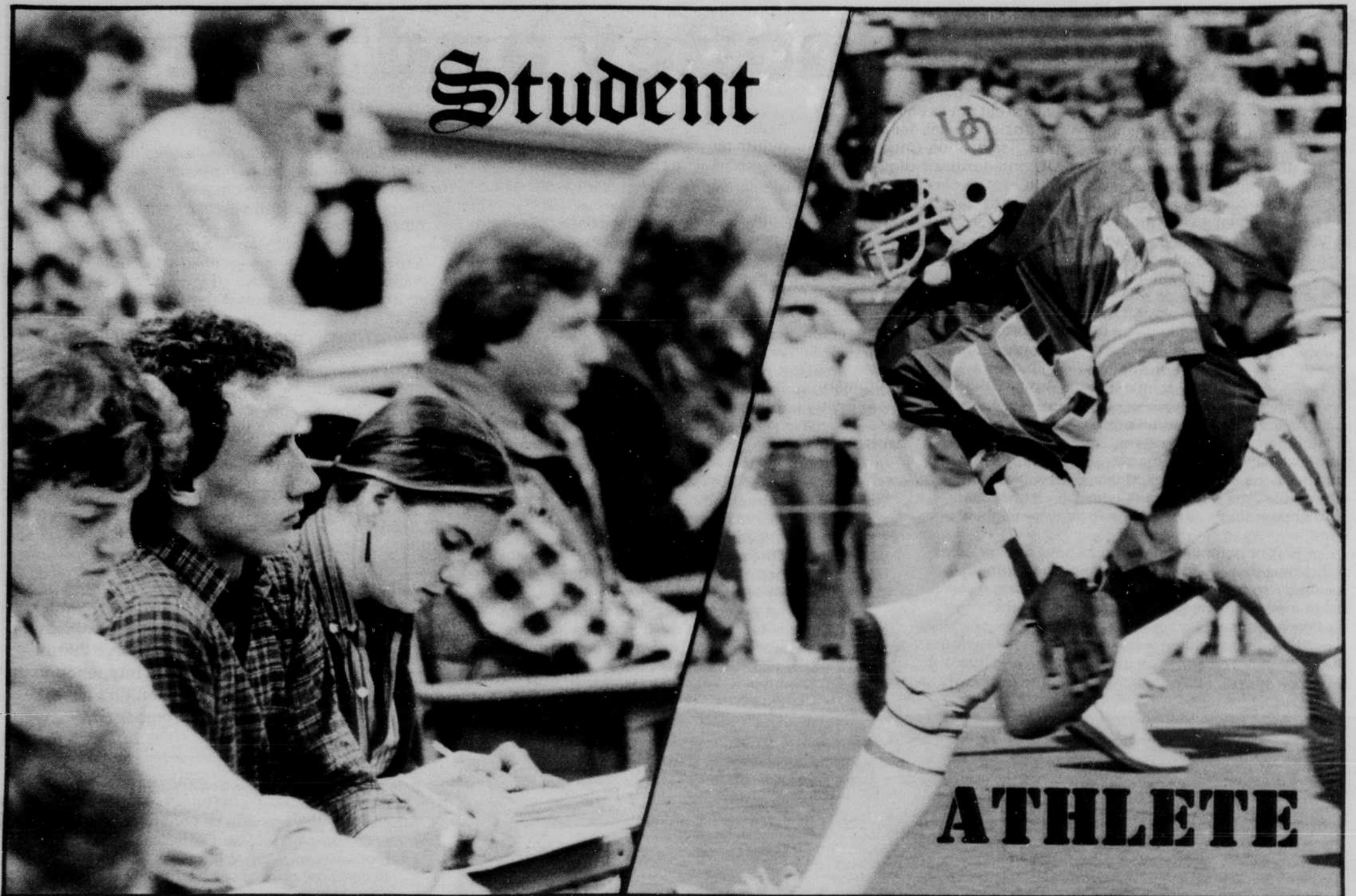


Student



Photos by Bob Baker

Athletes at the University are under a lot of pressure to perform on the field. In recent times, they have also been under pressure to perform in the classroom, due to such problems as the bogus credits scandal and the reputation they have for taking the "Mickey

Mouse" courses. Athletic counselor Barbara Nicholls says those who say athletic performers have it made aren't always right. Being a college athlete is like having two full-time jobs, she says, and "How can you say that this lacks discipline?"

Erasing the dumb jock image

By **MARK JOHNSON**
Of the Emerald

Q — How many football players does it take to make popcorn?

A — Five. One to hold the pan, and four to shake the stove.

For as long as there's been sport, there's been the stereotype of the "dumb jock." You know, the burly halfback who can thread his way through eleven would-be tacklers, yet

stumble over three-syllable words.

For many, that label would seem to be appropriate at Oregon, where recent academic problems involving athletes have surfaced. Two basketball players have been declared ineligible for the 1981-82 season already, and one football player had problems gaining eligibility after he was found to have insufficient credits.

And of course, Oregon was one of five Pacific 10 Conference schools implicated in the infamous "Bogus Credits" scandal.

So beyond the query asked at the beginning of this story, a more pertinent question surfaces: Is the label of "athlete" becoming more and more embarrassing to own?

One person who has an experienced ear listening to student-athlete problems is Barbara Nicholls, the University's student-athlete academic counselor. Nicholls, a former English instructor at the University, has arranged an advising program which includes help with scheduling, and tutors to compliment other resources such as study halls.

"My position at the University," said Nicholls, "is a result of a committee of faculty, students, student-athletes and the community in response to the complaints of athletes, black athletes in particular, who wanted to ensure they were getting a proper education. I'm here to see that the demands of sport don't overbalance education.

The University feels a strong commitment to its athletes."

Nicholls' services are separated from the athletic department. Money provided for tutoring is transferred from athletic funds, and then managed independent of athletic department control. Tutors are assigned by Nicholls to student-athletes "without regard to athletic prowess," according to Nicholls.

Nicholls, who says that she "was once anti-athlete and certainly anti-athletic department," sees a stereotype stamped on student-athletes.

"Some people overidealize athletes and others tend to put them down, but both views are wrong. Academically there is as much variety among the students as the athletes, who are not much different from the norm."

According to Nicholls, stats on GPA and success rates of athletes are hard to culminate because a true definition of what constitutes an athlete does not exist. But she maintains that in past studies, athletes showed a slightly higher GPA than the student body as a whole.

An academic progress study under the direction of Robert Bowlin, Dean of Students, compiled data on all male athletes from the fall of 1975 through the fall of 1979. Bowlin cautions that the study's findings are only preliminary and incomplete because data on the rest of the student body has yet to be compiled.

In drawing some preliminary conclusions, it was found that in

those four years studied, it took the average graduate 4.91 years to complete requirements while the athletes that graduated took an average of 4.58 years. Graduates of every sport but one, on the average, took less time to graduate than did their fellow undergraduate students.

Bowlin also points to several articles written from studies which indicate student-athletes are slightly more successful.

In one article, by Jerry Uhrhammer on a 1967 study, it was shown that a greater percentage of athletes were above a predicted GPA of between 1.7 and 2.99 than the non-athletes. Some teams such as the men's tennis and gymnastics team have solid reputations for academic excellence.

Bowlin said that student-athletes usually do better because they are "reasonably competitive people who learn to use their time effectively and get the additional help, such as tutors."

"You would expect them to do better - motivation is a key factor," Bowlin said.

But like Nicholls, Bowlin seems more content to say that "student-athletes do not differ that much from the general student body," and dumb jock stereotypes are labeled to athletes because "with bad publicity it's easy to jump to conclusions."

Nicholls suspects the only general difference between the academic success of student-athletes and the student body is that, "athletes parallel a normal

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