Montana State University teaches nearly 5,000 students during fall quarter

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

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At the end of a very busy year, Montana State University found itself teaching nearly 5,000 students, the largest registration in its history and largest of any unit in the state's system of higher education. This is the handiest yardstick to measure progress of an institution that opened its doors only a short time before the turn of the Century; a University then consisting of two buildings standing in a grove of saplings at the edge of a prairie below Missoula's Mount Sentinel.

But nose counting tells little about the reasons why the University has continued to grow over on the western edge of this sparsely populated state. When all the factors are considered, it must be concluded that the school has been doing a very workmanlike job of training people to serve Montana and the nation. Such a conclusion also implies that the school curriculum has not been allowed to remain static, but has been made to keep pace with the requirements for educated men and women.

The educational offerings of the University have come in for much study, and at present there are at least a half-dozen committees engaged in curriculum research. These studies will presently emerge in the form of revisions in the various course patterns of the University's college of arts and sciences and its professional schools.

Last fall, the University added a Ph.D. in psychology to its growing list of doctoral offerings, a list that now includes degrees in zoology, geology, microbiology and chemistry, as well as a doctoral degree in education.

Immediately below this peak to the MSU educational pyramid, masters degrees are offered in 53 areas by the graduate school. Base of the structure is the
baccalaureate program with degrees offered in 60 areas in the college of arts and sciences and the seven professional schools.

Another gauge of the University might be found in its research program, where close to a half-million dollars in research contracts are now in effect. This does not include the contracts for various summer institutes planned for the coming year nor is it a true dollar reflection on the total contract research program. Some items are for a period of several years, but only the current year's income is included in the total.

As an aid to research at all levels, the University has nearly completed the installation of a digital computer, which will shortly join the school's linear accelerator as a prime educational tool.

Within recent weeks, the School of Forestry completed its 50th year as a professional school, attesting to the importance of its function as a supplier of talented minds for the lumbering industry and governmental services. At nearly the same time, the Music School was ending its first 50 years as a department of the University devoted to professional training.

The physical plant also contributed to the University's annular ring pattern. A "million dollar" dormitory for upperclass women was completed; a new dormitory for men was started, and food service facilities underwent extensive changed to handle the problem of feeding the increased student body.

In September, MSU received a new president, Dr. Robert Johns, formerly executive vice-president of Miami University. The new chief executive is dedicated to achieving excellence at the academic level and to development of a broad program of service to the public of Montana.

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