

Meeting Collegiate Needs in a Demanding World

CHAPTER XXV

Boise Junior College was founded on the premise that it must meet the current as well as expanding needs of the community. The community was late in arriving at a higher education program, but there was real vision in the educational and lay members of the Boise community. This is well expressed when one recognizes it was the Boise Public Schools, aided and abetted by leaders in the community, that brought Dr. Leonard V. Koos to the city in 1930 for a study of higher education needs, particularly a junior college. His study primarily concerned itself with the feasibility of a junior college in this city.

A later study made by the Board of Education Research at the University of Oregon in late 1964 and early 1965 evaluated what the College was doing and had done for the community in a higher education way and what its great needs would be in the immediate future in serving higher education during the period from 1965 to 1980. As this study points out, Boise Junior College has met the needs in three fields; (1) for the student taking a regular day program leading to a professional and business career; (2) for the individual who wants to take up technical and general education, planning to complete from one

to two years, but not seeking a baccalaureate degree; and (3) for the adult who wishes to attend evening classes to catch up with the advances of our world. For each type of student it early developed that there was a real need for summer study and hence the summer school was developed.

All of this was considered by the study team from the University of Oregon Research Division, headed by Dr. Frank Farner and ably assisted by Lawrence D. Fish, Dale Tillery, and Donald E. Tope. Consultant to the study team was Dr. Leland L. Medsker of the University of California. Dr. Medsker had been the president of junior colleges in both the City of Chicago and the San Francisco Bay area.

This team pointed out the fact that the vocational-technical field needed further development, but its greatest contribution was the statement that if the College were to continue to serve the community it must offer bachelor's and master's degrees. It emphasized that the major fields for the four-year school would be business, education, and governmental studies. The study warned against the great temptation to go "high brow" and thus forget the great body of young people in the state who, in the present day society, need college work that is largely vocational and technical.¹

In making this warning, the Oregon research team did not neglect the tremendous contribution that could be made in the four-year baccalaureate fields. It recommended such an extension of the College, but it recognized that the big weakness of an ambitious faculty and administrative staff would be to forget the non-baccalaureate group and overemphasize the bachelor's and advanced degrees.

This study came just after the State elections of 1964 and stretched over the legislative months of January, February and two weeks into March of 1965. Just preceding the arrival of the study team, the city of Boise had brought in metropolitan planners to try to determine how the city itself might be developed and become a true metropolitan area. Studies were made

by a San Francisco firm which pointed out that while the city had great potential, it could never achieve a metropolitan area of any real dimension unless it had a college that granted baccalaureate degrees along with professional degrees, particularly in the field of business.

As a result, the Chamber of Commerce and individuals within the Chamber were ripe for a proposal to the 1965 Legislature to enlarge the scope of Boise Junior College to eventually a State college and for the fall of 1965, to a four-year college under the control of the Board of Trustees of Boise Junior College. An independent committee,² spearheaded by T. H. Eberle, Senator William C. Roden and Donald M. Day, drummed up support and House Bill No. 7 was passed by the Legislature. Governor Robert E. Smylie signed it on February 6, 1965. This act provided no State financial support.

During this same identical period the Oregon study team met with faculty and administrative members of Boise Junior College to work out the transition from a junior college to a four-year institution. The law provided that any junior college could become a four-year school if it met certain financial and educational minima. The only junior college in the State that could hope to meet such requirements at this time was Boise Junior College with its own district imposing the top two years (financed largely through tuition) of a four-year program on the two years of junior college work.

March, April and May were busy times for both the administration and the faculty. Much of the work in establishing the upper division revolved around the registrar and record sections and there the fine work of Mrs. Alice Hatton aided materially. She had had almost six years to get acquainted with the College as Registrar and Director of Records and worked exceptionally well with the faculty in building the new curricula for the upper division.

A major problem was the sifting of all of the requests of the departments and divisions to expand into this upper division

and Mrs. Hatton worked well with the faculty committee headed by Jack Dalton in limiting the offerings so that they did not "fly out" in all directions. The first of those selections were largely in the fields of business, education and a general curriculum in the liberal arts emphasis.

One thing that assisted in this transition period was the excellent work done by Miss Elma Gockley who helped to fill in during the five-year period separating the work of Mrs. Hershey and Mrs. Hatton. Miss Gockley was exacting in the work she did and was available to knit together the work of the early 1950's with that of the 1960's as far as registration and records were concerned.

During the most intensive period of this study, the president was hit with a second illness which incapacitated him for a month during the early spring of 1965; in fact, his physicians stated that he must take an extended leave.

At the same time that the president was ill, the dean of faculty, Dr. A. H. Chatburn, had a major illness in his own family. His daughter, Dorothy, was in a critical condition with her life hanging in the balance for a period of six months. In spite of these problems, the College launched into its full baccalaureate program through the tremendous energy of its faculty and faculty leaders.

All this was accomplished in such a superior manner that the College was granted a Candidacy for Membership as a four-year institution in early December of 1965 by the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools and secured a permanent educational accreditation status at the Portland meeting in December of 1968.

For eighteen months after his second illness, from June 1, 1965 to December 1, 1966, the president continued his administration of Boise Junior College as it changed into the four-year status of Boise College. The first classes of those entering the upper division actually started in early June of 1965. The first graduates received their degrees in May of 1967 and the second

group in August of that same year. During these transitional years the actual enrollment of the College skyrocketed. As has been indicated elsewhere, the growth the first year after four-year status was accomplished was 40 percent with rapid growth each succeeding year, tapering off at 20 percent during the fall of 1968-69.

In the fall of 1966, the Board of Trustees suggested that the president go into a new field where he would have more time to study the needs of the College and at the same time, no longer carry the heavy burden of administration. On October 5, 1966, President Chaffee sent the following letter to the Board of Trustees of Boise College:

I am requesting a sabbatical leave (1) to study educational conditions in higher education in the countries of Western Europe, and (2) to take a much needed rest from my years of work at Boise Junior College and Boise College.

I am well into my thirty-fifth year with this institution, thirty-one of them as President of the College and four as an instructor with some administrative duties included. Over the years indicated, I have repeatedly considered a leave, but no time seemed an appropriate one. Recognizing that this condition will probably persist, I have decided that unless I want to limp around Europe on a cane, there is no time like the present. Therefore, I am requesting that the Boise College Board of Trustees grant me such a leave beginning December 1, 1966 and ending May 31, 1967.

In our earlier discussions over the past two years, I have indicated my desire to retire from my position as President on June 30, 1967, so that I may take the less onerous but important position of Chancellor on the following day, July 1. This will give me the opportunity to plan the next ten years for Boise College without the pressure and constant interruptions that accompany regular administrative responsibilities.

All requests were granted by the Board at a special meeting held on October 5, 1966. A Resolution for the same was drawn up and the following was added:

. . . That on July 1, 1967, President Chaffee be confirmed as an officer of the Board of Trustees of Boise College to assist the Board in the operation and planning to meet the educational and financial requirements of the College in the future, the exact outlines of such program to be determined at that time, Dr. Chaffee to be given a title commensurate with the duties which he will assume, such as Chancellor . . .

Unfortunately, the duties in the position of Chancellor have not been followed to the degree contemplated. Dr. Chaffee's chief purpose as stated in this October agreement, was as an advisor to the Board and to the new president. This has been chiefly realized in the areas of growth predictions and salaries. It has not been used at all as regards academic and building growth and needs and campus development. It further developed during the absence of Dr. Chaffee that should he carry out the contracted program, the new president might be embarrassed in his administration of the College.

Valuable assistance has been given in the research field in regard to salaries as Boise College progressed from a two-year college, to a four-year college, to a State college. Its upper division cost to the student has been cut by more than 75 percent and its lower division cost to students outside the old junior college district, but within the State, by more than half. On January 1, 1969, the control of this institution passed out of the hands of the people of the community and into those of the State of Idaho, namely the State Board of Education. Of course, the total cost per student has gone up; most of this is paid by the State as is true also at Moscow and Pocatello. It was necessary that by January 1, 1969, the first step in salaries should be taken, that of placing the faculty members and employees on a par with the other State institutions of higher education, principally the University of Idaho and Idaho State University. The new salaries that have been developed over the last three years as a result of Dr. Chaffee's study and other earlier ones, have placed the faculty of this institution, except the full professor, on a par with the faculty members at Moscow and Pocatello.

Boise must have a broader horizon, not only theoretically and for public consumption, but actually in its offerings. In a real sense it needs to become a State institution though this is not yet recognized by Boise State College itself or by the two universities where it and they, in a broad sense, provide for the meeting of the State's higher education needs. Provincialism has no place either in Moscow, Pocatello, or in Boise. This

conception does not now exist in any of the three. All seem to think only of the big splurge that can be made by just one particular institution. This is epitomized by the recent drive toward new stadia at each institution where millions of dollars will be spent in building them.

Now, what of the growth of the past and the future. As a result of the legislation in 1965 the Boise College student body increased by 40 percent in 1965 over what it had been in 1964, by 30 percent in 1966 over 1965, and between 15 and 20 percent in the 1967-68 year over the previous year. Chaffee's study on enrollment growths shows that the new surge should develop within the next two years, roughly adding 50 percent to the student body, largely in the upper division where tuition costs have been pared down 75 percent because the State accepts the major portion of each student's educational cost. This study shows that this growth will come about through the following causes:

1. Change in student tuition rate from 1967 to January 1, 1969 making Boise competitive with the two Idaho universities. (Tuition rate for juniors and seniors at Boise College, regardless of residence within the State of Idaho, from basic cost by tuition compared to change over to basic cost paid by State, January 1, 1969).

2. Growth in percentage (from 30% to 70% from 1930 to 1967) of high school students going on to college (high school education no longer adequate for better jobs). This has applied largely to lower division—upper division too expensive; after January 1, this no longer applies to upper division.

3. Increase in population in Southwest Idaho and Eastern Oregon countering current declining birthrate and decrease of graduates from Boise high schools.

4. Growth in curricular offerings, e.g. in health, medicine, education, law and business.

5. Completion of Interstate Highway and Couplet from Oregon to Boise Airport in 1970 to campus via Broadway,

shortening the time and easing the trip from Canyon County cities to the campus.

6. Possible increase of Federal assistance in growing professional fields, e.g. health and medical courses in the next few years. (This will cut cost by State and also by student).

7. The adding of graduate school, e.g. in business and education.

8. Growth in prestige will increase the number of residents and nonresidents entering Boise College.³

Another bill adopted by the 1965 Legislature that widely affected the growth of Boise Junior College was House Bill No. 13—the County Tuition Aid Bill. Through this legislation, every high school graduate living within the State of Idaho in a county where there was no junior college, received \$225.00 from his county. This cut his tuition of \$370.63 to \$145.63 a semester or \$291.26 a year. This resulted in a student growth at Boise Junior College from within the State of Idaho but outside Ada County, or 217 additional students over the 651 of the year before, or a growth of 33 percent.

From December 1, 1966 to June 1, 1967, Willis L. Gottenberg was Acting President while President Chaffee was on his sabbatical leave. During these six months he continued the transition program and gave unstintingly of himself, turning a vibrant institution over to the new president, Dr. John B. Barnes.

Dr. Barnes left his duties as President of Arizona Western College, a county public junior college at Yuma, on June 1. He immediately began a year of making himself known by speeches to various public bodies in Southwest Idaho. His formal inauguration took place in early December 1967 and he set to work on a program to add new buildings to the campus to accommodate the skyrocketing enrollment.

In early 1967, the legislature passed a bill making the four-year college in Boise a State college to be known as Boise State College. Governor Don Samuelson signed this bill and

as a result, there were 443 juniors and 239 seniors registered in the fall term of 1968-69, anticipating by one semester the lower tuition that they would pay for the second semester. In the second semester when a drop in students is usually expected, there were 607 juniors and 376 seniors making a total increase of 301 in the second semester of the 1968-69 year. There was an increase of 449 students in the upper division over the previous 1967-68 year.

¹Bureau of Educational Research, School of Education, University of Oregon, *A Study of the Requirements for Higher Education in the Area Served by Boise Junior College, 1965-1980.* pp.12-13.

²A Committee for a Four-year College.

³Chaffee, Eugene B. *Growth of Enrollments for period from 1967 to 1975 at Boise College.* p.2.