

A look at good grades

The faculty should take a long, cold look at the grading study released this week.

The study analyzed grades given during winter term 1971. It broke grading down to numbers and percentages and some of the statistics are shocking.

To start with, it seems the least academic of all university departments gives the best grades. The Department of Military Science and Aerospace Studies (ROTC) gave 38.2 per cent of its undergraduates A's winter term. No one flunked a ROTC class that term. This lends support to the idea that ROTC is not academically viable. It should be remembered, however that the University has no control over either the curriculum or faculty of that department.

While lack of University control may be used as an excuse for lack of standards in ROTC, it is no excuse for lack of standards in other University departments.

In Education, 35.5 per cent of all undergraduates received A's winter term. Only .8 per cent received a failing mark. To have such a discrepancy in a department that is supposedly training people to mold and shape the lives of children is questionable to say the least. When 1376 A's are given out and only 29 N's, something is wrong. It should be harder to get an A than an N, not the other way around.

In contrast to these statistics, the School of Journalism, often considered more of a trade school than an academic department, gave 12.2 per cent of its students a failing grade while only 15.3 per cent received A's.

There is no reason why grading standards should differ as much as they do between journalism and education. Are students in education smarter than those in journalism or do journalism teachers have higher standards?

There are reasons for this proliferation of good grades. Some teachers consider the grading system archaic and not reflective of academic achievement or learning. They are right. But it is childish to assume that the grading system can be changed by handing out good grades like candy. If the recent change in the grading system, voted in by the faculty, is any indication of what they think reform is, other groups should begin looking at the system and work out new proposals.

Another reason for the higher grades might be that students are better prepared to

do college work when they come to the University. The growing number of students who meet entrance requirements and the University's new program that will allow high school seniors to take college level courses before they arrive are indicators.

Even now many freshmen become disillusioned with the University when they find that their first year courses are often rehashes of their high school classes. If this is true, shouldn't the faculty make their courses more challenging and difficult?

This is not to say that teachers should use the new grading system to arbitrarily prevent people from getting a college education. But the grades should be more equitable so that a grade in one department means the same as the same grade in another.

Academic freedom is delicately

balanced as it is now. The faculty should undertake reforms on its own rather than force the department heads and administration to put pressure on them.

Paul Holbo, associate dean of liberal arts said of the study Tuesday, "it's like inflation of our currency, it hurts us all." Holbo said that when grades are too low the scholastic deficiency committee can take action. If the grades are too high he suggested that two things could be done. First, the grades each teacher gives out could be posted resulting in peer group pressure. His second suggestion was more ominous though and one that would be a step in the wrong direction. He said if other measures don't work faculty legislation might be set up to control this problem.

Individual faculty members should take a long look at their grading procedures and their courses and decide just who is going to reform grading and how it will be done.

All booked up

During the first week of school, the University Co-op has turned into a giant bottle-neck.

Hundreds of students have been trying to buy their text books—but many have been unsuccessful. The Co-op has been too busy and too crowded.

At various points Monday and Tuesday, the upstairs section of the student store was so crowded, it constituted a fire hazard and people had to wait downstairs. The store was so crowded Monday afternoon, it had to lock up and begin turning people away half an hour before the 5 p.m. closing time.

Students must not be punished for not buying their books until classes start—after all, there is a notice by many of the texts in the Co-op warning students to go to class before they buy their books. But when a student is kept from buying a book needed for homework, that constitutes one of the stiffest punishments imaginable—he is unable to complete the assignments and starts behind the other people in his class.

In recent years, the Co-op stayed open during night-time hours the first week of school. One year this was done for an entire week, then it went down to three nights, then one and now none.

This year, the Co-op chose not to be open at night for economic reasons—the store could not make it worth its while to stay open the extra hours.

That was a mistake. Such a decision must not be made again.

With more students and faculty members turning away from the Co-op and exploring other book-buying options, the store's Board of Directors or its manager is going to have to examine ways to better serve its customers.

They can start by looking into ways the Co-op can better serve them the first week of school next fall.

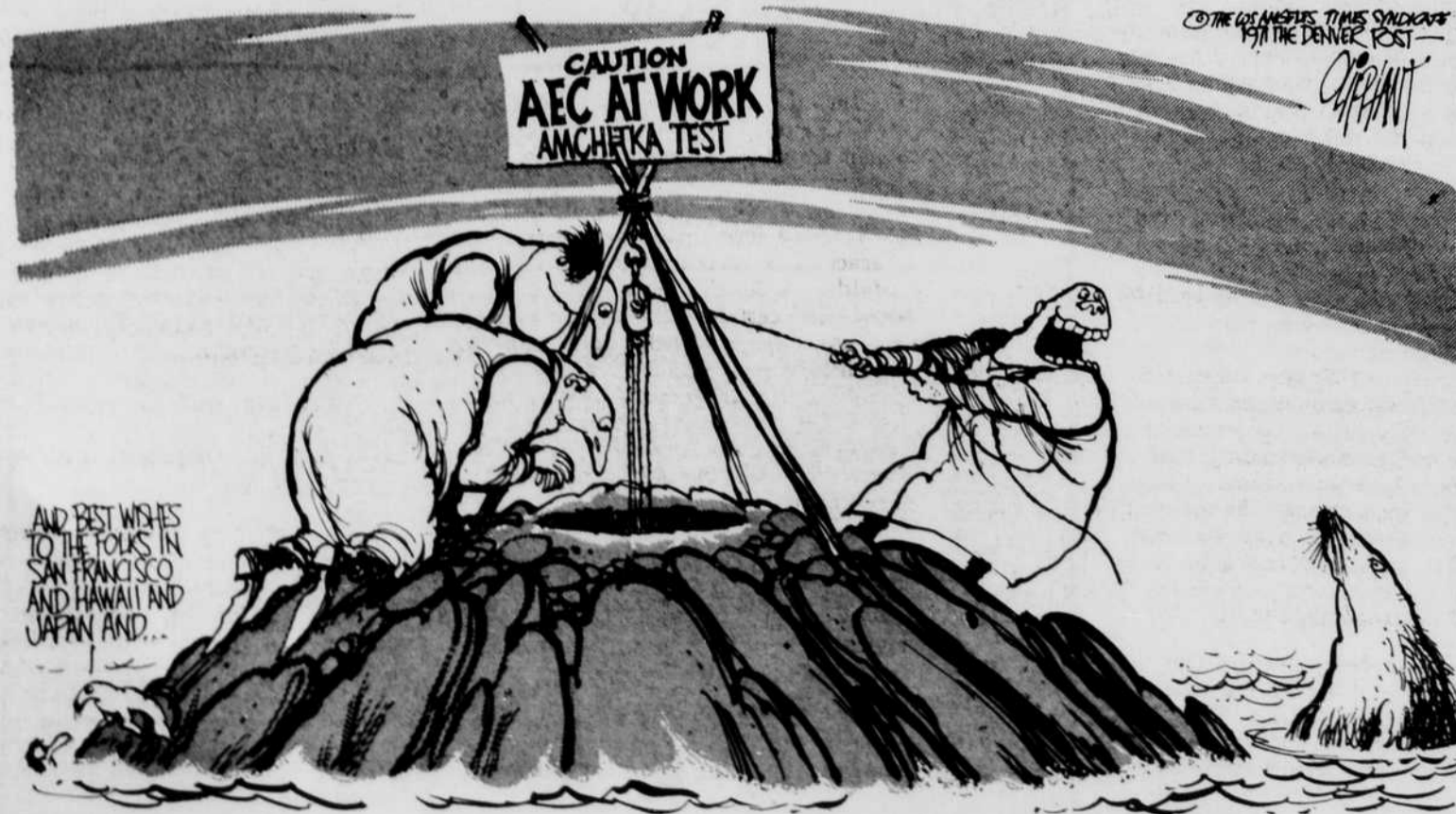
Footnotes

As our fathers resisted unto blood the lordly avarice of the British ministry . . . so we the daughters never will wear the yoke which has been prepared for us. We would rather die in the alms houses than yield to the wicked oppression attempted to be imposed upon us.

Factory Girl's Assn., 1835

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be."

Thomas Jefferson



AND BEST WISHES TO THE FOLKS IN SAN FRANCISCO AND HAWAII AND JAPAN AND...

'OK, then—if it does cause damage to wildlife, massive earthquakes and destructive tidal waves, we promise not to hold tests here again!'