Gee's successor to continue on Kellogg Commission

By Bob Reddy
Lantern staff writer

The new president of Ohio State will automatically become a member of the Kellogg Commission following the departure of OSU President E. Gordon Gee.

This is because each university in the commission is a permanent member, said Richard S. Stoddard, a member of the commission's steering committee and assistant to Gee.

The Kellogg Commission was created in 1995 from a $1.2 million grant given by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. Consisting of 23 university presidents and chancellors, the purpose of the commission is to take a forward look at improving the quality of state and land-grant universities.

When formed, the commission selected a diverse group of universities, and OSU was a natural choice for its size and for its location, Stoddard said.

The National Association of State University and Land-Grant Universities is the nation's oldest higher education association.

There are 194 institutions in all 50 states. Its member campuses enroll more than 2.9 million students and claim upwards of 20 million alumni.

"The Kellogg Commission is an effort to get presidents and chancellors to talk about change and to talk about the future," Stoddard said.

"We all want to be part of evolving institutions," Stoddard said.

The commission only sets out ideas that member universities can see, Stoddard said. There is no way to impose guidelines, so the commission makes other presidents aware of issues and possible options, as seen in its first report, he said.

In April, the first report was released to members. The report, called "Returning to Our Roots: The Student Experience," is the first in a series of five reports to be presented by the commission.

The report outlines the direction in which universities should move to sustain a healthy learning environment and focus more on the needs of the student.

The commission's focus is on the future of public universities nationwide, Stoddard said.

Gee is the current chairman of the commission and will remain in that position until Jan. 1. He will be replaced by Penn State University President Graham Spanier, said Michael Vahle, staff assistant to the commission.

"We will invite this person in, because we want OSU to be a part of this," Vahle said.

Gee said he will continue his service to the commission after he leaves OSU for Brown University on Jan. 1. Because Brown is a private institution, Gee cannot hold an official position, but he will assume the role of chairman emeritus.

Gee said the issues the commission deals with are very important to him personally.