

University business office handles complex operations

by JOHN J. HANEY

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Sundries:

Debit to subscriptions:

Orrington Lunt

John Evans

Geo. F. Foster

Clark Hinman . . .

So runs the first entry in the "Journal" — the first record of Northwestern university's business office.

A little further on, under expense, are such items as "Postage, \$1" and "Envelopes, 38c." The postage and envelopes have long since disappeared but the name of Evanston and the names of many of its streets and buildings recall the university's founders.

And the faded Spencerian handwriting in the "Journal" has given way to a battery of business machines necessary to handle the operations of a \$57,000,000 institution.

The office building itself would hardly qualify among the roaring industrial giants of the steel makers or the meat packers.

The small red brick building at 619 Clark street, nestled unobtrusively behind Pearsons hall and surrounded by trees and shrubbery, looks as if it might be an old library left over from before the other war.

The people in the building have plenty to do, however. Harry L. Wells, business manager and vice-president of the university; James Brooks, assistant business manager; 56 others in the office and 18 at Lunt and the Chicago campus are needed to handle the complex affairs of a non-profit corporation that has to look after endowment trusts, real estate, securities, purchasing, buildings and grounds, payrolls, collections, general accounts, and legal matters among other things.

Charles Skidmore, purchasing agent, has to consider quite an array of articles in buying for so varied an institution as a university. Test tubes for the Technological institute and chairs for sedentary journalists would be a couple of items.

Ralph Ball, head of the legal department, has plenty of contracts to check over in so large an organization.

Northwestern is fairly "big business" all right, although commerce students will find the profit motive sadly lacking.

Or perhaps not so sadly when they discover that student tuition accounts for only 52.5 per cent of income as against 56 per cent of the expense for instruction, research, library, and so on.

Northwestern's budget for last

year was \$5,532,740. (The University of Michigan's budget for next year is around \$7,000,000, of which over \$2,000,000 is from the state.)

Northwestern is a private institution with no support from the state and its budget for last year breaks down about as follows:

Income:	Per Cent
Student tuition and fees	52.53
Endowed income	13.33
General investment	4.63
Gifts	3.67
Sales and services	4.97
Miscellaneous	1.32
General funds (dorms, athletics, books, etc)	19.55
Expense:	Per Cent
Instruction, research, library, etc.	56.0
Administration and maintenance	40.0
Equalization funds	4.0

A university is often the recipient of gifts, some of them quite unexpected, such as the \$100,000 bequeathed to Northwestern last spring by an elderly Chicago woman.

Such income cannot be depended on, however, and in addition most gifts and endowments are for specified purposes. This necessitates equalization funds so that the university can operate to break even as is its aim.

The assets of the university break down roughly as follows:

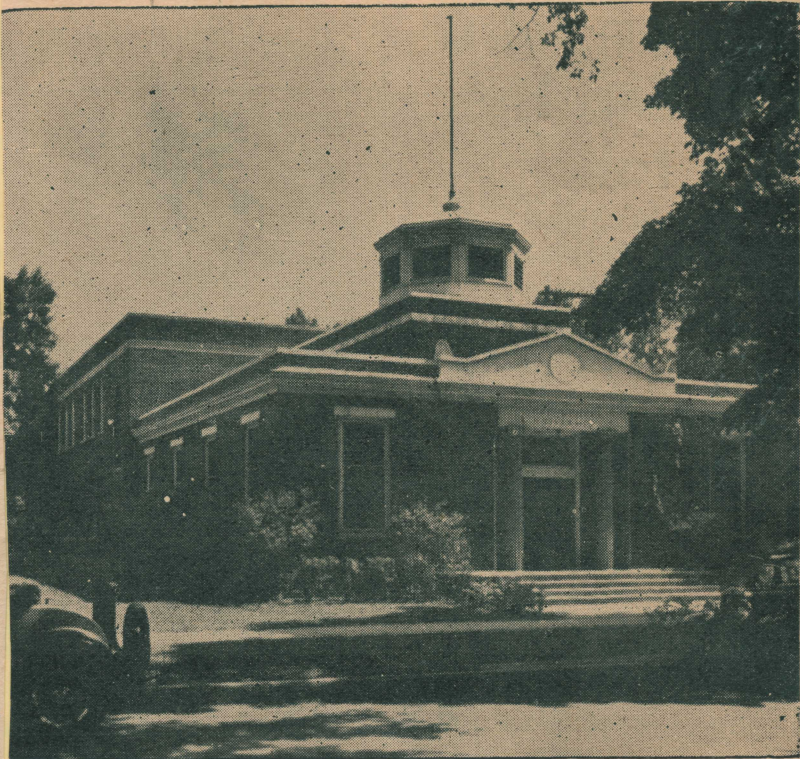
Plant	\$17,500,000
Endowed and restricted funds	28,000,000
Tech institute (separate account)	6,700,000
General assets	4,800,000
	\$57,000,000

Among the variety of assets which a university naturally accumulates are many buildings. Northwestern, for instance, owns office and apartment buildings in Chicago; several sections of land in Evanston, some of which it has given away in the past; and various leases, securities, and so on.

With the continual billing process, interest accounts, and investments to look after, in addition to the maintenance of the university plant and the administration of all other business operations, the business office seems to be appropriately named.

They are not taking any lengthy vacations there either. While the professors can rest a while during the summer, plant maintenance and preparations for fall make this as busy a season as any for the office.

Take it easy, everybody. Business is business, but it's a bit hot these days.



Northwestern university business office