

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

A meeting of the Board of Regents was held on Tuesday, October 1, 1929, at ten o'clock, in the office of the President of the University, at Norman, Oklahoma.

The following members of the Board were present: Chairman Buttram, presiding, Rogers, Carlock, Looney and Hayes.

The meeting was called to receive the report of the special investigating committee concerning the hearings conducted on the activities of the two pep organizations - the Ruf Neks and Jazz Hounds. The report of the special committee follows:

TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Sirs:

The Committee appointed by order of the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma at a meeting thereof on Friday, September 27th, to investigate the recent activities of the Ruf Neks and Jazz Hounds, two student organizations of the University, with respect to the agitation among the members of these two organizations and the acts of their members in the matter of violating the regulation of the University adopted by the Board of Regents which prohibited the practice of hazing by students and student organizations of the University submits to you its report and recommendations.

I.

Immediately upon the appointment of this Committee, it convened in session and commenced the investigation directed to be made by it, and has adopted substantially two days and part of two nights to this work. It has summoned before it for interrogation all of the members of the two student organizations involved, who had become members thereof prior to the present semester. One or more members of the Committee have conferred with members of the Faculty, including the President, members of the Board of Regents and other residents of Norman and vicinity who, the Committee was advised, might have information upon the matters investigated. Upon information from these sources, and principally upon the information furnished to the Committee by the members of these two organizations, the Committee has found the facts it now reports, upon which it makes its recommendations.

II.

No investigation has been made with respect to the acts or conduct of the members of these two organizations initiated since the commencement of the present semester.

III.

On Tuesday evening, September 24th, a joint meeting of the members of the two organizations was held at one of the buildings on the campus. No roll of the members of the two organizations who attended was kept and no minutes of

350

the proceedings of the joint meeting were made. It appears that it has been the uniform practice of these two organizations to make and keep no record of their proceedings at any of their meetings. At the joint meeting referred to, the principal, if not the only, matter considered and acted upon was the question whether the two organizations would have a public initiation of its new members in conformity to their traditional public ceremony, and which during the history of these organizations, except at their initiation of last spring, consisted of hazing or paddling the new members initiated.

IV.

The Committee finds that, subsequent to the adoption last year by the Board of Regents of its rule prohibiting this practice by student organizations and students of the University, these two organizations and their members until the present semester observed this rule and there was no effort to develop a sentiment for its violation.

The joint meeting of Tuesday, September 24th, was apparently called for the purpose of determining whether the two organizations would observe this year this rule of the Board of Regents, and that the two organizations might adopt a uniform attitude in respect thereto. At this meeting the question was submitted to a vote of the members of these two organizations whether a public initiation, in the objectionable form heretofore practiced by the organizations, should be had this year. There was a division of sentiment among the members with respect to this question. A number of members favored and advocated the regular and established form of initiation, notwithstanding the regulation of the Board, some opposed and counselled against this course, and others were silent and apparently assumed and expressed no attitude with respect thereto.

Upon a vote taken at this joint meeting, a majority of the members favored the usual public initiation in the form established by the precedence of these two orders, which included as its principal feature the hazing or paddling prohibited by the regulation of the Board of Regents.

V.

The Committee finds that shortly after this joint meeting, President Bizzell learned, at least in part, of what had occurred at the meeting, and immediately upon his learning of the same he called into conference the chief officers of these two organizations and also some of their other prominent members and warned them that the form of initiation the joint meeting had resolved upon making would violate the regulation of the Board of Regents and would incur the expulsion of the members of these two organizations who participated in it; and he urged upon these student members that they use their influence with their respective orders and their members to desist from the form of initiation resolved upon, and to observe the regulation of the Board.

VI.

The Committee finds that the officers and members of the organization with whom Dr. Bizzell thus conferred and counselled became immediately active, some more active than others, to induce their respective members to change their attitude and purpose in the matter. About 6:30 P. M., Wednesday evening September 25th, separate meetings of the two organizations were called and held. At these separate meetings there was some public discussion and much more discussion in

groups of the members with respect to what should be done. At both these meetings there was a division of sentiment as to what action the organizations should take, but by vote in the separate meetings both organizations decided that public initiation should be abandoned and that only private initiation should be held, whereat only the ritualistic ceremony would be had.

VII.

Prior to the meetings on Wednesday evening, and probably prior to the joint meeting on Tuesday evening, the candidates elected for initiation to both orders had been instructed to bring with them to the initiation the number of paddles each candidate had theretofore been required by custom of the orders to bring to the initiation ceremony; and the candidates of the two respective orders appeared on the campus with their paddles at or about the time of the convening of the two separate meetings on Wednesday evening.

Under the practice of initiation heretofore observed, each candidate was required to carry a bundle of paddles to the initiation, which was in the process of initiation used by the old members upon the new members. After the action taken by the separate meetings, deciding upon private initiation, apparently the officers and members of the two orders who had been active in inducing the two orders to abandon the plan of public initiation directed and procured the paddles to be piled upon trucks. The candidates and a large number of the old members of the two orders with the two truck loads of paddles thus proceeded to a point in the country approximately two miles south of the university, where the initiations were conducted by the two orders separately. The testimony of every old member of the organizations, who participated in or was present at the initiations, was that only the ritualistic features of the initiation were administered to the candidates, and that the hazing or paddling feature of initiation was not indulged in by their organizations; that the paddles were put into a pile and burned; and that no use of the same was made in the initiation ceremonies. The Committee was unable to obtain any evidence that the paddling ceremony was indulged in, as has heretofore been the practice of these orders in their initiations. From some members of the Faculty and residents living in proximity to the place of the initiation, it does appear that some use of the paddles was made by a limited number of the members; however to a very limited extent and incidental to the handling and final disposition of the paddles, rather than as a part of the initiation ceremony, and that the use of the paddles, even in this form and manner, was opposed and discouraged by the greater part or substantially all of the members participating in the initiation.

VIII.

The Committee finds, upon the frank admission and statement of officers of these two orders, including both those who favored and supported a public initiation as well as some of those who opposed it, that the abandonment of the paddling practice virtually destroys the only feature and tradition of these organizations worth while and that unless this practice can be continued, there is little inducement to continue the orders. There was also frank admission on the part of these members that these practices attracted an element of students and members who, despite the efforts of the more conservative members of the organization, at time control the conduct of the organization, resulting in disorderly conduct and abuses of the hazing or paddling practice, riotous spirit and conduct among the members.

IX.

Your Committee, therefore, is of the opinion that these two organizations serve no useful purpose to the student body, but that their influence has been and could only be if continued detrimental and destructive to the proper college spirit, conduct and moral of the student body. Your Committee recommends that the order of the Board of Regents made on September 27th, abolishing the student organizations named and known as the Ruf Neks and Jazz Hounds and prohibiting the members of these organizations and other students of the University from participating in said organizations and in any other student activities as members of said organizations be made permanent; and that the President of the University be authorized and directed to expel promptly from the University any student violating this regulation.

X.

With respect to the individual responsibility and culpability of the individual members of these two organizations in the recent events investigated, your Committee finds and recommends that the members of these organizations be divided into two classes: The first class, hereinafter referred to as Class A, to consist of members who have throughout the recent proceedings advocated the abandonment of the public initiation and an observance of the regulations of the Board of Regents; or who, if they did not do so from the beginning did subsequent to the joint meeting, change their attitude and gave their influence and counsel to this end; or who were not present at either the joint meeting or the separate meetings referred to, took no part in any of these proceedings, and who were not present at the private initiation; or who, if present, supported the attitude of abandoning the hazing or paddling practice; and who, in their conference with the Committee have impressed the Committee that they will observe and encourage others to observe the Board's regulation prohibiting hazing. The second class, hereinafter referred to as Class B, to include those members who favored the plan of continuing the regular public initiation heretofore used by these organizations, and who supported this plan either by their votes at the meeting or by their advocacy thereof, or who were officers or active and influential members of these organizations and knew the sentiment that was being agitated and developed with respect to the continuance of the forbidden practice and did not lend their influence to counteract it by expressing their opinion thereon or counselling against it; or who, by their admission, after having supported at the separate meetings on Wednesday evening the plan, to have the regular public initiation, and upon being defeated, refused to participate in the private initiation; and also those members who, in their interviews with the Committee, have impressed the Committee that their conviction and attitude toward the continuance of the prohibited practice is such that the Committee cannot conclude that they will voluntarily and zealously observe and support the regulation of the Board involved.

The Class A Members shall include the following students:

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| John W. Cole | Clarence McElroy |
| Harold C. Thurman | Henry Griffing |
| Frank C. Love | Ira McCrosky |
| Wm. Elbert Cook | Byron McFall |
| Wm. R. High | Clarence Black |
| James L. Robinson | George Fisher |
| Merton Munson | Benton Ferguson |

Robert White	Bill Harris
D. J. Coffey	Henry William Browne
George Bell	Ted Foose
Dudley Tucker	Clarence Warren
Sam Nowlin	Fred L. Kirkland
Weldon Ferris	Joe Revelette
Bill Cram	W. H. Taft
Sam Colby	Paul C. Brunk
Rex McGehee	Robley D. Evans
Ray Kimball	Fred H. Bringham

Oscar L. Grimes

And your Committee recommends that Class A members be permitted to continue as students of the University without any condition, reprimand or censure.

XI.

That Class B members shall include the following students:

Sherman G. Smith	Fay Coil
Ormand B. Shaw	Charles Edgerton
R. H. Pansze	Albert Larason
Charles Spangler	H. Tom Kight
J. Wm. Crawford	Delmas Martin
Wm. H. Noble	Merwyn C. Murrell
Ralph J. May	James T. Blanton
George Bushyhead	Billy Kerr
Paul Dudley	A. D. Howell
Carl Buerbaum, Jr.	Wayne Pitzer
John W. Bond	Ed Klopfenstein
Henry V. Witt	Benton Brooks, Jr.
Herman Becker	Sam Fullerton

H. L. Crisman

And your Committee recommends that members of Class B be permitted to continue as students of the University only upon condition that each of said members shall sign and file with the President of the University, during the day upon which the order of the Board is made public to the members of these organizations by the President, his individual written pledge signed by him, in substance that he will, as a student of the University, observe and obey all the regulations of the Board of Regents and of the Faculty of the University governing its students and that he will co-operate and give his support and influence to cultivating and developing a spirit of observance and obedience of all the rules and regulations of the Board of Regents and Faculty by the general student body.

Your Committee recommends that if any of the members of Class B fail or refuse to sign and file with the President such pledge within the time named, unless prevented by sickness or other unavoidable cause, the Board by order authorize and direct the President to expel immediately such student or students; that all members of Class A be permitted to return to their classes and to full participation in all the activities of the student body immediately upon the announcement of the order of the Board by the President; that each member of Class B be permitted to return to his classes and to participation in

all activities of the student body as soon after the announcement of the order of the Board by the President as such student shall have signed and filed with the President the written pledge recommended above.

XII.

Your Committee further recommends, in view of the fact that the action of the Board in suspending all members of these two organizations from participating in classes and in the activities of the student body pending the investigation and report of this Committee and before the Board could investigate or be advised of the individual conduct of each member, and was taken by the Board for the purpose of avoiding further disturbances in the student body by these organizations or their members and to facilitate the investigation of the individual members thereof, that the Board declare by its order that such suspension shall not be regarded by the Board or Faculty or entered against the record of said members as a punishment, and that the absence of the members from their classes during such suspension, occurring as to members of Class A not later than noon Tuesday, October 2nd, and as to Class B. not later than 5 P. M., the same date, shall not be charged against such members as cuts in their classes and said members shall not otherwise be given demerit therefor.

XIII.

Your Committee further recommends, that the Board by its order authorize and direct the President that, if any of the former members of said organization named herein or other students of the University shall violate the orders recommended herein and adopted by the Board, the President is authorized and directed to expel such offenders from the University; that this Committee be authorized, if it later shall be ascertained that there are any members of either of said organizations initiated therein prior to the present semester of the University who are now students at the University whose names have not been furnished to the committee and who have not appeared before the committee, to investigate the conduct and attitude of such members with respect to the actions of the organizations involved and to place them in the class in which they should be placed and be dealt with by the President accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) Frank Buttram
Chairman of Committee.

(Signed) W. B. Bizzell
" E. W. Reaves
" E. D. Meacham
" J. B. Cheadle

It was voted to approve the report and recommendations of the Committee. The form of pledge to be signed by the students in Class B was approved. The Chairman of the Board was instructed to read the report and recommendation of the Committee to the students concerned and secure pledges from those indicated in Class B.

On motion adjourned.

Emil R. Kraettli
Emil R. Kraettli, Secretary.