

Community education diversified

Declining enrollment continues to plague higher education and to worry University administrators, but one enrollment figure that offers some solace is that for the Community Education Program (CEP).

"There may be a day when students from the community outnumber those degree-seeking students who usually enroll in the university directly out of high school," says Assistant Registrar Chris Munoz.

Community Education is the new name for the program that allows persons not formally admitted to the University to take up to six credit hours per term at reduced fees. If a community education student decides later to get a degree, credits earned while enrolled in the program may be used as transfer credit. However, CEP credits cannot be applied to satisfy residence requirements.

The University is not the first school to offer higher education through such a program, says Munoz. Like other institutions, it is working toward a time when non-traditional students will be the "bread and butter" of the University and will outnumber traditional students, he predicts.

Community Education is designed to "serve the needs of the people in the community, make it easier for them to register and maximize the outreach of the University insofar as the number of participants," explains Bob Albrecht, vice provost for academic affairs.

Albrecht says there has not yet been much impact on traditional students by the CEP, except for the addition of a couple of classes that otherwise would not be offered by the School of Business.

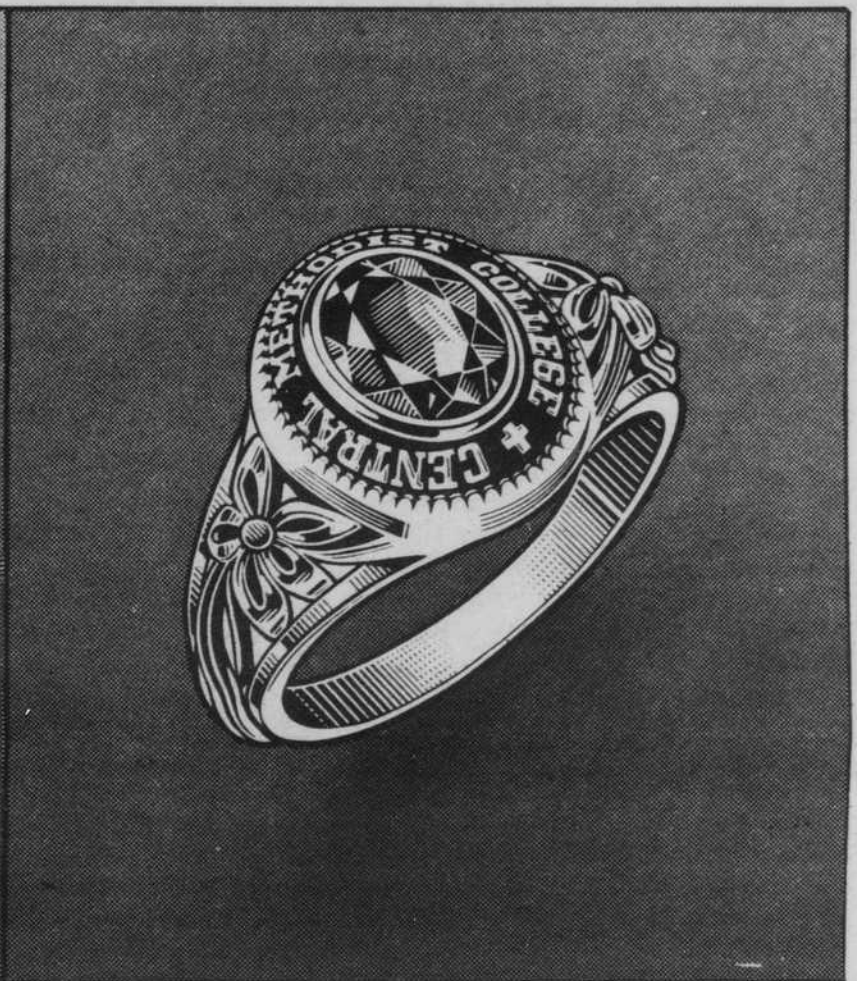
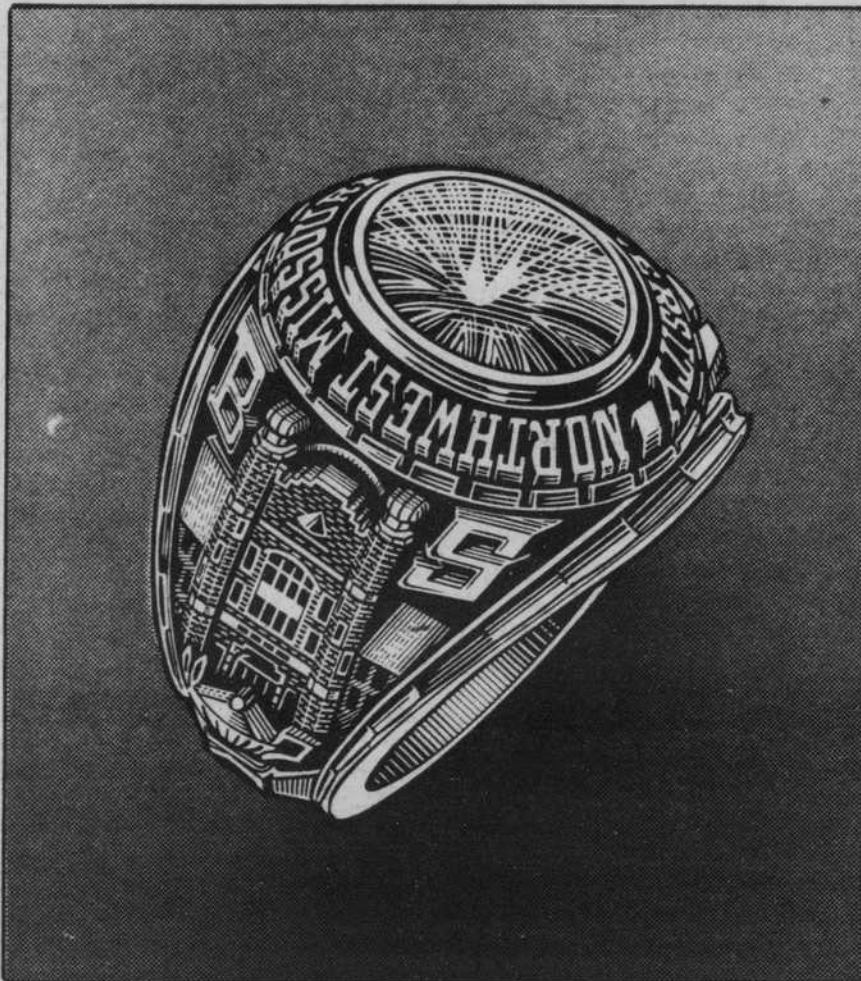
Munoz says the program has led to administrators encouraging deans and faculty members to offer "more diverse classes at more diverse times."

Offering classes at hours other than in the morning and early afternoon helps traditional students, because it allows them to take required classes in sections that otherwise would not be offered, says Gerard Moseley, assistant provost for student affairs. A student may not like taking late afternoon classes, but when sections offered at popular hours are closed the alternative is there.

Finances are also a consideration in the University's implementation of community education, and as the "pool of 18-year-olds continues to shrink there is going to be a trend toward more community education students and less traditional students," says Munoz.

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