

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

A special meeting of the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma was held on Saturday, December 17, 1932, at 10:00 a. m., in the office of the President of the University, Norman, Oklahoma.

Regent Bowman, president of the Board, presided; others present: Regents Rosser, Tolbert, Barry.

The reading of the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, December 8, 1932, was omitted.

The meeting of the board was called by President Bizzell to report on the recent episode in which the D. D. M. C., a secret organization of University students, had taken a university student, between the hours of 3:00 and 4:00 o'clock a. m., on the morning of Wednesday, December 15, 1932, from his room to a place approximately two miles south of Norman, where they administered a severe beating; President Bizzell's report on the incident follows:

To the President and Members of the Board of Regents:

With reference to the recent out-break of the D. D. M. C., in which Bill Stephens, a student in the University and the local correspondent of the Oklahoman and Times, was a victim, I submit for your consideration the following facts:

Between five and six o'clock on Thursday evening, December 8, a newspaper correspondent from the Oklahoman called me and asked what the University authorities proposed to do about the beating of Bill Stephens. This reporter said, "Bill Stephens, of course, has told you about it". He expressed great surprise when I told him that I had not heard of the incident. The reporter said, "Let me check up on the matter and I will call you again in a few minutes." Later on he called up and said that he was mistaken about Bill having told me, but explained that young Stephens was at that time in Mr. E. K. Gaylord's office, and he had assumed that the facts were known to me. In a short time there was an extra sold on the streets of Norman relating in detail, the statement of Bill Stephens to the press. In other words, the first information I got of this incident was through the press.

This unfortunate incident is alleged to have occurred in the early hours of Wednesday morning, December 14. This young newspaper correspondent was in my office twice on Wednesday. He was in the office again on Thursday morning about nine o'clock, and he called to see me again immediately after the adjournment of the Board of Regents meeting which was held on that day, about three-thirty o'clock in the afternoon. Although Mr. Stephens, a student in the University, conferred with me four times in the two days following this occurrence, he never mentioned the matter to me at all. The recital of these details is for the purpose of calling attention to the fact that all the incidents connected with this unfortunate affair were known to the entire student body before the machinery for investigation could be started. This proved a great handicap in securing the names of the members of this order.

The Statement of Stephens

On Friday morning I called a conference consisting of the chairman of the Discipline Committee, and Cleveland County enforcement officers, before whom young Stephens appeared. I later, on the same morning, held a conference with Major Peck, legal adviser of the Oklahoman and Times, and Bill Stephens. The statement of young Stephens as frequently reported in the papers the last few days was essentially as follows:

Sometime before day light on Wednesday morning, December 14, he was aroused from sleep by a group of men wearing masks, who told him to get out of bed and come with them. They took his overcoat and shoes and put them on him when he got down stairs. Then they rushed him into an automobile and drove rapidly south on Jenkins Avenue. The car was stopped at a certain point and he was taken to a vacant barn a little distance from the street or highway where he was told that they resented an article that he had written a day or two previously and published in one of his papers. He attempted to make an explanation and was told to "Shut-up". After having him bend over, his overcoat was pulled over his head and he was beaten with a rope by one of the gangsters. This group then returned to Norman leaving young Stephens at the place where he was beaten. He walked in, retired to his bed, and kept the secret until he reported it to his newspaper as described above.

Character of the Investigation

Since I secured the information about this case, every possible resource at my command has been utilized in running down those responsible for this dastardly deed. The Discipline Committee has been in session every day for long hours interviewing students and following up every rumor or suspicious circumstance that came under observation. A separate report of their activities and findings is herewith submitted.

I have held frequent conferences with the sheriff and assistant county attorney supplying them with such information as became available that I thought they could follow up. These officials have cooperated heartily and actively. Last Sunday morning I called a meeting of all fraternity presidents in my office, requesting that they denounce this lawless act, and pledge their cooperation in the investigation. I secured a hearty response from every one of them.

On Sunday afternoon I was present at a conference in Oklahoma City attended by representative alumni, which was called by Mr. Chester Westfall, president of the alumni association. We discussed the situation from every angle and every man present expressed a willingness to cooperate in purging the University of this outlawed organization. This group of alumni appointed an able committee that have spent hours in assisting me in solving this problem. I can not express in words, my appreciation for the cooperation and helpfulness of this committee.

I also called a meeting of the General Faculty of the University which was attended by approximately three hundred officers and faculty members. At my suggestion they authorized the appointment of a committee to draft appropriate resolutions condemning this act and pledging their cooperation in the investigation in every way possible. I am submitting as a separate exhibit the resolutions of this committee.

I also submit a resolution adopted by the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors, of which Dr. A. Richards is president, indicating their attitude in the matter and expressing their earnest desire to cooperate.

The University has presented, as indicated by the above, a solid front in this investigation. Everything has been done in our power to secure the names of those responsible for the whipping of this student, and I hereby acknowledge my appreciation for the united cooperation of officials, alumni, faculty groups, student organizations and individuals.

#### Newspaper Publicity

The University authorities have been greatly handicapped in this investigation by the intemperate publicity of the Oklahoman and Times. These papers by their sensational recitals, exaggerated reports, and attacks upon the integrity and sincerity of purpose of the authorities and faculty members of the University have created such intense opposition to them as to cause bitter resentment on the part of many people, and to divert public attention from this unfortunate incident itself. But, it is only fair to state that the press in general has dealt very fairly with this entire situation. But, it should be stated that there is great provocation for the severest indictment of this unfortunate affair. The D. D. M. C. organization never had any justification for existence. Its purposes are totally at variance with academic traditions.

#### Conclusion

It is the duty of all of us to combine our efforts in discovering the names of those responsible for this recent atrocity and purge the University from the blight of this lawless organization. The fact that a group who held membership in the organization in 1925 gained immunity of the Board of Regents and the Discipline Committee, including myself, on the formal pledge that they had disbanded and would never reorganize, justifies more drastic action than was taken at that time. While, I do not believe that any member of the group who made the pledge to disband in 1925, have ever participated or encouraged the organization since that time, there is no question that there has been a D. D. M. C. organization on the campus since 1926. It is necessary therefore, not only to discover and to punish the members of the present organization, but some definite steps must be taken to prevent the organization of another similar group later on. In dealing with both aspects of this question, I invite the advice and direction of the Board of Regents and pledge my best efforts to carry them out.

Respectfully submitted,

W. B. Bizzell, President.

President Bizzell made the following oral report on events leading up to the identification of the students, who were members of the organization known as D. D. M. C.

"On Thursday evening, December 15, at about 8:30 p. m. I received a telephone call from Carl Magee, Editor of the Oklahoma News, asking if I would come

to Oklahoma City, to the home of Lee B. Thompson, between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock p. m., on the following night (Friday, December 16), but that he could give me no further information at this time. I told him I would be there. On Friday, December 16, I had several telephone conversations with Judge Earl Foster, County Attorney Lewis Morris, and others in Oklahoma City who had been working to help solve the difficulties, and I was not certain, in view of these conversations whether I was still supposed to go to Oklahoma City for the conference about which I had been called by Carl Magee. I was at my home on Friday evening, and at about 9:30 o'clock p. m., I received a call from Oklahoma City asking that I come at once to the home of Lee B. Thompson. After I had been there a short time I was called to come to the Governor's Mansion for a conference. Upon my arrival there I found the Governor, Carl Magee, and fourteen students, seated about a long table. The Governor stated that these students had admitted membership in D. D. M. C., that they realized that they had brought great embarrassment upon the University and its president. The Governor asked me what penalty would be imposed upon these men, and I stated that I could not do otherwise than to recommend expulsion from the University, since membership in this organization was specifically prohibited by a regulation of the Board of Regents. Carl Magee stated that the men had come to him with a definite agreement to disband the order, that they were ready to accept whatever punishment would be forthcoming, but that they had requested no announcement be made as to the identity of the membership by the University. I stated that it had always been the policy of the University not to make public the names of students under discipline, and that this policy would be adhered to in this case. It was also requested that the names be not divulged to the discipline committee, or to the Board of Regents at their meetings Saturday, but that a complete statement would be given out through the press on Sunday, December 18. I was given the names of the students in their signed statement, but under the conditions as above stated, I am not at liberty to disclose them at this time."

President Bizzell reported further that he had had the cooperation of the alumni, and that two groups, especially, had been very active in trying to clear up the situation. The older group, headed by Chester Westfall, of Ponca City, were in Norman and held conferences with various students, some of whom were suspected as being members of the organization. That the younger group, in closer touch with the present student body, had been instrumental in bringing the members of the organization in touch with Carl Magee, which finally resulted in the admission of membership by the students whose names appear on the statement above referred to.

Following his report, President Bizzell read a letter he had written to E. K. Gaylord, President of the Oklahoma Publishing Company, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Mr. Gaylord's reply. President Bizzell's letter and the reply were as follows:

December 13, 1932.

Mr. E. K. Gaylord, President,  
The Oklahoman and Times,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Dear Mr. Gaylord:

In the Oklahoman of this date, there appears an editorial from which I quote the following sentence: "The more the public suspects that the D. D. M. C.'s

have been stool-pigeons for certain university authorities and that what that body is not able to accomplish by campus politics, it attempts to accomplish by force, the more annoyed the people of Oklahoma become." I am wondering if you would mind answering the following questions with reference to this sentence:

1. What is the source of your information that the D. D. M. C.'s are "stool-pigeons for certain university authorities"?
2. Will you be so kind, also, as to tell me who the "certain university authorities" are that are referred to in this sentence?

The last paragraph in this editorial reads as follows: "What the university needs, apparently, is a leadership free from all entangling alliances with self-constituted disciplinarians who resort to the anonymous threat, the mask and the lash."

Does this sentence mean that the president of the university has any "entangling alliances" with the D. D. M. C.'s or any other so-called "self-constituted disciplinarians"?

I will greatly appreciate a prompt reply to this inquiry.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) W. B. Bizzell, President.

December 15, 1932.

Dr. W. B. Bizzell,  
University of Oklahoma,  
Norman, Oklahoma.

Dear Dr. Bizzell:

I have just returned from three days' absence from the city and find your letter of the 13th.

I think that the use of the expression, "stool-pigeon" was doubtless ill-advised and I think it referred to the fact which has been frequently mentioned by students and alumni that the various members of the faculty and the discipline committee frequently consult with leading and prominent students on the campus and from among this group it is generally supposed that the D. D. M. C. has secured its membership.

The fact that the faculty or other University authorities consult with these students and accept their advice in matters pertaining to the campus or student activities would not justify the term, "stool-pigeon".

I do not think there was any significance in the use of the term, "certain University authorities" for it is generally known that this group of students who are suspected of membership in the D. D. M. C. is in close touch with various

members of the faculty and of the discipline committee.

While I do not know what the last paragraph specifically referred to, if anything, I do know that there is considerable criticism of the fact that several members of the faculty are known to have formerly been members of the D. D. M. C. and are suspected now of being still in sympathy with the organization or at least it is suspected that some of them are in sympathy with it.

The fact that one of these professors announced to his class that he was a former member of the organization sounded as if he were proud of the fact.

Very truly yours,

(signed) E. K. Gaylord

President Bizzell then read a resolution signed by the faculty of the University, and a resolution by the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors; the resolutions were as follows:

To the President and Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma.

We, the faculty of the University of Oklahoma, in a general meeting on this day, Wednesday, December 14, 1932, vote unanimously our active assistance and cooperation in the investigation of the recent offense allegedly perpetrated by an organization known as the D. D. M. C. against one of the students of the University.

The principal duty or function of the faculty is that of teaching, and only a small number are called upon to serve actively in a disciplinary capacity. However, we keenly appreciate and fully acknowledge our duty to aid, assist and cooperate in all matters relating to university affairs. We, the general faculty, take this opportunity to express our unequivocal condemnation of the recent outrage; and we pledge our wholehearted support in discovering those offenders who, in open defiance, violated the regulations of the University and the laws of the State of Oklahoma; and we further pledge ourselves to prevent, insofar as we are able, any recurrence of such an outrage.

Respectfully submitted

To the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma:

At a meeting of the local members of the American Association of University Professors, it was decided to appoint a committee which should formulate an expression of opinion concerning the happenings of the past week in which a student is said to have been whipped by a group of masked individuals who were themselves unknown, but wore the regalia of D. D. M. C. In the opinions here expressed we wish to make it clear that we are not authorized to speak for the national organization of the American Association of University Professors, but that we represent the opinion of the local members of our profession of university teachers.

We deplore the incident of last week in the strongest possible manner. Corporal punishment is any form in repugnant to adult civilized society. It is psychologically unsound, and characteristic of a low social level, and it is not often that by it any desirable results are obtained. But when such punishment is administered by masked individuals it becomes morally reprehensible, and a crime against society. Practices of this kind and any organization supporting them can not be too strongly condemned. They have no place in a university community and any sentiment which condones or supports them is sadly misguided.

We wish to offer every encouragement to your Board and to all duly constituted authorities of the University in your efforts to remove these practices, and also any organization countenancing them from our community. You have our full confidence and support in all measures you may approve for extirpating this sore from the University body. We also affirm our support of the officials of this State or of any subdivision of it in all their efforts to apprehend any criminals whatsoever.

In connection with these matters we wish to make certain observations. A university exists for three purposes and for these only. They are: to train the youth, to broaden the frontiers of learning, and to disseminate knowledge. As members of our profession, we believe that this University has seriously endeavored to carry out these three functions, and it is our opinion that a large measure of success has rewarded its efforts. During the current year the enrolment has reached 5,248 students and we believe that over 5,200 of them are desirable members of our community. Indeed we believe that the work they are accomplishing is of higher character than before, and that in general they are living together happily and with sober purpose. It is a serious misplacement of emphasis to forget the permanent aims of the institution and the accomplishments of the great numbers of our members in our disgust at the actions of a few whose judgment does not restrain them from deeds which should be beneath persons of their opportunities and training. We urge you and all who are rightfully interested in the greater good which this University accomplishes to take such steps as will lead to a correct appreciation of the great ends which the institution serves. It is the duty of the administrative officers of the University to set up regulations and enforce them in order that the common welfare may be served, but it should not be forgotten that the primary aims of the institution do not include policing the student body. Where regulations of that order become necessary, they are merely subsidiary to the primary purposes for which the institution exists. College students are not children, and, although every effort must be made to set up good conditions for their work, it is neither possible nor advisable for the University to supervise the intimate details of their living. We reiterate that the primary purposes of the University must not be lost sight of, for in our concern over this unfortunate occurrence there is danger of an entire misplacement of emphasis.

We deeply deplore also the attempts at formulation of the policies of the University on the part of outside individuals. The University is an institution of the State and its control is vested in your Board by rightfully constituted authority; and interference or ill-considered criticism on the part of outside agencies is not for the greater good. We recognize the function of the press of the State in calling attention to abuses or lapses which occur in public

institutions. But we deeply regret attacks which unjustly impugn the motives or misrepresent the character of those in responsible charge of an institution. The good faith of the press may often be shown by its willingness to cooperate judiciously with proper authorities before exploiting the news value of untoward incidents. There are proper means of redress available if the duly constituted officers fail to perform their functions, and until that time of failure arrives, (and it has not yet arrived) we object to interference on the part of outside agencies. May we say that the spectre of political domination of Oklahoma institutions has never entirely departed, and it has given many thinking persons in this state grave concern. Nevertheless, it is our judgment that dictation of University policies by any other outside agency or group would be as harmful as political domination. As members of this faculty and of the profession of University teachers, we offer you our support in all measures which you may take looking toward the establishment of higher education upon a plane above the domination by any outside agency.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) R. T. House

" P. B. Sears

" Stephen Scatori  
Secretary

" H. H. Herbert  
Vice-President

" A. Richards  
President.

President Bizzell read the following report of the Committee on Student Conduct:

December 16, 1932.

President W. B. Bizzell,  
University of Oklahoma.

Dear Dr. Bizzell:

Following a conference with you last Friday morning, December 9, 1932, I called the Committee on Student Conduct for a meeting Friday afternoon. Mr. Bill Stephens came before the Committee and verified the account published in the Daily Oklahoman that same morning concerning his being taken to the country by the D. D. M. C. organization and flogged with a rope. He stated that this report is accurate. He also explained to us the reason why he delayed so long in giving out information concerning the matter. His reason in brief was that he was making an effort to secure information concerning the guilty individuals. He gave us the names of certain men whom he suspected.



I have been working on this problem every day since that time and have had a great many conferences with students and others. The Committee has been in session every day this week and a great many students have been called before the Committee. Sixty-two students have been called before the Committee and questioned in detail about their connection with the D. D. M. C. organization and each of them was given an opportunity to sign an affidavit denying all such connection. Each of these students except two readily signed the affidavit.

Andy Beck declined to sign the affidavit and gave no reason for declining except that he did not care to sign it. Mr. Beck has been called before the Committee previously and had been questioned in detail as to his whereabouts Monday night and Tuesday night, December 5 and 6. It was supposed that the D. D. M. C.'s had a meeting of their organization on Monday night and that Andy Beck and Charles Davis, who are members of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and live in the chapter house, had attended that meeting. These two men had appeared before the Committee at a previous meeting and had failed to give a satisfactory account of their whereabouts on Monday evening before two a. m. Each of them, when questioned, had stated that he did not feel disposed to assist the university officials or others in ascertaining the names of the D. D. M. C. membership or of the individuals who had taken Bill Stephens out for a flogging, this notwithstanding the fact that Stephens is a fraternity brother of theirs. These facts are mentioned in connection with the refusal of Andy Beck to sign the affidavit. Charles Davis, however, signed the affidavit without hesitation.

The other man who failed to sign the affidavit as prepared was Alvan Muldrow. He was questioned as to whether he is a member or pledge now, whether he has ever been a member or pledge, and whether he has ever had any connection of any sort with the D. D. M. C. organization. All of these questions he answered verbally in the negative. When presented an affidavit covering these items, he said that he was unable to sign it. He seemed willing to sign, only the wording of the affidavit seemed to be too strong. When I suggested that the word "ever" be omitted and the phrase "within the past twelve months" be inserted in its place, he replied that he could truthfully sign that. After going to a typewriter and himself making out an affidavit incorporating this change, he still seemed unwilling to sign it and requested permission to talk to his father before signing it. I gave him this permission and he went away, returning an hour or so later. He brought to the Committee still in session an affidavit which said in effect that he is not now a member of the D. D. M. C. and that he had nothing to do with, and no knowledge of, their recent activities. After discussing this with the Committee, he requested permission to take it home with him for the purpose of revision. The revised copy was brought to me the next morning, which reads as follows: "I hereby swear that I am not a member of the D. D. M. C., and had nothing to do with, and know nothing of, the alleged flogging of Bill Stephens." (Acknowledged before notary public in regular form)

The names of the following students have been furnished the Committee but we have been unable to interview them because of their reported illness. Charlie Teel, Rupert McClung, Paul Young, Ellis Bashara, Elwood Brockman, Ernest Bartolina, Bob Clark, William Grisso, and Charlie Wilson. None of them have been asked to sign the affidavit.

Charles Teel has been suspected of being one of the active members of the D. D. M. C. An anonymous voice called Bill Stephens over the phone Monday evening, December 5, demanding that the name of the Sigma Nu fraternity be omitted from a news story which Stephens had prepared and making threats to Stephens if this were not done. Stephens thought the voice of the man who talked to him immediately before he was flogged was the same voice. He thought the figure of the man speaking to him was that of Charles Teel. I called Mr. Teel to my office Saturday morning, December 10, and asked him whether he had called Stephens concerning the fraternity news item. This he denied and also denied all connection with the organization. Within an hour, Teel called Stephens, who was then in Oklahoma City, and asked him if he had told me that he thought he recognized Teel's voice in the phone conversation. At least, this is what Stephens says Teel did. I may state that I did not tell Teel that Stephens had told me this. However, Stephens has stated that he felt reasonably certain that this voice was the same voice that had called him on the earlier occasion. On the last occasion, it was admittedly Teel's.

There has been some evidence that Percy Main was thought to be the man who turned out the lights in the auditorium for a brief interval at a freshman meeting, during which interval representatives of the D. D. M. C. scattered their cards over the audience. Mr. Main was called before the Committee on two occasions and questioned closely about this matter. I feel that the facts have not been satisfactorily established.

The Committee has sought every possible clue in regard to this matter and has investigated every suggestion or rumor and followed every lead as far as possible. While certain individuals have been strongly suspected of connection with the matter, there is not yet in our hands sufficient evidence to fix the guilt on any one of them. The individuals most strongly suspected are Charles Teel, Andy Beck, Charles Davis, and Percy Main. It is reasonable to believe that Alvan Muldrow has been connected with the D. D. M. C. organization up to a relatively short time ago.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) S. W. Reaves, Chairman,  
Committee on Student Conduct.

Committee Recommendation

President W. B. Bizzell,  
University of Oklahoma.

Dear Dr. Bizzell:

In addition to the report of the Committee on Student Conduct, covering its investigation of the recent activities of the D. D. M. C. organization, we wish to make the following supplementary report, based on information later obtained. We have learned that you have in your possession a statement signed by fourteen students who are named below, admitting that they have recently been

members of the D. D. M. C. organization, which organization we find from our investigation was responsible for the flogging of Bill Stephens.

Membership in this organization is a violation of the rules of the university and has been ever since action by the Board of Regents in 1919, or thereabouts. In wearing a mask and flogging Bill Stephens, not only were the rules of the university violated, but a crime against the State of Oklahoma was committed. In view of the seriousness of these offenses, the Committee on Student Conduct recommends that these students whose names are copied from their signed admission, be expelled from the university. The students involved are the following: (Names to be supplied by President Bizzell)

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)	S. W. Reaves, Chairman
"	S. R. Hadsell
"	John B. Cheadle
"	Loyd E. Harris
"	C. Langford

Approved: W. B. Bizzell, President

The above recommendation was submitted by the committee on student conduct which appeared before the board.

There was a general discussion on the incident which occurred on the morning of December 14, and on the investigation that followed. The Committee on Student Conduct was dismissed.

President Bizzell recommended that the recommendation by the Committee on Student Conduct, that the fourteen students, whose names President Bizzell had in his possession, but was not at this time in a position to reveal, be expelled from the University of Oklahoma.

There was a brief discussion following which Regent Tolbert made the motion, seconded by Regent Barry that President Bizzell's recommendation that certain students be expelled from the University, be approved; that President Bizzell, the University Discipline Committee, and others conducting the investigation be commended for the diligence and effectiveness of their work; that this board appreciates the spirit with which they have handled the matter, realizing that this has been a very trying and difficult problem.

On motion adjourned.

*Emil R. Kraettli*  
 Emil R. Kraettli, Secretary.