

# Grading system can be 'D'stressing

By RICHARD SEVEN  
Of the Emerald

When the D grade was reinstated after two years in academic limbo, it was argued it would stem the rising tide of grade inflation and enable professors to grade more precisely and justly.

"It was felt," says William Lamson, associate professor of education and a key figure in bringing back the D, "that the grading system of A, B, C, F needed refinement. The gap between F and C was too wide. The gap had to be filled with a grade far below mediocrity, but still passing."

Without the D, teachers were often accused of "saving" a student doing below C standards by giving him or her a C instead of an F grade.

Whatever the reasons for the implementation of the new grade, it seems to be causing students, faculty and administrators more

confusion than they bargained for.

One teacher tells of a student who was caught plagiarizing a final project. The teacher gave the student three grading options, who chose an F for the paper and a D for the course, despite the teacher's effort to explain the trouble the new grade could cause. Apparently the student was and may still be convinced that by getting a B in another class she could even out the D to maintain a C average. Not so.

Part of the confusion has been caused by the five different rules (50, 65, 75, 85, 95) the University uses to interpret the D.

Under current University policy, the D counts as positive credit toward University general requirements of 186 accumulative credit hours.

However, a student must also satisfactorily pass 90 percent of

his or her classes at this University to graduate.

This means a student graduating with 186 credit hours can have no more than 18 hours of D credit. If so, he or she will have to take more classes.

The University uses a 65 percent rule to compute academic warning and probation. This means a student must satisfactorily pass 65 percent of the work attempted. In this case, the D is considered a passing grade.

So a student taking 15 hours a term can get three hours of D a term and never be placed on warning or probation. This means a student can surpass the allowable limit of 10 percent Ds and never be alerted.

Don't think it doesn't happen. Since the beginning of winter term, the Scholastic Deficiency Committee (SDC) has not moni-

tored the number of students placed on warning or probation, but those guilty of violating the 90 percent rule has increased from 234 in the fall to 352 in the winter.

The Office of Student Services has been sending letters to these 352, but Assistant Registrar Chris Munoz, says it's far from a satisfactory answer.

"It's no solution," says Munoz, "It's just a measurement to warn people who are getting themselves into trouble. If the D trend continues to rise, which right now it looks like it will, I'm going to the SDC to come up with a process to monitor cases of academic warning and probation."

Counselor Jane Farrand Degidio, says transfer students, along with freshman and sophomore students, should be especially aware of the D's implications.

Transfer students should realize the 90 percent rule applies to work completed at this institution only. It doesn't matter if they come from previous schools with D-less records.

So if students come to Oregon to complete their last 90 hours, they would only be allowed nine hours of D each, not 18.

If that isn't confusing enough, Shirley Wilson, director of Student Services, says students who are put on academic warning and/or probation are also finding it difficult to understand.

"A lot of students have been coming in wanting an explanation why they were put on academic probation because of Ds without ever being on academic warning," says Wilson.

According to University stan-

dards in interpreting the D, Wilson says, "In some cases one D grade in a term wouldn't be enough to place the student on warning, but say two more the next term would put him on probation."

"Academic probation, of course, limits the hour load a student can take to 18 hours, and more of the same academic performance can get him or her disqualified."

Wilson says not only do students find themselves in this situation more often with the D grade than with the F, but in some cases students have been choosing to take Ns or Fs rather than Ds.

This brings us to another rule and another paradox of the D grade — the 85 percent rule.

Under this ruling students can accumulate 32 hours of F, in all work graded, while they are allowed only 18 hours under the 90 percent rule.

Wilson says when a student doesn't need a class and the D might put him or her on probation, the student often chooses to take an F.

Lamson says the grade was originally intended as a "compassionate" grade to help those students, particularly in the hard sciences, who try hard but can't keep up with majors in the field.

However, admitting the system has become more punitive than compassionate, Lamson agrees, "There are just too many rules."

As of yet, it seems the SDC doesn't intend to make any revisions in the process. In the meantime, students should be aware that scraping by with a D is not saving themselves.

## Chicken manure — (Continued from Page 1A)

Another manure manufacturer, who preferred to remain anonymous, operates a 50,000 broiler farm west of Junction City. She hasn't been doing so well in the manure business. "We're too far out," she explains. She entered the market only recently.

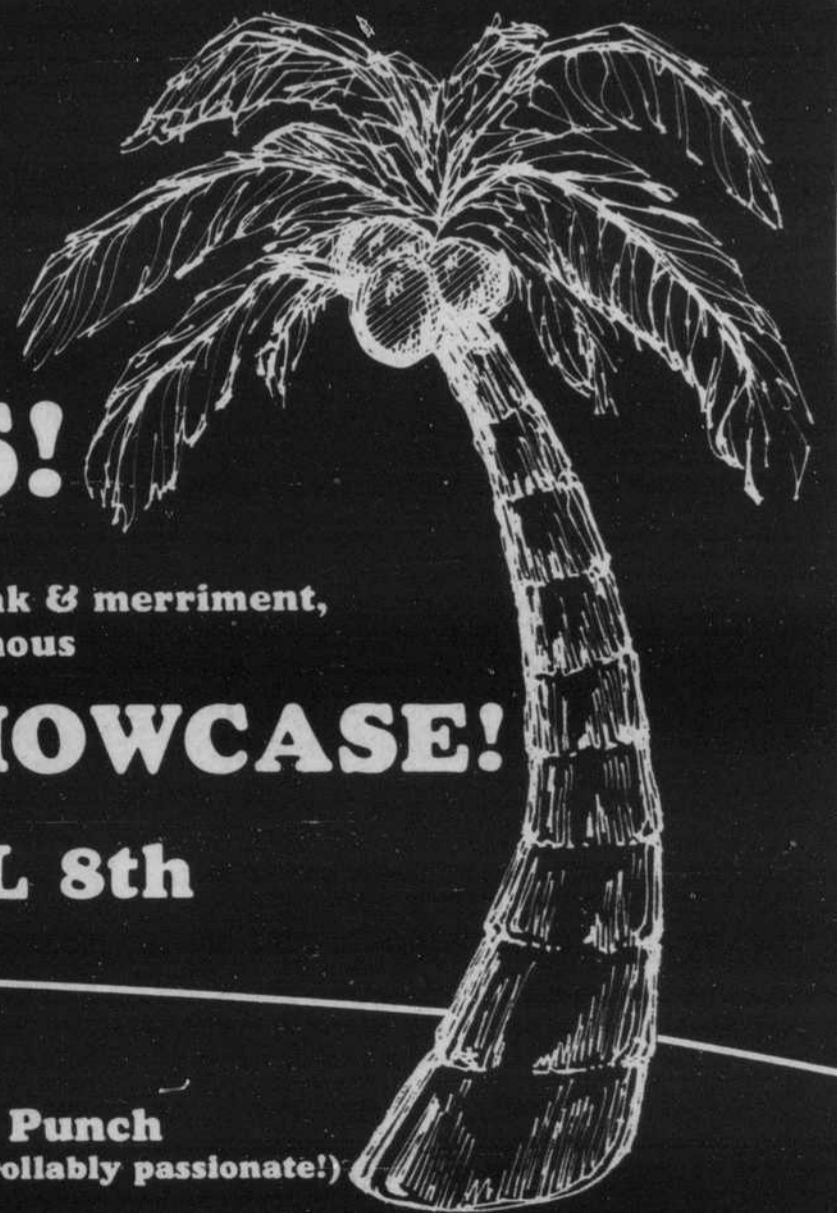
Bob Papannen, who owns a 90,000 chicken farm on Rattlesnake Road in Dexter, has been successfully selling manure for four years. Demand for manure, Papannen explains, varies with the weather. Wet springs, like the one Eugene had last year, dampen the manure market. Wet ground makes the manure hard to

spread. Even with the constant changes in manure demand, Papannen usually makes enough off manure to pay for replacement sawdust, with profit to spare.

A check on the commercial manure market shows chicken manure has sales potential. A 50 pound sack of industrial fertilizer can sell anywhere from \$4.85 to \$7.25. This doesn't begin to compete with chicken manure which in comparison is dirt cheap. A company in Salem has picked up on the low cost of chicken manure, and has started bagging it. Industrially bagged, chicken manure sells for \$1 a 50 pound parcel.

As a product chicken manure also has its draw backs. It's rich stuff and should be spread carefully. Dormitory residents should not buy chicken manure for their plants.

But if spread thinly, chicken manure offers a high crop yield. Manufacturers sell it mixed with sawdust, which dilutes the 75% nitrogen content. Once the manure has mellowed in the soil, almost anything will grow. Gardeners can watch their seeds grow into juicy chicken manured vegetables, or they can sit on their plants when they are wee. That's the kind of a world we live in.



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