

Dr. Lewis, Dean Hixson, and Dr. Byers model their academic gowns.

## Academic Costumes Signify Degrees

"What is that little hat Dr. Lewis has on?" "Well, why does Dr. Byers have all those colors?" "What is that gold tassel for?" Questions, questions, questions. On opening day as the faculty marches down the aisle of Memorial Hall, everyone wonders just what the significance of their regalia is. Why wear robes and hoods and mortar boards?

It all started a long time ago in Europe. The history of the academic dress reaches far back into the earliest days of the oldest universities. In 1321 there was a statute requiring that all Doctors, licentiates and bachelors of the University of Coimbra, Portugal, wear gowns.

During the second half of the fourteenth century in England, colleges forbade "excess in apparel" and prescribed the wearing of long gowns. It is still a question as to whether the academic gown found its sources chiefly in ecclesiastical or civilian dress. It may have been necessary for warmth in the unheated buildings which scholars frequented. Both Oxford and Cambridge have made academic dress a matter of university control to the extent of even its minor details, and they repeatedly issue revised regulations.

When American colleges and universities desired to adopt some suitable system of academic apparel a half-century ago, it seemed best to agree on some definite system which all might follow. Students, in a way, were responsible for this movement in America for the standard academic robes lent to the ideal of democracy. They overcame individual differences among students and also helped to appeal to school spirit.

As the result of this student movement, on May 16, 1895, a

conference of representatives from interested institutions met at Columbia. From that meeting came the official suggestion that a "by-law regulation, or statute" be set up. In 1902 the regents of the University of New York gave a charter to an organization called the Intercollegiate Bureau of Academic Costume to serve as a source of information and guidance in such matters. The firm of Cotrell and Leonard was designated as "repository" and still serves in that capacity.

In 1932 the American Council on Education authorized the appointment of a committee to determine whether revision and completion of the Academic Code adopted in 1895 was necessary, and if so, whether to draft and revise the code and present it to the council. The committee reviewed the situation and approved a code that has been in effect ever since.

The Committee on Academic Costumes and Ceremonies was appointed by the American Council on Education in 1959. They reviewed the code and made significant changes.

Closer to us at Salem, the first Oxford cap and gown were worn at Salem in 1891. The Cremation ceremonies, when the seniors

burned old straw hats and donned their caps and gowns, were held in 1910. This has become hat burning in the Spring of the junior year. 1906 marked the first graduation exercises in which seniors changed tassels.

Specific regulations concerning Academic dress are lengthy, but several are as follows:

The gown of a Bachelor should be made of cotton poplin or broadcloth with pointed sleeves and should be worn closed. The Bachelor wears a cap to match his gown. The tassel is either black or the color representing his major subject.

A master's gown is also of cotton, but has oblong sleeves open at the wrist. The sleeve base hangs down in traditional manner and the front of the oblong has an arc cut away. The robe may be worn open or closed.

The Doctor's gown is by far the most elaborate. The material should be black silk or rayon. The front is faced with black velvet and three bands of black velvet encircle the sleeves. Tassels may be black or gold.

The hoods of the robes were originally like the hoods that priests once wore and used for collecting money in their parishes. Now they

mainly denote the major subject and the school attended.

The lining of the hoods is the school color and the trimming (about two to five inches around the edge, depending on the degree) is in the specified color for the major subject.

A few of these colors are: arts, letters, and humanities—white; Economics—copper; Education—light blue; Fine Arts—brown; Journalism—crimson; Library Science—lemon; Music—pink; Philosophy—dark blue; Science—golden yellow; Social work—citron; Theology—scarlet.

There are even more colors, but the preceding are the ones seen most often around Salem campus. These colors are used for tassel trimming and edging around hoods.

Persons like Dr. Lewis who hold degrees from foreign universities may wear their entire appropriate academic costume.

Precedent directs that only a single degree from a single institution should ever be indicated by a single garment.

There are reams and reams of information concerning the academic code of dress. Dr. Hixson has made a study of it and keeps adding to her collection.

Maybe from this brief sketch we will know why Mrs. Heidbreder has on a blue tassel and Dean Hix-

## IRS Sponsors Room Contest

There was a reason for the hustle and bustle of freshmen on Tuesday afternoon — the Freshman Room Contest. Held on October 18 between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m., the competition was sponsored by the IRS.

The winners of the separate contests held in the two freshman dorms are as follows: Anne Griffis and Helen Wolny, second place; Betty Pope and Kathy Chalk, first place in Babcock; Anne Simmons and G. G. Monk, second place; Mary Alice Teague and Carolyn Morrison, first place in Clewell. The rooms were chosen on the basis of neatness and originality, but primarily on "livability."

Dean Hixson, Mrs. Snow, and Mr. Hill, representatives from the faculty, Barbara Edwards, President of the IRS, and Lou Liles served as judges. They announced their decisions at a reception given in the Babcock Terrace Room after the contest.

son has a gold one, and why Dr. Lewis has on his tippet and fur trimmed robe, when they line up outside Memorial Hall for the Academic Processional.



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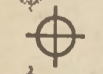
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