

Honors College: Ivy League at a state university price

By Diane Winocur
Of the Emerald

The University Honors College offers what students and faculty claim to be an Ivy League education at a "state university price." But "Harvard of Oregon" has its share of problems as well as advantages.

Like Ivy League colleges, the Honors College emphasizes a broad, synchronized Liberal Arts education, stiff grading, a heavy workload, classes with less than 25 students and personal interaction with professors.

But the same sources admit that the "Ivy League image" continues one step further. The college has a highly structured and what some call limiting set of requirements, almost no minority students, and scholars who occasionally live up to the "nasty, snotty intellectual" image their elite schooling suggests.

Promotional material for the Robert D. Clark Honors College calls it a "small liberal arts college in a large state university." Students benefit from this interaction by gaining access to a large university's library, calendar of events, professors, and atmosphere, yet a small college's intense scholarship.

"We're serving a definite benefit to the taxpayers," says Dr. Frances Cogan, one of two full-time college literature professors. Many students choose the University and the Honors College over more expensive and distant Ivy League schools, she says, yet receive a comparable education.

Students take lower division college classes in literature, history, science, and the like, in place of University general requirements, usually during their first two years. Upper-division time is spent working toward a University major, and culminates in a senior honors thesis and an Honors degree. This carries roughly the "resume weight" of a Harvard diploma, Cogan says.

The classes are very different from others on campus. Discussion, rather than lecture, is the predominant classroom activity, as the 12 to 25 students analyze over 200 pages of reading materials assigned each week. No matter the subject, professors base grades on attendance, class participation, and completion of lengthy written compositions. Midterms and finals are de-emphasized or non-existent.

According to Cogan, the freshman attrition rate is incredibly high. Students entering the Honors College most often have been receiving easy high

school A's for the last four years and react strongly when their first B's appear. Cogan says that after this initial shock, "Only the most academic of the academic stay. Of the 300 students currently enrolled in the College, only 14 are senior thesis candidates."

Senior Carrie Davis, a double major in journalism and art, says the increased difficulty in receiving A's "made me want to work that much harder." Receiving college A's, she says, makes her feel that "Wow, I've really done something."

Like any Ivy League school, not all students at the college are content with its vigorous, structured approach. Malcolm Wallop, a liberal arts sophomore, says he would prefer to learn from a professor's application of the facts as much as from the readings themselves, but that the workload prevents this. "I can't finish reading it all," he says, "I can't even keep the stories straight any more."

Davis says she felt the same way during her first years in the college, "but now I look at it and see what it's done for me," strengthening her personality and writing skills, and says she is thankful for the program.

Wallop also voices a common complaint in desiring more applicability from his required classes. He often questions the usefulness of his classwork in the "real world," he says. "I'm skeptical about any type of molds," he says.

The college's final similarity to Harvard is its image. The public's impression that college students are "nasty, snotty, intellectual hothouse flowers," is unfair as Cogan describes it. The image derives from a role played by students who see their own intelligence as an aberration, she says. "I personally detest that, and the rest of the students won't put up with it."

On the other hand, political science sophomore Scott Hercher allows that a few of his peers are "what you called nerds in high school," students "more interested in their reading than in having friends or being like others." But he asserts that most of his classmates are "intelligent, interesting, moral and liberal people."

"Honors College makes you think in a philosophical context," explains Davis of its "intellectual aura" and non-materialistic politics. "I'm fairly on the prep side, so I really do stick out," she says. But the wide variety of students enrolled in the college, representing 40 of a possible 45 majors at the University make overall characterizations unfair. "We are a group of normal, social human beings," says Davis.



Emerald graphic

State schools up standards

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — A commission says Oregon's public colleges and universities are following a regional trend in raising their academic admission standards.

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education reported on its survey of admission requirements in eight Western states.

The required high school grade-point average for Oregon residents is being raised by .25 over last year so freshman entering this fall will need a 2.75 average at University of Oregon and Oregon State, 2.50 at Portland State and Western Oregon and a 2.25 at Oregon Tech.

Eastern Oregon is raising its grade-point requirement from 2.00 to 2.50 for Oregon residents except those in its service area, who still can be admitted at 2.00. Southern Oregon is adding a writing test requirement.

Some students without high enough grade-point averages can substitute test scores and summer courses. The highest average under the grade-point system is 4.00.

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Committee on the Arts and Humanities Presents

PROF. ROBERT ALTER

Distinguished literary critic, writer on contemporary Jewish affairs, Biblical scholar. Speaking on

"HOW CONVENTION HELPS US READ: THE EXAMPLE OF THE ANNUNCIATION TYPE-SCENE IN THE BIBLE"

Tuesday May 4, 2:30 pm EMU Forum Room
Admission Free. Open to the Public

Sponsored by English, Comparative Literature, Religious Studies, and the Oregon Committee for the Humanities.



342-8111

TINO'S

- Full dinner menu
- 23 varieties of Pizzas
- Whole wheat and white crust
- Pizzas to go-cooked and uncooked

15th and Willamette

New Hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 11:00-Midnight
Fri. 11:00-1:00 a.m.
Sat. 5:00-1:00 a.m.
Sun. 5:00-11:00 p.m.

KWAX 91.1 FM Presents
a special six week series on

National and Local Educational Issues

each Tuesday, May 4 through June 8, at 6:30 p.m. on An Oregon Evening.

Produced by Nancie Fadeley, KWAX public affairs director, and Marilyn von Seeger, Eugene Education Association.

This program made possible in part by a grant from the Eugene Education Association.

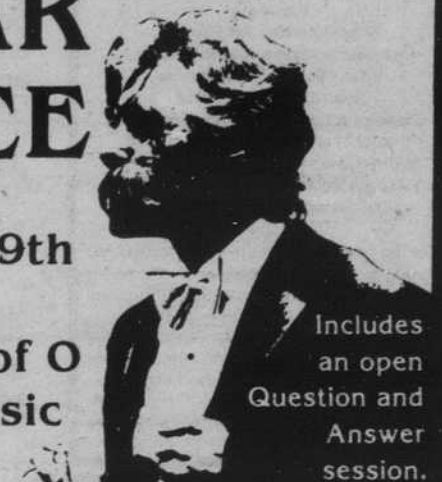
emu Cultural Forum Presents

William McLinn as Mark Twain
turns social critic for the '80s

MARK TWAIN ON WAR & PEACE

Sunday, May 9th
8 pm

Beall Hall, U of O
School of Music



Includes an open Question and Answer session.

"It takes a very original person to imitate a master as the master would imitate himself, and (he does) it well."

BILL MOYERS

Tickets: \$2.50 Students
\$3.50 General Public
At EMU Main Desk and at the door

Endorsed by Clergy and Laity concerned

Spend a magical evening with the one you love...

Sat. May 8th

"My

SWEETHEART

of The Year Dance"

Valley River Inn/Willamette Room

\$10/Couple

includes complimentary
flower, cocktails and
smorgasbord

semi-formal

PLEASERS
Dancing begins
at 9:30pm

Tickets available at EMU-Main Desk