan focused on missions of the institutions. Courses were divided into major and service categories. Courses leading to a degree were major courses while those courses necessary to support major fields or to cultivate the student were in the service category. Once an institution

categorized its courses, degrees were available only in the major fields. The first year at all institutions was to be standardized. The Oklahoma College for Women was to become either a liberal arts college of the University of Oklahoma or a vocational school of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. The teachers colleges were to be restricted to elementary education and the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College would be responsible for secondary education.<sup>66</sup> This plan outlined function instead of structure.

In August, 1933, the coordinating board adopted the "Preliminary Plan of Procedure for the Greater University of Oklahoma." The central structure was the Greater University. Major components were the coordinating board, a chancellor, an institutional cabinet, a board of educational consultants, and an office of administrative research and statistics. The coordinating board performed those duties outlined by the legislature, as previously discussed. The board would appoint the chancellor and the chancellor would be the chief executive officer. Responsibilities of the chancellor included preparation of an annual report and budget. He served on all legislative committees within the Greater University and attended board meetings. He had authority to sign any papers, including degrees of the Greater University, and to veto any act of a committee. The institutional cabinet was composed of the presidents of participating institutions. The board of educational consultants was simply a method to obtain services from national experts. Fact finding and accounting were assigned to the office of administrative research. The plan outlined specific duties and equipment needs for this office.<sup>67</sup> The preliminary plan of procedure emphasized centralization, with the Greater University as a regulatory structure for member institutions.

Communication was also emphasized through the advisory role of the presidents in the institutional cabinet.

W. B. Bizzell, president of the University of Oklahoma and a member of the board, provided insights about the way the board functioned and concerns about its work. One practical problem Bizzell discussed was the transfer of programs initiated by Murray's Executive Order in March, 1933. The implementation of transferring programs to and from the University of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the teachers college was too difficult. The board abandoned discussion of the problem because it was unable to reach any kind of agreement. One major problem was the insecure term of office. No one knew if the members would be reappointed after January, 1935, when Murray left office. Another problem was the probability that the board did not have authority to form a public corporation. The major concern others expressed to the board was the participation of the private colleges. The board would do nothing, according to Bizzell, to violate the separation of church and state. He emphasized the value of private college input. There was also a question of the governing boards' relationship to the coordinating board. The governing boards' function did not change, but the coordinating board would consolidate the budgets of individual boards.<sup>68</sup> Bizzell neglected to discuss his own problems with the coordinating board. If the Greater University were implemented, the president's office at the University of Oklahoma would no longer exist. Apparently, Bizzell did not want to resign as president of the university, and the governor was opposed to Bizzell's appointment as chancellor.<sup>69</sup> Eventually, Bizzell's reluctance to resign as president of the university would prove to be wise.



The Board concluded that implementation of the Greater University required incorporation. The purpose of such a corporation was the establishment of a centralized coordination agency. The articles of incorporation were sent to the attorney general for his opinion, and his office informed the board that a corporation could not fulfill the duties of the coordinating board as outlined in the statute. The duties of the members of the coordinating board did not include the ability to form a corporation. The attorney general's office also stated that the legislature did not authorize the coordinating board to incur any major expenses. A chancellor's salary was considered such an expense. Also, the board had no authority to collect tuition. There was no statutory provision for the Greater University to issue degrees. Therefore, the attorney general denied the request for incorporation.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, the attorney general, J. Berry King, and the governor were political foes. Although the opinion was legally accurate, King took the opportunity to lambast Murray publicly. King told Murray to adhere to the state constitution, of which Murray was an author. King termed the board members "sycophants" and threatened them with legal action if they interfered in the operation of any higher education institutions. This personal threat upset Bishop Kelley.<sup>71</sup> It is evident that Kelley was respected in the state because King issued a public apology. King said, "I recognize that you [Kelley] have, perhaps, given more thought to it [the Greater University] than any other one man in the state."<sup>72</sup> But King could not resist a further jibe at Murray and speculated, "Obviously, however, others in executive power have attempted to appropriate your own ideas and take credit for them."<sup>73</sup> Thus, the board's bid for incorporation disintegrated in a bitter, political confrontation.

The coordinating board continued to meet after the failure of the Greater University plan. Accounting procedures and budgeting methods for the higher education institutions were its major areas of concern. The board also considered conducting a survey of educational needs in the state. One proposal was the administration of an intelligence test to high school students as a means of assessing those needs.<sup>74</sup>

Although the board was able to collect information for small projects, its legal defeats could not be surmounted. Governor Murray recommended a small budget for the board to the legislature and a bill was introduced.<sup>75</sup> The bill failed to pass on the last day of the session.<sup>76</sup> The governor also submitted the board's recommendation for tuition charges.<sup>77</sup> This recommendation was not implemented either.<sup>78</sup> These defeats and the attorney general's denial of incorporation limited the effectiveness of the board.

The end of Murray's term as governor was the end of the first coordinating board that met and tried to perform its duties. Educators recognized the critical need for a coordination agency and had worked together toward implementation of the Greater University. Working toward some kind of coordination, although not ideal, was better than no coordination. The coordinating board allowed educators to determine some general principles of coordination for the entire state. But an agency which was so closely connected with the predominance of the University of Oklahoma could not succeed. It was no surprise that a plan, designed to illuminate other institutions' real or imagined weaknesses, failed. Although Bishop Kelley was respected, it was unlikely that educators would wholeheartedly support a system created by a Catholic bishop. Perhaps the board purposely chose incorporation as a means to jettison the Greater University cleverly. After all, they knew beforehand that,

legally, incorporation was unlikely. Murray himself was the board's greatest strength and its greatest weakness. As governor, he was in a powerful position to make things happen. As a controversial, interfering politician, he created many enemies. The experience convinced President Bennett to become more involved in politics to prevent another man such as Murray from assuming the position of governor.<sup>79</sup> Yet, Murray had publicized coordination of higher education, instigated legislation for a coordination agency, appointed members to the coordinating board, and finally, left intact a mechanism for the next phase of coordination in Oklahoma.

ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Bennett, Implications, 6.
- <sup>2</sup>Fischer, Governors, 1929-1955, 54-57.
- <sup>3</sup>Scales and Goble, Politics, 155-160.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 156-157.
- <sup>5</sup>Fischer, Governors, 1929-1955, 56.
- <sup>6</sup>Scales and Goble, Politics, 20-25.
- <sup>7</sup>William H. Murray, Memoirs of Governor Murray and True History of Oklahoma, 2 vols. (Boston: Meador, 1945), II:450-452.
- <sup>8</sup>The Blue Valley Farmer (Oklahoma City), 20 August 1931.
- <sup>9</sup>Executive Order, 17 December 1932, William H. Murray Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- <sup>10</sup>The Blue Valley Farmer, 12 May 1932.
- <sup>11</sup>Norris, Southeastern, I:204.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., 201; Tulsa Daily World, 16 March 1933.
- <sup>13</sup>Rulon, Oklahoma, 231.
- <sup>14</sup>The Blue Valley Farmer, 16 March 1933.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., 15 March 1933.
- <sup>16</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 14 March 1933.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., 15 March 1933.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., 19 March 1933.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup>Clint Strong, Stillwater; Dr. A. Linscheid, Ada; Eugene Kerr, Muskogee; Professor John Murray, Stillwater; Dr. Charles Briles,

Stillwater; R. M. McCool, Norman; Dr. A. J. Williams, Norman; Professor C. Hinshaw, Stillwater; Judge C. C. Hatchett, Durant.

<sup>23</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 16 March 1933.

<sup>24</sup>Clint Strong to William H. Murray, 21 March 1933, Murray Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 25-26.

<sup>27</sup>Strong to Murray, 21 March 1933, Murray Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>28</sup>Fred J. Kelly and Howard J. Savage, The State and Higher Education: Phases of Their Relationship (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1933), vi.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>30</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 75.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Murray to the Fourteenth Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, 24 March 1933, Murray Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 19.

<sup>35</sup>Murray to the Fourteenth Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, 24 March 1933, Murray Paper, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>36</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 23-25.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>James P. Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley and the American Catholic Dream, 2 vols. (Bensenville, IL: Heritage Foundation, 1980), II:200-201.

<sup>39</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 23-25.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 202.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 204-205.

<sup>43</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 26-28; Blue Valley Farmer, 13 April 1933; Daily Oklahoman, 9 April 1933.

- <sup>44</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup>Blue Valley Farmer, 11 May 1933.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>48</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 26-28; Blue Valley Farmer, 13 April 1933; Daily Oklahoman, 9 April 1933.
- <sup>49</sup>Blue Valley Farmer, 11 May 1933.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>51</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 206.
- <sup>52</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 9 April 1933.
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid.; Blue Valley Farmer, 8 June 1933.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>56</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 9 April 1933.
- <sup>57</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>58</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid.; Blue Valley Farmer, 29 June 1933.
- <sup>60</sup>Blue Valley Farmer, 27 April 1933.
- <sup>61</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 29.
- <sup>62</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>63</sup>Judge Reford Bond, Chickasha; Honorable J. J. Moroney, Okmulgee; President I. N. McCash, Enid; President Eugene M. Antrim, Oklahoma City; Judge J. T. Dickerson, Edmond; Honorable Fred Tucker, Ardmore; Judge Houston B. Teehee, Tahlequah; Honorable C. R. Bellatti, Blackwell; Honorable Carl Magee, Oklahoma City; Honorable Earl Oliver, Ponca City; Dr. John D. Finlayson, Tulsa; Dr. W. B. Bizzell, Norman; Professor Charles W. Briles, Stillwater.
- <sup>64</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 8-9.
- <sup>65</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 200.
- <sup>66</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 30-33; 34-43.
- <sup>67</sup>Ibid., 49-57.

<sup>68</sup>A. H. Upham, ed., Transactions and Proceedings of the National Association of State Universities in the United States of America (Chicago: National Association of State Universities, 1933), 173-177.

<sup>69</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 213-214.

<sup>70</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 91-97.

<sup>71</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 215-216.

<sup>72</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 13 December 1933.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 97-107.

<sup>75</sup>Murray to the Fourteenth Legislature, 28 May 1933, Murray Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>76</sup>Scroggs and Bennett, Beginnings, 94.

<sup>77</sup>Murray to the Fourteenth Legislature, 22 June 1933, Murray Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>78</sup>The issue of tuition in public institutions was still being debated in 1941.

<sup>79</sup>Rulon, Oklahoma, 244.

## CHAPTER IV

### ONE STATE

The formation of a permanent coordination agency did not have the drama of the attempts at coordination which preceded it. The confrontations between governor and legislature and the plans for a grand and glorious super university were the stuff of yesterday. After two attempts to formalize coordination in 1929 and 1933, success finally came in 1941, "not with a bang, but a whimper."<sup>1</sup>

After Murray's tenure as governor, the people of Oklahoma elected a person as different from "Alfalfa Bill" as a person could get. E. W. Marland was an Easterner from a refined and comfortable background. Marland's father, an industrialist, raised him as a "gentleman" and hoped his son would one day become a supreme court justice. The younger Marland earned his law degree but became an oilman in Oklahoma. When the famous Marland Oil Company ceased to exist after J. P. Morgan and Company gained control, Marland turned to politics and was elected United States Representative from the eighth district in 1933. Elected governor in 1935, Marland promised to bring the New Deal to Oklahoma. His chief concern as governor appeared to be as champion of the "common man."<sup>2</sup>

As a United States Representative, Marland had commissioned the Brookings Institution to survey the state's government. Financed by private donations, the survey was published after he became governor. It identified many problems in higher education which required centralized, consistent leadership. Several major problems were rivalry between the



University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, differences in the private and public institutions (such as tuition), lack of definition of the role of the Oklahoma College for Women, duplication in the teachers colleges, and a lack of definition of the role of the junior college. None of these problems was new or surprising. Among the other difficulties the survey discussed were low enrollment in certain colleges, the offering of graduate courses at all of the institutions, and lack of standardization. It was obvious that the above problems needed to be addressed by the state.<sup>3</sup>

The Brookings's Institution recommended restructuring the governing boards. The main goal in restructure was the recognition of the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College as leaders of higher education in the state. The University of Oklahoma and the junior colleges would share a governing board, and Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and the other agricultural and mechanical colleges would share a board. The Oklahoma College for Women would have its own board of regents, and the State Department of Education would govern any teachers colleges not governed by the agricultural and mechanical colleges' board. Only the women's college, teachers colleges, the University of Oklahoma, and Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College would have their own presidents. This was another elaborate scheme when a simple recommendation for a coordination agency would have sufficed. But the survey said that although coordination was needed, one board was probably incapable of governing all the institutions.<sup>4</sup>

Governor Marland was aware that one of the major themes of the survey was the need for coordination. Although he believed most people in Oklahoma favored coordination in government, he also felt there would be disagreement on methods for achieving coordination. Because the report

made so many specific recommendations, this was no doubt true.<sup>5</sup> Because of the Brookings Institution recommendation, Marland did not appoint any members to the coordinating board.<sup>6</sup> Although he had been appointed to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents in 1919,<sup>7</sup> the governor expressed no particular interest in higher education coordination.<sup>8</sup>

There had been high expectations for Marland's tenure as governor, but the New Deal in Oklahoma failed for several reasons. Marland himself was not a skillful politician. He attempted to govern the state as a corporation, which did not work. The state itself did not have the well-organized organizations necessary to help implement the New Deal. Another reason for the failure of Marland's programs was Leon Phillips.<sup>9</sup>

Leon "Red" Phillips came to Oklahoma Territory as a child with his family in 1892. After he graduated from high school, Phillips attended Epworth University,<sup>10</sup> and studied theology. He then transferred to the University of Oklahoma in order to study law. Following graduation, Phillips practiced law in Okfuskee County. During his time at the University of Oklahoma, Phillips was active in politics. This interest continued in local politics. In 1932, already known as a conservative Democrat, Phillips won a seat as state representative. He quickly became influential in the legislature and served as Speaker of the House.<sup>11</sup> It was from this position that he thwarted Marland's ambitions. Indeed, Marland was unable to initiate any of the Brookings Institution recommendations.<sup>12</sup> After Phillips lost the position as Speaker and failed to gain a federal judge position, he decided to seek the governorship. A foe of the New Deal, Phillips promised to reduce expenditures. Among his supporters was Henry G. Bennett. Elected governor in 1938, reduced expenditures in education and domination of the legislature were some of the characteristics of Phillips' term.<sup>13</sup>

The governor, Leon Phillips, was the representative who had introduced the bill for the second coordinating board in 1933. It was therefore not a surprise that Phillips was interested in reactivating the board, which could also help Phillips with two items on his political agenda. First, the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College continued as rivals. As a University of Oklahoma graduate, Phillips did not want to express favoritism for his alma mater, and because of this he was accused of being partial to the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. Perhaps the board would provide a forum for the two institutions and extricate Phillips from their arguments.<sup>14</sup> Second, as a candidate for governor, Phillips promised to control state spending. The coordinating board would help control higher education institutional budgets. The governor informed Bishop Kelley that he would appoint members to the coordinating board at the beginning of his term. This would give them a longer period of time to work.<sup>15</sup> Fifteen members were appointed to the board in 1939. Bishop Kelley, President Bennett, and President Bizzell were among those appointed.<sup>16</sup>

One of the first items on the board's agenda was a review of other coordination models, which revealed interesting facts. Florida was one of the first state systems coordinated by a single control board. Its State Board of Education supervised the board. Georgia coordinated in 1933. Its executive director was a chancellor, but councils assisted him--a superior council (chancellor and presidents), and a university system council (chancellor, university administrators, and selected faculty). Mississippi had a single board of control for its six institutions. Montana consolidated its four institutions in 1913. There a chancellor of the university reported to the State Board of Education. In 1931, North Carolina consolidated three institutions with a governing

board. The head of the system was a chancellor responsible to the board of trustees. In Georgia and North Carolina, a single university system existed. The report identified four kinds of boards: (1) a board for all state institutions, (2) a board for all state education, (3) a board for all state higher education institutions, and (4) a board for all state institutions with the same goal (e.g., teachers colleges).<sup>17</sup> The coordinating board in Oklahoma preferred number three, which had its spiritual beginning in the first coordinating board. The first and second models were cumbersome systems; the board did not consider them. The board found little merit in an agency for all state institutions of the same type. It felt that this kind of organization would continue to promote divisiveness and rivalry. It would also be difficult to group institutions according to goal. All of the institutions were servants of the state with the purpose of educating students beyond the secondary level.<sup>18</sup>

When the board reviewed higher education in other states, Bishop Kelly studied the University of Chicago. Kelley was impressed with the liberal education emphasis of that university and invited Robert Maynard Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago, to Oklahoma. Hutchins reviewed the board's work and recommended an agency with the authority to enforce elimination of duplication. The wonder boy of Chicago advised that college presidents would not willingly give up parts of their territory.<sup>19</sup>

The history of coordination efforts in Oklahoma and the statutory basis of the coordinating board encouraged the board to recommend constitutional status for a coordinating board of the future. A constitutional board would not be subject to the changing whims of the governor or the legislature. The proposed board would be a permanent one.<sup>20</sup>

The coordinating board also recommended a single state system of higher education. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education would coordinate the system through responsibility for a consolidated budget, determination of fees, relationships with other agencies, approval of courses of study, and the standards of higher education. The regents consisted of nine members with staggered terms who could be removed for cause only. The governor appointed and the senate approved those members. It was hoped that staggered terms removed the regents from undue gubernatorial influence. The chancellor was to be the chief executive officer for the system. The use of government resources in private institutions was not possible, but provisions were made for private institution participation in the system. It was also hoped that this system would bring consistency and planning to policies, procedures, and curriculum in higher education.<sup>21</sup> The coordinating board's proposal did not alter any of the higher education institutions or boards of regents, as previous plans did. Any changes in scope, mission, and standards became the responsibility of the regents. In this manner, the coordinating board was able to propose an agency for change that affected higher education for many years instead of specific changes in institutional or boards of regents status that were ephemeral.

Governor Phillips was responsive to the board's proposal. He and Bishop Kelley had developed a cordial relationship and respected each other's opinions. Kelley had kept the governor informed of the board's progress.<sup>22</sup> Governor Phillips accepted the board's recommendations and forwarded them to the legislature. The legislature submitted a constitutional amendment to the people.<sup>23</sup> The campaign for the coordination board amendment was a short one of about a week prior to the election. The amendment was submitted to the people with two others--an amendment

for a balanced budget and an amendment for old-age assistance. The coordination board was the least controversial topic, with most of the attention given to the balanced budget.<sup>24</sup>

The governor campaigned for his amendments in personal visits and on the radio. Phillips reminded the people of the Democrat Party's convention platform of 1938, which promised "to grant adequate support to higher educational institutions of the state and prevent the coercion of heads of institutions for political advantage."<sup>25</sup> In addition to the fulfillment of the party platform, he said that men with no ulterior motives had studied the situation and recommended the amendment for a coordination board.<sup>26</sup> In a visit to Northeastern State College in Tahlequah, Phillips told the audience that the amendment would make "two years at this college just as good as two years down at Norman under those reds and pinks."<sup>27</sup> He also told the audience that anyone opposed to the amendment probably did not have good "reasoning power."<sup>28</sup> During the campaign, the governor said that all college presidents and all boards of regents members supported the amendment. Phillips formed a statewide citizens' committee in support of the amendment.<sup>29</sup> With such a short time for the campaign, the committee was a publicity measure. It was a way of publicizing those prominent citizens in support of the amendment and of giving the appearance of widespread support. Phillips was a shrewd politician with many years of experience.

President Bennett also campaigned for the amendment because he had been

in a position to see and to know the effects of bitter institutional rivalry, unwise duplication, regionalism and other evidences of institutional anarchy which result from the multiplication of boards.<sup>30</sup>

Oklahoma did not have an overabundance of institutions, according to Bennett, but there were more tax-supported institutions than in many other states. He felt the result was a greater need for coordination than existed in Oklahoma's "sister states."<sup>31</sup> The president was certainly in a position to assess Oklahoma's needs. As president of Southeastern Normal School and then Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Bennett was a college executive for 32 years. At the time of the constitutional amendment, the state was only 34 years old. Ten governors served during his years as president. The dissertation Bennett wrote was the foundation for the first and second coordinating boards. Bennett's experience and influence were instrumental in the creation of a constitutional amendment. Although some of his original ideas were not used, his main idea of a single state system was the foundation of the coordinating board's proposal. Bennett's persistence was certainly a factor in the campaign's outcome.

The amendment received support from several important organizations in the state. The Oklahoma Education Association supported a constitutional board.<sup>32</sup> There was bipartisan support from both the Democratic and Republican party chairmen.<sup>33</sup> The Tulsa Daily World outlined its reasons for support--to remove higher education institutions from political influence, apportionment of budgets on a more equal basis, removal of duplication, and uniform standards and fees.<sup>34</sup>

There was some opposition to a constitutional coordination board. The Farmer's Union and some elements of labor characterized the governor's support of the amendment as "Caesar had his Brutus and Oklahoma has Phillips."<sup>35</sup> They suggested that the governor would have complete control of the colleges and universities. They also felt that the regents would not be responsive to citizen concerns.<sup>36</sup>

Several former governors were quoted as being opposed to the coordination board. "Alfalfa Bill" said: "The Board of nine, after the present governor leaves office, will not be under obligation, even in gratitude, to any governor that we may elect hereafter."<sup>37</sup> Murray felt that any board should be responsive to the governor's wishes. In fact, one of the reasons Murray campaigned for governor in 1938 was to continue gubernatorial support for the Greater University.<sup>38</sup> Murray's opposition was exactly why a constitutional amendment was recommended. Governors Henry Johnston and Jack Walton, both of whom had been impeached, were also opposed to the measure. Walton felt the amendment gave "unheard of dictatorial powers to the Chief Executive of the State."<sup>39</sup> This was an ironic statement from a former governor who had used his powers to replace several college presidents and many boards of regents' members. Apparently, Walton had a change of heart and did not want the governor to appoint the members of a board which was responsible for all higher education institutions.

Others also opposed the board. A formidable foe was the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, A. L. Crable. Crable, a former protege of President Bennett,<sup>40</sup> questioned the effects of a single board of control<sup>41</sup> and formed his own citizens' committees to oppose the amendment.<sup>42</sup> Some suggested that his opposition was simply a personality conflict with Phillips and that some would not vote for the amendment because they did not like Phillips.<sup>43</sup> Others suggested that Crable's opposition was based on the fact that the state superintendent would not control the coordination board.<sup>44</sup> John Vaughan, president of Northeastern State College and Crable's predecessor as state superintendent, supported the amendment, which helped to minimize Crable's opposition.<sup>45</sup> Other criticisms of the amendment included opposition to appropriations



in one package for all institutions and the provision for tuition if the legislature approved.<sup>46</sup>

March 11, 1941, the day to cast votes for a constitutional amendment for a coordination board, finally arrived. The Daily Oklahoman had said that the general public was not very interested in or well informed about the amendment and predicted a small number of voters.<sup>47</sup> Although the voter turnout was low, as predicted, State Question 300 received 152,173 affirmative votes and 95,617 no votes.<sup>48</sup> Because a majority of the voters approved the amendment, according to the Oklahoma Constitution the amendment passed.

The constitutional amendment created the Oklahoma State System for Higher Education and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. In that same year, the legislature passed a law which created the state regents' staff, offices, and annual officers.<sup>49</sup> The system was in operation. The amendment granted enormous responsibilities to the state regents. The state regents were responsible for the standards, budgets, courses of study and programs, tuition and fees, and academic degrees of all public higher education institutions.<sup>50</sup> Although the institutional boards of regents retained responsibility for day-to-day management, as a coordinating board of control the state regents would be the guide for the entire system.

What kind of course would the state regents chart? What kinds of relationships would the state regents and chancellor have with the college and university presidents and the boards of regents? Would the state regents and chancellor be respectful and responsive, or dictatorial and distrustful? Would financial appropriations be fair and reasonable? How would fair and reasonable be determined? Would unnecessary duplication be eliminated? What was unnecessary? Would higher education in

Oklahoma be ready for the challenges to come? Finally, would the governor wield less influence? This is the way the call for coordination ended, "not with a bang, but a whimper."<sup>51</sup> Would the system created in 1941 be able to find a happy medium for the state between a bang and a whimper?

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Journey of the Magi," College Anthology of British and American Poetry, A. Kent Hiatt and William Park, eds., 2nd edition. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972), 198.

<sup>2</sup>John Joseph Mathews, Life and Death of an Oilman: The Career of E. W. Marland (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1951), 5-240.

<sup>3</sup>The Brookings's Institution, Report on a Survey of Organization and Administration of Oklahoma (Washington, D.C.: E. W. Marland Good Government Fund, 1935), iii:41-52.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., iv-v.

<sup>6</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 109.

<sup>7</sup>Governor Appointments List [n.d.], J. B. A. Robertson Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>8</sup>Higher Education and Society (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1936), 293-301.

<sup>9</sup>Scales and Goble, Politics, 183-185.

<sup>10</sup>Epworth University became Oklahoma City University.

<sup>11</sup>Fischer, Governors, 1929-1955, 101-110; Scales and Goble, Politics, 189-215.

<sup>12</sup>Scales and Goble, Politics, 188.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 189-215; Fischer, Governors, 1929-1955, 101-110.

<sup>14</sup>Rulon, Oklahoma, 244.

<sup>15</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 219.

<sup>16</sup>Other members were: John H. Kane, Bartlesville; Eugene S. Briggs, Enid; G. W. Hilderbrandt, Oklahoma City; Robert S. Kerr, Oklahoma City; A. Linscheid, Ada; T. T. Montgomery, Durant; M. A. Nash, Chickasha; C. I. Pontius, Tulsa; John W. Raley, Shawnee; John Rogers, Tulsa; W. C. Smoot, Bartlesville; A. G. Williamson, Oklahoma City. See State Coordinating Board, System, ii:13.

<sup>17</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 22-52; 117-118.

- <sup>18</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 220.
- <sup>20</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 115.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., 115-117.
- <sup>22</sup>Gaffey, Kelley, 217-219.
- <sup>23</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 135.
- <sup>24</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 4 March 1941.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., 6 March 1941.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 6 March 1941.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., 4 March 1941.
- <sup>30</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 7 March 1941.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 7 March 1941.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid., 4 March 1941.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., 5 March 1941.
- <sup>35</sup>Farmer's Union Pamphlet [n.d.], Leon Phillips Papers, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup>Murray, Memoirs, II:547.
- <sup>39</sup>Farmer's Union Pamphlet [n.d.], Phillips Papers.
- <sup>40</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 7 March 1941.
- <sup>41</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 2 March 1941.
- <sup>42</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 5 March 1941.
- <sup>43</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 6 March 1941; 9 March 1941.
- <sup>44</sup>Tulsa Daily World, 2 March 1941.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 6 March 1941.

<sup>46</sup>Daily Oklahoman, 9 March 1941.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>State Election Board, Directory of the State of Oklahoma, 1941 (Guthrie, Oklahoma: Cooperative Publishing Company, 1941), 148.

<sup>49</sup>Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education: A Guide to the History, Organization and Operation of the State System (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1983), 3-4.

<sup>50</sup>State Coordinating Board, System, 136.

<sup>51</sup>Eliot, College, 198.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The governor had the primary role in higher education coordination in Oklahoma from statehood to the constitutional amendment of 1941. He served as primary agent in the political process which affected higher education institutions. Although the legislature contributed to the political process, its actions were isolated. The very nature of any legislature made it impossible to work consistently toward a single goal. Each legislator was responsive to his own district. Some legislators served for a number of years and some did not. Therefore, the legislature was composed of many different people with different interests. The governor actually attempted to plot a statewide direction. The legislature's role was reactive. It responded either to the governor or to local interests. In the effort to direct higher education, each governor brought his own distinct styles of management.

Lee Cruce attempted to bring consolidation of institutions through recommendations to the legislature. His recommendations met with disapproval, and he eventually signed appropriation bills for the very institutions he hoped to close. Because Cruce sought and followed advice from prominent, national educators, one may conclude that he sincerely hoped to improve education. But the advice he received had little impact on higher education institutions in the state. His one success, however short-lived, was the activation of the State Board of Education as an agency of centralization.

Robert L. Williams continued Cruce's theme of too many institutions but used the veto as an instrument of power. Even though he succeeded in closing five institutions, only two remained closed. The legislature resented Williams' vetoes and ushered in a new period of decentralization with reopened institutions, creation of a new institution, and establishment of a number of boards of regents. In terms of what Williams wanted to accomplish in higher education as governor, he was successful because he closed the institutions he felt were unnecessary.

J. B. A. Robertson initiated the survey of 1922. It contained a fairly objective assessment of education in Oklahoma, but since it was submitted at the end of his term, there was nothing he could do with the information. It is not certain whether Robertson would have acted on any of the recommendations if he had had the opportunity. He seemed content with the status of higher education institutions.

The term "coordination" was introduced to the political arena in 1929 when William Holloway focused on Bennett's system of higher education. Bennett recommended the State Board of Education as a central coordination agency and the reduction of governing boards from nine to three. Beyond the successful recommendation of a coordinating board, Holloway was inactive.

The best example of an attempt to shape higher education institutions into a personal vision was the Greater University. William H. Murray promoted a super university for the state. He embraced Bishop Kelley's ideas as though they were his own. The extreme conditions of the Great Depression and the absence of a functioning centralized higher education agency allowed Murray to further the plan to the extent that he did. Had it succeeded, the Greater University may have provided a strong voice for institutional presidents in the governance structure.

Eventually, the plan was too personal to survive. It was created largely by one person and represented a dream for public and private cooperation. Although a part of this dream was finally realized in the state constitutional provision for the affiliation of private and denominational colleges in the state system, the dream itself was not enough to sustain an entire system.

It seemed as though the Great Depression would have been an ideal time for the kind of reform the Greater University represented. Demands for economy were a constant factor in Oklahoma, and the dire conditions in 1933 and 1934 added urgency to those demands. The Greater University concept failed, but it was only one failure of many in the Murray Administration. Only the Oklahoma Tax Commission served as a lasting achievement.<sup>1</sup> There may have also been a tendency for educational reform to seem insignificant compared to the many dramatic actions of Governor Murray. For example, he used martial law proclamations on 34 occasions.<sup>2</sup> Formal coordination of higher education would wait for another time.

Although E. W. Marland had access to information during his term as governor on the status of higher education and on the need for coordination, he did not appoint members to the coordinating board. The Brookings's Institution recommended restructuring of the governing boards before appointment of coordinating board members. Marland took this advice. He made no attempt to chart a different course for coordination.

In his memoirs, Murray said that Leon Phillips misunderstood the Greater University. Nevertheless, Phillips had sponsored the coordinating bill during Murray's term and reactivated the board in 1939. Phillips accepted the board's recommendations and successfully campaigned for a permanent coordinating agency.



The above governors' methods may be divided into two styles: autonomous (the governor acting alone), and democratic (the governor acting in conjunction with others) (see Figure 1). The executive order and the veto are autonomous styles. Appointments and expert advice require communication and denote democratic styles. Publicity may be autonomous or democratic. Publicity as a method of disseminating one view is autonomous. Publicity as a means of receiving information is democratic. Recommendations to the legislature presented in an authoritative, dictatorial manner are autonomous. Recommendations to the legislature in a collegial manner are democratic. One governor may have used several methods and both styles.

Three governors used appointments to agencies as a method of accomplishing some of their goals. Governor Cruce appointed members to the State Education Board. Governors Murray and Phillips appointed members to the second coordinating board. Cruce's appointees seemed to report what they felt the governor wanted to hear. Murray's appointees, which included independent thinkers, were burdened with the Greater University work. Fortunately, Phillips seemed to have left his appointees to do their own independent work. Making appointments was important because an agency could be in place, but if there were no members, nothing was accomplished. A governor would appoint people he believed would implement his program. But peoples' actions could not be predicted with certainty.

Governor Murray used, or rather misused, the executive order. Murray used the order to dictate policy, procedure, and courses of study. In his office, it was the most autocratic tool used between 1911 and 1941.

There were two levels of the procurement of advice from persons in the education profession. Consultation was personal and informal.

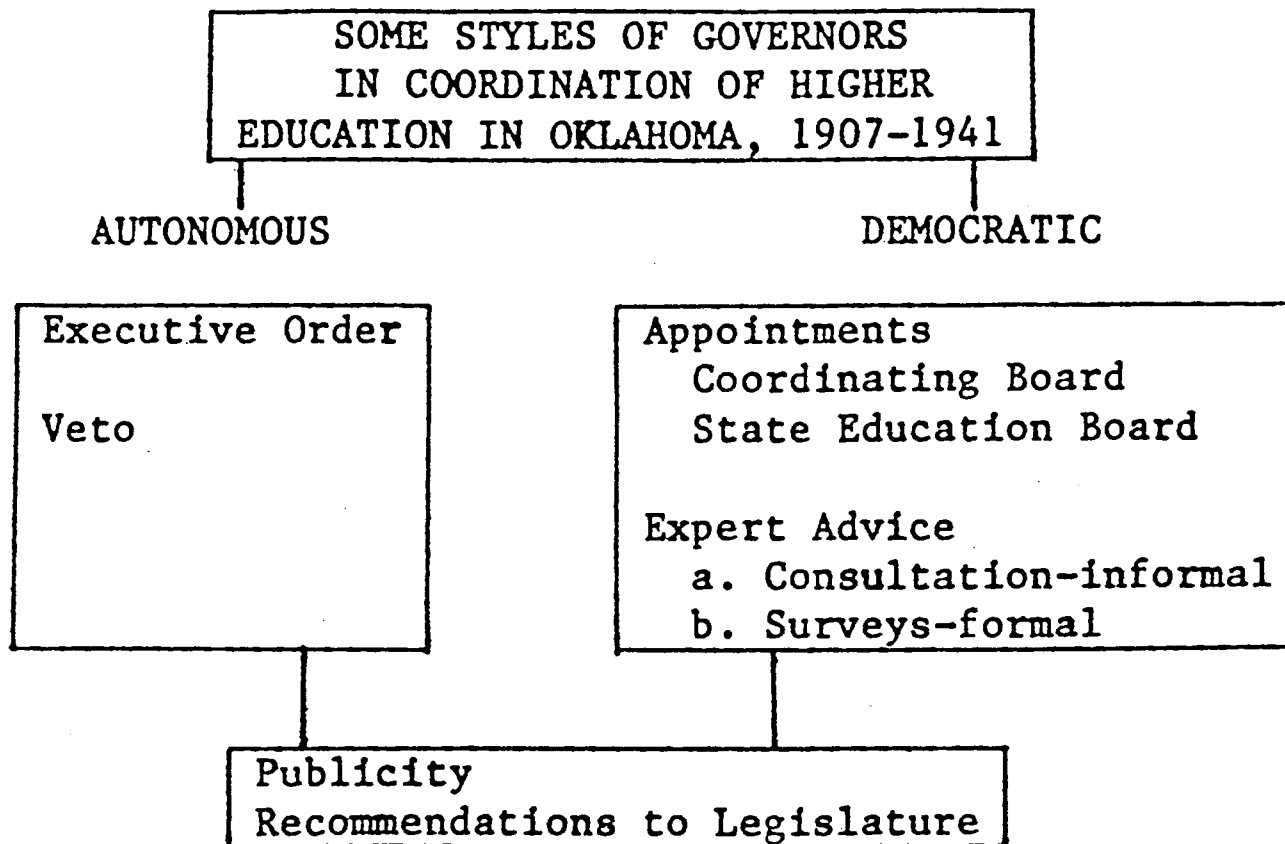


Figure 1. Governors' Management Styles

Surveys were performed when an agency, public or private, hired professionals. Governors Robertson and Marland were instrumental in the completion of surveys. In terms of immediate impact, the survey was the least effective method.

Publicity controlled by the governor was either an effort to receive information or an effort to disseminate information. Williams used publicity to receive information from citizens. The Blue Valley Farmer, Murray's own paper, was used to disseminate biased information. Most of the articles praised Murray's policies or criticized any opponents of his policies.

Each governor shared his goals and objectives with the legislature. Success in their implementation depended on factors such as the tone of the message, public opinion, and strength of support or opposition in the legislature. Thus, the legislature acted upon some recommendations, such as the coordinating boards, while others remained recommendations, such as Cruce's pleas to close some institutions.

The veto was a widely used and usually appropriate form in which the executive communicated. As Williams used this method, the veto closed entire institutions. Cruce threatened to use the veto in the same manner, but never did.

With their varied styles and methods, all of the governors except Phillips failed to create a coordinated system of higher education. They failed largely because the governor could not coordinate higher education. The governor was not elected to coordinate higher education. A governor may have promised to change higher education, but he was not elected to change things himself. Cruce, Williams, and Murray tried to accomplish too much on the strength of their office. In contrast, Phillips supported a general idea and left it to others to work out the

details. Phillips' success required legislative, coordinating board members, newspaper, radio, and voter participation.

One cannot ignore the impact of local interests in the governors' failures. The Brookings Institution reported that approximately 50% of all students lived within driving distance (25 miles) of the higher education institution they attended.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this factor, there were few imposing monuments to represent the struggle of the people in a sparsely populated prairie state. Perhaps the institutions helped fill that void and represented pride in their communities. At any rate, the communities in which the institutions were located were quite vocal in their support.

People were important in the history of higher education coordination in Oklahoma, and two distinct phases may be identified. In the first phase (1911 to 1939), the emphasis was on institutions. From 1911 to 1919, the concentration was on the closing of institutions as a means of regulating the direction of higher education. It had taken only four years after statehood for the distressful, yet necessary, process of self-evaluation to begin. There was little activity between 1920 to 1933. The emphasis in 1933 and 1934 was on the creation of the Greater University. The second phase, 1939 to 1941, was finally directed toward formal coordination.

In order to put coordination of higher education in Oklahoma in context, a general discussion of coordination in the United States is instructive. Coordination of higher education did not begin until the late nineteenth century. Most higher education institutions enjoyed a great deal of autonomy (absence of state control) prior to that time. Most states now have some kind of coordination agency.<sup>4</sup> The degrees of coordination vary from state to state.<sup>5</sup> Approximately 27 states have

coordinating boards, and about half are regulatory. The other agencies are advisory. The first of these boards was formed in New York in 1784, and the second was not formed until 1934 in Kentucky. Approximately 19 states have consolidated governing boards. The first of these boards was formed in 1897 in South Dakota.<sup>6</sup> Oklahoma's higher education institutions did not have the luxury of evolving over a relatively long period of time, but accomplished higher education coordination in only 34 years. Thirty-four years may appear to be a long time, but in the context of this country, it is not.

Oklahoma is one of only two states with a coordinating board of control.<sup>7</sup> The state regents coordinate the system mainly through a unified budget and approval of course offerings and programs. The control occurs mainly with their duties of recommending to the state legislature budget requests and of allocating those funds to the institutions.<sup>8</sup> Oklahoma's experience with political interference resulted in an emphasis on authority. This does not seem to be the situation in other states.

After 34 years of statehood, why was the attempt to formalize coordination in 1941 successful? There were several factors. The governor in 1941, Leon Phillips, was a skilled politician and knew how to work with the legislature. Strong supporters of coordination, Bennett and Kelley had supported Phillips' campaign for governor. This gave Phillips added encouragement in support of coordination efforts. Phillips had designed a short campaign for the constitutional amendment which left too little time for an effective counterattack. But the success of the amendment was more than the success of a governor; it was the culmination of a process. Oklahoma had experimented with coordination for most of its existence as a state. Other states were involved in coordination of higher education. All of these factors influenced success in 1941.

The need for coordination of higher education in Oklahoma was perceived early in the state's history. The number of state-supported institutions required some kind of financial accountability. The people of the state deserved the best education possible. This required, at the least, consistent standards and policies. Coordination seemed to be a way to respond to these major needs. Local interests and political interference affected the nature of the coordination. On the eve of World War II, the people of Oklahoma approved Article XIII-A of the State Constitution. Would the Oklahoma state system and the State Regents of Higher Education be prepared for the challenges to come?

#### Further Areas of Research

There are several further areas of study suggested as a result of this paper. A continuation of the study of coordination of higher education in Oklahoma could examine the original responsibilities of the state regents and its performance in relation to those responsibilities, the office of the chancellor, and/or the degree of coordination of constitutional, statutory, and private institutions. A related study could review and compare coordination models in similar states (such as those in the Southwest region or those with similar patterns obtaining statehood) with Oklahoma. The history of Oklahoma's governing boards generates at least two subjects for study--a general study of the evolution of Oklahoma's governing boards, or a specific study such as the evolution of the Board of Regents for Oklahoma State University and the agricultural and mechanical colleges. These subject areas offer exciting possibilities for the future researcher.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Scales and Goble, Politics, 165.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>3</sup>Brooking's Institution, Report, 44.

<sup>4</sup>Robert O. Berdahl, Statewide Coordination of Higher Education (Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1971), 3-21.

<sup>5</sup>Robert B. Kamm, Class Notes, 26 October 1987, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

<sup>6</sup>Berdahl, Statewide, 20-21.

<sup>7</sup>Robert L. Williams, Legal Bases of Coordinating Boards of Higher Education in Thirty-Nine States (Chicago: Council of State Governments, 1967), 9.

<sup>8</sup>Kamm, Class Notes, 26 October 1987, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

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## APPENDIX

## Major Events

- 1911 - State Board of Education activated
- 1917 - Five institutions closed
- 1919 - Three institutions reopened; one institution founded
- 1922 - Public Education in Oklahoma, A Report of a Survey of Public Education in the State of Oklahoma published
- 1926 - Bennett dissertation published
- 1929 - First Coordinating Board bill passed; Oklahoma College Association formed
- 1933 - Second Coordinating Board bill passed; Coordinating Board members appointed
- 1935 - Report on a Survey of Organization and Administration of Oklahoma published
- 1939 - Coordinating Board members appointed
- 1941 - Oklahoma State System of Higher Education and Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education created

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