

University of Texas: On the Way Up —But Politics Still Intrude

Austin, Texas. The 29-story tower of the University of Texas and the state capitol dome dominate the skyline of this attractive city in the south-central Texas hill country. The juxtaposition of these edifices is not without symbolic significance, for relations between Texas politicians and the university are characterized by a mutual watchfulness.

With 32,000 students, the University of Texas is the largest and most important university in a wide region. In fact there is no other institution in the South or Southwest to equal it in the strength and scope of its programs, although a few smaller institutions, such as Rice, Duke, and the University of North Carolina, are its rivals in quality. In 1876 a state constitutional convention directed the Texas legislature to establish and support a university of "the first class," a mandate which still has not been carried out. But, if the University of Texas does not rank among the top ten or so American universities, nearly all the indices—quality of faculty, diversity of programs, Ph.D. production, and the like—place it among the next ten, the institutions of the second rank.

The University of Texas has sprung from soil where, traditionally, politicians have practiced a brand of raw one-party southern factional politics. Fundamental issues such as tax policy and the need for improved public services have tended to be obscured, even though the state Democratic party's liberal wing has struggled to raise these issues. A two-party system is now emerging as the Republicans gain strength, but this development is comparatively recent. In the absence of strong party organizations opposed on substantive issues, lobbyists for oil and gas and other dominant interests have controlled the state legislature. Tax measures have repeatedly been defeated or emasculated, with public education and other services suffering accordingly. The state of Texas still has no individual or corporate income tax and has only modest taxes on oil and gas production.

Despite these circumstances, the

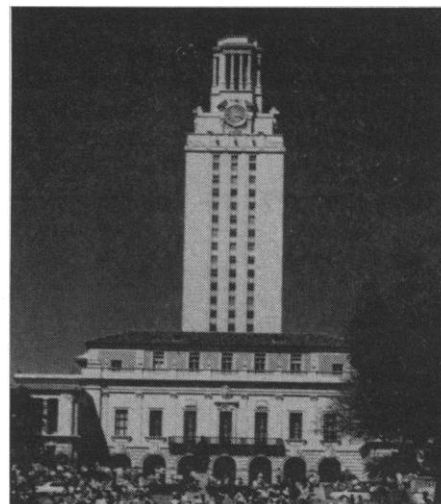
University of Texas has for years, even in times of lean legislative appropriations, benefited from a large endowment of a kind that must be unique. When the university was established it was given 2 million acres of arid lands in western Texas, lands then regarded as worthless except for grazing. Not surprisingly, income from the western lands, which are scattered over a wide region from the vicinity of Midland almost to El Paso, proved insufficient to meet even the modest needs of the fledgling institution. Viewed in retrospect, this was fortunate, for the legislature had little choice but to support the university through regular appropriations and to regard the land revenues as supplemental funds.

"Saint of the Impossible"

In 1923 a wildcatter, drilling on land leased from the university, struck oil, bringing in a well which became known as Santa Rita No. 1—Santa Rita being the "Saint of the Impossible." From that moment the financial prospects of the University of Texas brightened. And today the university, which keeps a sizable staff of petroleum experts at its Midland field office, oversees domains vast and rich enough to satisfy a score of feudal lords. Santa Rita No. 1 is still producing oil, though the original pumping rig is now enshrined at Austin as a campus monument.

The importance to the university of the income from the western lands lies chiefly in the fact that it has provided a steady, assured means of institutional development, including most of the wherewithal for the \$199 million worth of campus buildings. Oil and gas bonuses and royalties and certain other revenues from the western lands have, over the years, been invested in stocks and bonds. These investments now make up the \$530-million Permanent Fund, a steadily growing endowment which, even during the last fiscal year, jumped in value by \$22.7 million.

If the western lands were sold and the proceeds invested, the Permanent Fund might be larger even than Harvard's \$1.1-billion endowment. Texas



The University of Texas tower.

A&M, originally established as a branch of the University of Texas, receives a third of the fund income (\$21.6 million last year), the remainder going to the university. The university system has some 10 units altogether, including campuses at El Paso and Arlington (near Fort Worth) and medical schools at Dallas, San Antonio, and Galveston, but the great bulk of the income from the Permanent Fund is reserved for the Austin campus.

The aspirations of the University of Texas to become a major graduate and research institution go back at least as far as 1910, when the graduate school was established. And, in fact, the university was admitted as early as 1929 to the Association of American Universities, which is made up, for the most part, of elite institutions having important programs of graduate studies and research. Forty years ago the university was offering Ph.D. programs in 18 different fields, about half the number of areas in which it offers the Ph.D. today. Some of the most important research ever done at the university, such as John T. Patterson's work in genetics and the work of R. L. Moore and Harry Vandiver in mathematics, was in full swing in the 1930's.

But the university's rise to the status of a major institution has often been hampered by meager legislative appropriations and political interference. Without the income from the oil lands, the university would have been in a wretched plight indeed during the 1930's and 1940's and even later. As recently as 1950, the annual legislative appropriation for the university's operating budget was still less than \$5 million.

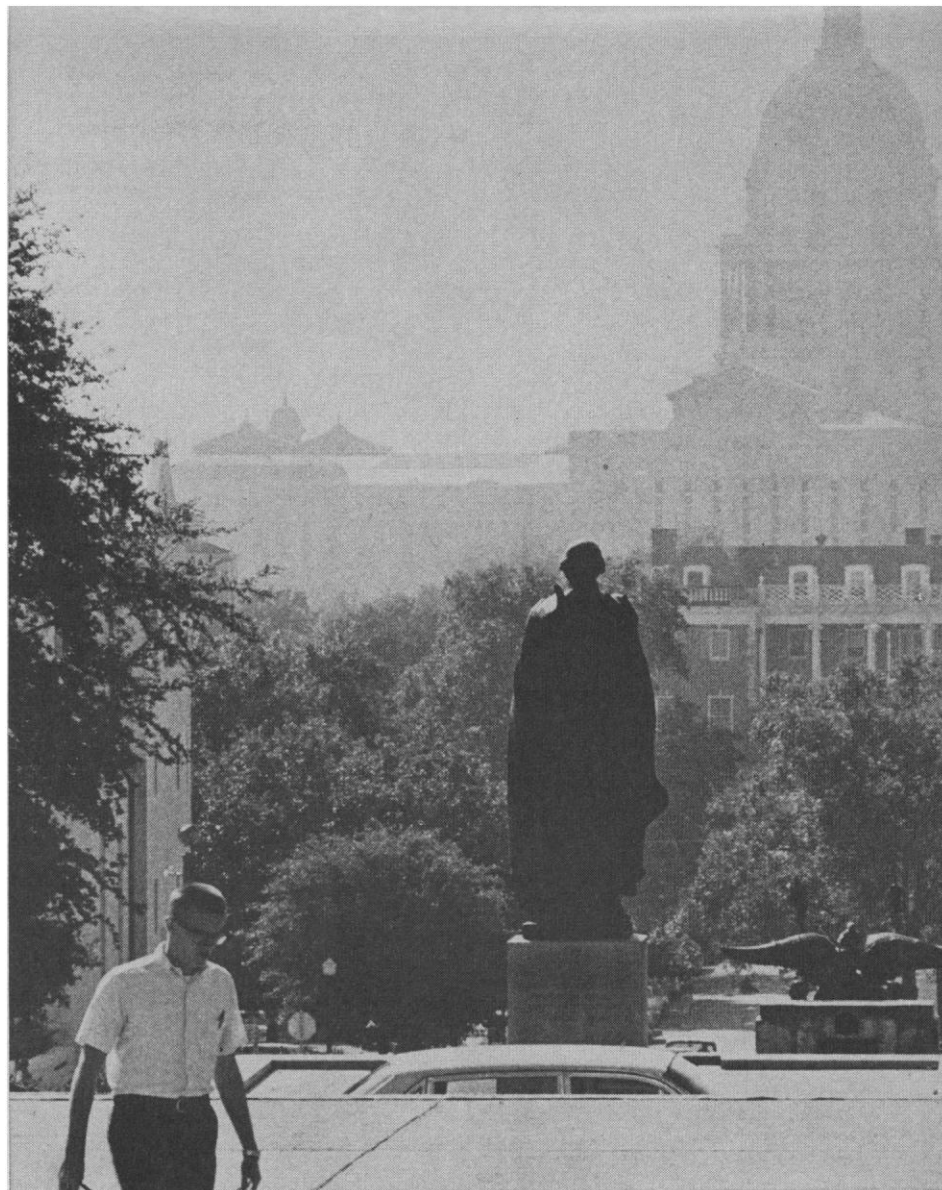
Political harassment is not unknown

at the University of Texas today, but the university's present political setting is blissfully tolerant as compared to that of a few decades ago. A particularly brutal assault on the university occurred in the early 1940's at a time when the Board of Regents had come to be dominated by appointees of "Pappy" O'Daniel, a boondocks demagogue who was governor of Texas from 1939 to 1942. The board set about to destroy the integrity of the institution, blacklisting books, dismissing professors, and finally, in 1944, firing President Homer P. Rainey. Two years later the American Association of University Professors, after a lengthy investigation, censured the university administration, saying in effect that the regents had tried to force the university to conform to the primitive educational and social philosophies of the state's political establishment. The university administration remained on the AAUP's censured list until 1953, the year Logan Wilson (now head of the American Council on Education) became president.

President Wilson, regarded by many as an important transitional figure in the university's history, did much to strengthen the institution, improving its financial base, building a stronger faculty, and even freeing the university from some of its inhibitions. In the latter regard he moved cautiously, for the challenge facing him was the impossible one of helping to lift the university well above the atmosphere of ultraconservatism then prevailing in Texas without having students and faculty become unpredictable free spirits offensive to the powers-that-be.

Wilson obtained steady if modest increases in university appropriations, and he broke with precedent by using part of the income from the oil lands for faculty salaries as well as for buildings. His administration's record on academic freedom was much better than that of some past administrations, but Wilson did not let the university get too far out of step with the rest of the state on racial matters.

In May of 1957, toward the close of the second year in which Negro undergraduates were admitted to the university, President Wilson kept a Negro girl, Barbara Smith, from performing in the Department of Music's production of the opera *Dido and Aeneas*. She had been rehearsing all year, cast in the starring role opposite a white student. This action was roundly protested by many students and by some



View from the campus: The state capitol dome looms large.

members of the faculty, including John R. Silber, a professor of philosophy, who is now the dean of arts and sciences.

This occurred at a time of rising tumult in the South over school desegregation (the Little Rock crisis followed a few months later), and President Wilson, to justify his position, said that performance of the opera with racially mixed casting in "romantic lead roles" would become a symbolic incident stirring bitter controversy and possibly endangering the university's progress toward integration. "On basic social issues," Wilson said, "the university is subject to the will of the majority [of Texas citizens], insofar as that will can be interpreted by those [the legislators] most directly responsible to them." The faculty committee on academic freedom and responsibil-

ity not only sanctioned the administration's action but blamed producers of the opera for failing "to take account of possible public reaction to the presentation of hero and heroine of different races." If this episode had its bright side, it was that Silber and others who had criticized the administration suffered no serious reprisals, an encouraging indication that the university had turned away from the worst repressions of the past.

By the 1960's the University of Texas clearly had joined the mainstream of American academic life, but the mainstream was becoming subject to sudden wild and not always predictable turbulences. Yet, on the whole, things have not gone badly at the university, though even on the clearer days one can spot signs of threatening weather. Harry Ransom, formerly an

Famous Fossil Beds Are Endangered

Scientists fear that the Florissant fossil beds in central Colorado—considered one of the finest fossil concentrations in the world—may be destroyed in the near future by real estate development. Efforts are under way to preserve the fossil area as a national monument. But, on the eve of congressional hearings on the monument proposal, a Colorado real estate firm purchased roughly 30 percent of the land involved and revealed plans to subdivide the land for housing development. Almost all scientists familiar with the area agree that the construction of housing would destroy the fragile beds. "It will be an irreparable loss—just terrible," Harry D. MacGinitie, a paleobotanist who has worked in the area for more than 3 decades, told *Science*.

The fossil beds lie in a mountain valley, about 35 miles west of Colorado Springs, near the small community of Florissant. Some 34 to 38 million years ago, during the Oligocene period, an ancient lake covered much of the area. Volcanic eruptions apparently rained down clouds of dust and ash upon the lake and its forested shores, thus capturing and preserving thousands of insects, plants, and other forms of life with rare delicacy.

MacGinitie, who is an associate in the Museum of Paleontology at Berkeley, said the site is "known all over the world" as having "one of the finest concentrations of fossil plants, insects, and fishes all in one area." He said that the insect fossils are "almost unrivaled" and that the plant specimens are "beautifully preserved." There are also unusual fossils of *Sequoia* stumps, but only a few small mammals.

Estella Leopold, a paleobotanist with the University of Colorado, finds the area "unique in the enormous diversity of organisms present—everything from algae to higher plants." She also said there is an "incredible abundance" of fossils. "I worked an hour recently and got 40 really marvelous leaf specimens and two bugs," she said. "Usually you have to work hard to find one or two specimens an hour at even the best localities." According to the National Park Service, Florissant has yielded some 60,000 specimens of more than 1,000 different species of living things.

Three bills are currently pending in Congress that would designate 6,000 acres of the fossil bed area—which is known to exceed 12,000 acres—as a national monument. Similar legislation died in three previous congresses—largely because of apathy rather than outright opposition. But this year there seems to be more steam behind the proposal.

Colorado's two Republican senators—Gordon Allott and Peter H. Dominick—have cosponsored one of the bills. Allott, who is ranking Republican on the Senate Interior Committee which is handling the legislation, has expressed "a sense of urgency about the passage of this bill." Dominick has warned: "We must protect the area before it is too late." Last week the Interior Committee's parks and recreation subcommittee held hearings on the legislation in Colorado Springs.

Shortly before the field hearings began, however, Central Enterprise Realty Company of Colorado Springs purchased some 3000 acres in the Florissant vicinity from an out-of-state owner. Interested scientists say about 1800 of these acres lie within the boundaries of the proposed monument. K. C. Wofford, a partner in the firm, told *Science* his company plans to subdivide the land and sell it off "immediately" to people interested in putting up housing. Wofford said he had a "firm purchase contract" with the previous owner of the land and expected to close the deal "in a few days." He also said he is bargaining for more land in the area.

Meanwhile, Colorado conservation groups have asked the realtors to delay development until Congress has a chance to act. If negotiations fail, they plan to file suit. "We'll have to do something," one attorney said. "The bulldozers are ready to cut the roads."—PHILIP M. BOFFEY

English professor who had begun working his way up the university's administrative ladder in the early 1950's, became president of the Austin campus in 1960, when Wilson was promoted to chancellor of the University of Texas system. Then, the following year, Ransom replaced Wilson as chancellor; Norman Hackerman, formerly chairman of the chemistry department, eventually became the administrative head of the Austin campus, first under the title of vice chancellor, and then, in 1967, as president.

Enrollment at the Austin campus is now growing by about 2000 students a year, a growth rate that shows no signs of slackening even though a great many Texas students now attend junior colleges for their first 2 years of college work. (Last fall the university admitted far fewer freshmen than transfer students from other institutions.) All told, this year the university has had about 25,700 undergraduates, plus about 1300 law students and 5000 graduate students.

Although the state Coordinating Board on higher education has fixed an enrollment ceiling of 35,000 for the Austin campus, the university's Board of Regents is seeking, successfully it appears, to have this ceiling removed. The university itself has set enrollment limitations for certain programs, such as law, but it has no policy or plan for limiting its total enrollment. Some key people, including the dean of arts and sciences and the dean of the graduate school, feel that it would be best to hold the undergraduate enrollment at its present level, while allowing the comparatively small graduate enrollment to increase by about another 5000. Yet, whatever the disproportion between the number of undergraduate and graduate students, the university last year conferred some 390 doctorates, twice the number awarded 10 years earlier.

The university's legislative appropriation of \$40.2 million for the next academic year is little enough, given the size of the institution and the scope of its activities, but it is several times what the university was receiving in the late 1950's. Faculty salaries are, on the whole, below those paid at leading private institutions and the more affluent state universities. Yet, 10 years ago, today's average salary of \$14,000 (for a "B" rating on the AAUP scale) would have seemed princely.

The university has become a major

research institution, support for research and training projects during the last fiscal year having totaled almost \$28 million. Federal agencies contributed more than \$19 million, but contributions from the endowment, the legislature, industry, foundations, and private donors were substantial too. The experimental sciences are, of course, getting most of this research money. The university also has been adding impressively to its science laboratory facilities, one notable addition being the 107-inch telescope—one of the world's largest—put into service last year at the university's McDonald Observatory in western Texas.

Further evidence of the university's growing resources is to be found in its 2-million-volume Mirabeau B. Lamar Library. Special collections include a distinguished one on the history of science, made possible by a \$2-million grant from the Sid W. Richardson Foundation of Fort Worth. The university campaigned hard, and successfully, to have the Austin campus chosen as the site for the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library. This new research library will be one of the most prominent campus features, occupying a new eight-story building that will stand at the east end of a mall which extends from the university tower. An LBJ School of Public Affairs is in the works too, though it appears that, if the former president himself does much teaching at the university, it will be chiefly as an occasional lecturer and part-time conversationalist in residence.

Strong in the Sciences

In the American Council on Education's assessment of quality in graduate programs—a survey based on questionnaires distributed several years ago to some 4000 academicians—26 University of Texas departments were rated "adequate plus" or better, with nine given the second highest rating and one (German) given the highest. Opinions differ on how close to the mark various ratings were, but the survey's finding that the University of Texas has more strong programs in the sciences than in the humanities or social sciences seems well accepted.

Such departments as botany, zoology, psychology, geology, astronomy, physics, and chemistry all are now considered strong. Three of the university faculty's four members of the National Academy of Sciences belong to the department of chemistry. A \$5-million National Science Foundation science

Wolfe To Leave AAAS

Dael Wolfe, executive officer of AAAS since 1954, has accepted appointment as professor of public affairs at the University of Washington, Seattle, and has asked the AAAS board of directors to name his successor within a year. In addition to his duties as AAAS executive officer, Wolfe has served as publisher of *Science*, and he presided over the combining of *Science* and the *Scientific Monthly* in 1958. The circulation of *Science* has risen from 61,000 in 1958 to the present 146,000. A psychologist on the University of Chicago faculty at the beginning of World War II, Wolfe served on the staff of the Office of Scientific Research and Development's applied psychology panel during the war. He was director of the Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training at the time he joined AAAS.

development grant is currently giving the university's science programs a further upward boost. According to Gardner Lindzey, vice president for academic affairs, mathematics has been the science department most in need of rebuilding, and this is now well under way.

The university has been improving faster than its reputation—academically and from the standpoint of having a lively, alert student body—and many departments are not getting the top-flight graduate students they believe they should. More state fellowship funds would attract more students of the first rank, but, in addition, the university needs and probably deserves a more lustrous image.

Situated on a rise perhaps a mile from the state capitol, the university is built mostly in a Mediterranean style that seems in keeping with the landscape and the campus's graceful live oaks. The campus atmosphere and student life impress a visitor as free and easy. *In loco parentis* is a dead concept at the university, if only because the student enrollment has long since outstripped the growth of university housing and most students must live off campus. Though all but about a tenth of them are from Texas, the students do not on the whole seem narrowly provincial in their outlook or concerns. The *Daily Texan*, the student newspaper, carries on a well-established tradition of regularly denouncing the administration, as it did again in March after President Hackerman revoked a permit, granted by a student board, allowing the Students for a Democratic Society to hold their national meeting in the student union building.

Though the campus SDS chapter is

small, the SDS students have managed to stage some large meetings, the last having been one last fall in which they protested the administration decision not to renew the contract of their faculty adviser, Lawrence Caroline, a non-tenured assistant professor of philosophy. Caroline, in a widely reported speech on the capitol grounds in October 1967, had called for a new American revolution, though the reason later given for dismissing him was his alleged failure to develop satisfactorily as a philosophy professor and his failure to finish his Ph.D. dissertation. The efforts of SDS to arouse a major campus protest over the Caroline case produced little result, and, lately, SDS has not been particularly active, though it has carried out routine harrying missions. For instance, SDS hecklers showed up at an informal talk given one day this spring by Walt W. Rostow, LBJ's national security adviser who has been recruited by the university as a superstar professor of history and economics. (The *Texas Observer*, a liberal journal published in Austin, has described Rostow as a "displaced person" from the Jet Brain Set, "forced to live on the frontier and drink Pearl beer from the can.")

Iranian Heads Student Body

The election last year of an Iranian engineering student as president of the student body must itself be considered a small triumph over the WASP ethos. And this year a Negro was elected vice president of the student body, the first black student to hold such an office at the University of Texas. There are two significant minority groups on campus, for, in addition to about 250 Negro students, there are more than 900 Mexican-Americans. Some 30 to 40 of

the black students are said to be active in the Afro-Americans for Black Liberation (AABL), which in late February presented a list of 11 demands to President Hackerman. In addition to its demands for black studies and the early admission of 2000 minority students, AABL demanded such concessions as the dismissal of the Board of Regents, the firing of all "racist" faculty members upon trial and conviction by an audience of which at least half must be "third world," and the conversion of the LBJ Library to the Malcolm X Black Students Building.

Though the administration may regard some of these demands as unnegotiable, the university has efforts under way to set up an ethnic minorities studies program and to admit more minority students. The latter effort is hampered by lack of sufficient scholarship funds, though students and some faculty people have noted wryly that the university has a \$10-million project to enlarge its football stadium and physical education facilities. The Mexican-Americans, adopting a less abrasive style than AABL, have submitted a list of ten "proposals," focusing on admissions, financial aid, ethnic studies, and the need for better intergroup relations.

Ingredients for a Blowup

In sum, the university has most of the ingredients necessary for continued progress—or for a major blowup. "The possibility of a crisis breaking out here is as good as it is any place in the country," President Hackerman told *Science* recently. Against the possibility of a student upheaval at Austin or on other state campuses, the state legislature this year has adopted a strict law for dealing with disruptive behavior, and the Board of Regents has incorporated the terms of the statute in its own regulations.

The university has sought to open a direct dialogue with students. This year students were given several seats on the University Council, and for some time they have been represented on a number of university committees. President Hackerman has, moreover, given a patient hearing to the black students and other petitioners. Yet more important than these things may be the university's record in deciding controversial issues.

No state university is insulated from political interference, especially not in these times of campus turbulence, and the University of Texas certainly has

no more, and perhaps has less, insulation than most. The chairman of the Board of Regents is Frank C. Erwin, Jr., a blunt-spoken Austin lawyer who is regarded as a smart, tough political operator and master lobbyist. Erwin, until recently a Democratic National committeeman, is a friend of LBJ's and of former Governor John B. Connally's.

In Erwin the university has an effective advocate, and even a buffer of sorts, for its dealings with the political establishment. But many students and faculty members believe that Erwin himself is a problem. Cases cited in point include the following:

- A few years ago, when Erwin was not yet chairman of the Board of Regents but was nevertheless an influential member, he took the side of the then governor, John Connally, in a dispute which led John S. Redditt, a regent from Lufkin, Texas, to resign from the board in disgust. Connally had insisted that an architect for a building project at the University of Texas at El Paso be chosen by an El Paso Democrat and party leader.

- After press accounts of Lawrence Caroline's call for revolution, Erwin told the *Houston Post*: "If he said what he is reported to have said, I'm absolutely outraged that any teaching employee of the university would do such a thing and I'm going to do something about it." This statement complicated the philosophy department's, and the university administration's, handling of what otherwise might have been simply a matter of not renewing the contract of a non-tenured professor who allegedly had not performed up to expectations. The campus AAUP chapter, in an implied rebuke to Erwin, later said such denunciations of individual faculty members by regents or administrators should be avoided.

- Last June, while down at the capitol explaining the university's financial needs, Erwin got into a discussion with the chairman of the House appropriations committee about two matters of mutual concern: the growing number of out-of-state students attending the law school (to the exclusion of some qualified Texas students) and the law school's hiring of some social activist professors. Erwin said that the law school was showing no interest in changing its ways, and suggested that, to "get its attention," the appropriations committee treat the school's funds separately from the rest of the uni-

versity budget. This was done, the implication being that, if the law school did not behave, it would be hit in the purse. The dean of the law school, with potent assistance from influential alumni, got this action reversed, and Erwin now says he had no intention of actually having the school singled out for bad-boy treatment.

No Hot Line or Walkie-Talkie

Some people at the university think Erwin is the administration. "There are a lot of faculty members who think there is a hot line or walkie-talkie between the chairman and the administration, but this is just not so," Ransom told a recent interviewer. According to the chancellor, neither Erwin nor any other regent has tried to preempt the administration's role in academic matters.

For his part, Erwin does not discourage the idea that he recognizes no line between policy-making and administration. "The statute creating the board says that it shall govern the university," Erwin said, in an interview with *Science*. "It doesn't say that it shall oversee the administration. It expressly says that the board can hire and fire professors, appoint administrators, approve salaries, and make all other rules and regulations. That doesn't sound like it's only a policy board." But he later added, "the board doesn't interfere in administration as much as they [its critics] would like people to believe."

No university, however wisely run, is assured these days of heading off a crisis. But some people at the University of Texas believe the crisis potential on their campus would be reduced if Frank Erwin and, symbolically, the state capitol dome, did not loom so large in the life of the university. Academic freedom does exist at the university, but there are faculty members who find the atmosphere threatening at times. A young professor of government, Roderick A. Bell, recently put it this way: "If this university is to get better than it is, or even stay as good as it is, it cannot expect to avoid offending the legislature or, for that matter, the Texas public. I've never seen a member of the administration of the Board of Regents throw the challenge back at the legislature, and say that there are some kinds of social and political deviations at the university which must be tolerated."

—LUTHER J. CARTER