

UNIVERSITIES

Changeover at Illinois

from a Correspondent

DURING the past 12 months, 266 new college presidents have been appointed to positions at institutions, including Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Wisconsin and Northwestern. Princeton, Purdue, Syracuse and the University of California at Berkeley are among those seeking new presidents now. A recent major appointment in the middlewest has been that of John E. Corbally, Jr, to the presidency of the University of Illinois.

Founded in 1867, the university now has three campuses and is known as the University of Illinois system. In addition to the Urbana campus, there is the large Medical Center on Chicago's West Side, located in one of the city's largest ghettos.

A third campus, the recently developed Chicago Circle skyscraper, stands just west of Chicago's downtown district. It is essentially a commuter campus, focusing on liberal arts education. Although an architectural masterpiece, the Chicago Circle campus still must make its mark academically. It has been subjected to the internal politics inevitable in a system as large as Illinois, which has an enrolment of nearly 60,000 students. For example, Chicago obviously offers a unique laboratory for urban planners and architects, but the stubborn Illinois faculty still retains the core of its urban planning-architectural faculty in the rural setting of Urbana, 150 miles to the south in a prairie atmosphere.

The university's medical school, however, appears to be more progressive. Its College of Medicine is the second largest in the United States, exceeded only by the University of Michigan. And, recently, the medical school has been developing branches in two other Illinois districts—Peoria and Rockford—to meet urgent health needs.

A problem that has for months disturbed the university's administration is the loss of federal government support for construction and operation of a major computer known as Illiac IV, which is now to be located at the Ames Laboratory in California. A building contracted for by the university as a home for Illiac IV in October 1969 and now nearing completion will be used, instead, by the Center for Advanced Computation, a research unit established at Urbana last summer. The Department of Defense changed its mind about locating the computer on the campus after Illinois, which had been relatively quiet, suddenly became the centre of student activism about two years ago. The computer, being built by Burroughs Corp at Paoli, Pa., pioneers a concept

originated by Dr Daniel L. Slotnick, professor of computer science at Illinois.

Student opposition developed after the campus newspaper, the Daily Illini, reported that the \$24 million computer would be owned by the DOD and was expected to create a body of scientific knowledge that will make possible larger and more powerful weapons and facilitate development of the Safeguard anti-ballistic missile. When the machine is plugged in, it was said, the world's computer capacity will increase 25 per cent. Defenders of the decision to move the site to California argue that the computer was so large and complex that the campus was not the best place to operate it and that costs would outrun original estimates to such an extent that the Defense Department might need help in financing it, say, from another governmental agency. Yet those close to the project say that the fact that the proposed Illiac IV building became a target of picketers had much to do with the decision in Washington to move a critical research tool away from a campus that might explode. Meanwhile, University of Illinois faculty members are working on basic research in computational techniques. Hopefully, their efforts will lead to more advanced systems, one of which could well be "Illiac V". But who will finance it and where will it be built if they develop such a complex tool? Those questions may well confront Dr Corbally in the not too distant future.

At an annual salary of \$50,000, Corbally comes to Illinois at a period when political leaders, fearing tax increases, are trying to pare the state's appropriations for higher education and demanding higher tuition rates for students who once could attend classes for almost nothing because it was a public institution. He thus faces demands for austerity on two fronts, the declining federal government support of research and development activities on the campuses, as well as pressures to reduce programmes and capital construction from local public funds.

Corbally comes to Illinois chiefly as an administrative technician. There is little to indicate that he was ever a great scholar. He earned a doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley with a major field in educational administration and finance. Before going to Syracuse as president, he was vice president for administration at Ohio State University in Columbus. Corbally is the author of a standard work on education administration. The fact that this type of a background intrigues a university search and screen community dramatizes that the boards of trustees, also frustrated by various problems, are turning to professional administrators rather than scholars with established reputations.

Short Notes**Interior Filled**

WILLIAM T. PECORA, director of the US Geological Survey since 1965, has been chosen as Under Secretary of the Interior. His selection is part of the restorative process following the recent decimation of the Department's top management. The White House's first choice for the post was James R. Schlesinger, assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget, who is looking for a new job reportedly because of being overruled on a matter of military budget cuts by presidential assistant Henry A. Kissinger. But western senators, who have a strong interest in the department, indicated that Schlesinger was too much of an easterner for their tastes.

Pecora's nomination is expected to pass Congress without difficulty, and he has also received the blessing of environmental lobbying groups such as the League of Conservation Voters and Friends of the Earth. Pecora joined the Geological Survey as a research scientist in 1939; his new job will improve his salary from \$36,000 to \$40,000 a year.

The post of Under Secretary of the Interior has been vacant since last February 19 when Fred J. Russell, a former Californian real estate dealer, was fired amid sighs of relief from mine safety reformers, conservationists, long-time officials of the department and a Congressman who described him as "a true troglodyte of the McKinley era". Russell's departure followed a purge of the department conducted by the White House around Thanksgiving day last year when the Secretary, Walter J. Hickel, and six of his aides were dismissed. The blacklist, apparently drawn up by Russell, included Dr Leslie Glasgow, a professor on leave from Louisiana State University, who was Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. "The Administration thought many decisions should be based first on politics and second on environment; I was just not political enough," Glasgow was quoted as saying a few weeks after his dismissal.

Breadlines into Ploughshares

A \$42 MILLION programme to help jobless aerospace scientists and engineers was announced by President Nixon on April 1 from the western White House at San Clemente, California. The chief purpose of the programme is to retrain these people in more socially relevant skills; it may also serve to undercut the \$500 million retraining programme for technologists which Senator Edward M. Kennedy has introduced into Congress. This new initiative is a more generous departure from the Administration's belief that unemployment will cure itself as the economy expands.