

*Excerpt from letter written by Professor Benjamin F. Thomas, Professor of Physics at OSU, to OSU President William F. Scott on October 4, 1887:*

“...I wish also to ask your attention to another matter. You are aware that there is an increasing demand among our students, and from without, for work in applied electricity. This demand has been met so far as our equipment will enable us to do it. Electrical Engineering is rapidly becoming a profession and soon must take its place beside mechanism and civil and mining engineering in the work of technical schools. The rapid extension of electric lighting, electric railways, the use of electric motors in manufacturing, etc., calls for young men thoroughly trained both in the science and in the art of electricity. The University ought to supply the demand for Ohio, at least, but we cannot give young men a training which, when put to the test of practical use, will be satisfactory either to themselves or to their employers until special provision is made. Sound theoretical knowledge is necessary to the highest success and can be given with but little apparatus, but theory alone is not sufficient. It must be supplemented with thorough practical knowledge before a student can enter on a practical life for which he has been fitting himself. I ask that an appropriation be made for this purpose. We need equipment with which practical instruction can be given in the use of such electric machinery as is now used commercially. This will comprise a steam engine, at least four dynamo machines of commercial size, an electric motor, dynamometers, arc and incandescent lamps, and the necessary line wires, insulators, switches, etc. etc. The machinery will need a small building which will not be expensive. I respectfully urge that an earnest effort be made to secure the necessary means from the next legislature.”