



University enrollment plummets

By **Debbie Howlett**
Of the Emerald

The University's registrar released preliminary figures Monday that indicate a 9-percent drop in enrollment for fall term.

At this time last year, 14,916 students had registered. This year 13,567 students filed registration packets at the two-day registration last Thursday and Friday, a decrease of nearly 1,400.

While the admissions office anticipated a decline of 6 percent, admissions director Jim Buch says his office as well as the registrar's office are hoping more students will enroll either before Wednesday, which is the last day to pay tuition without a late fine, or before the final registration deadline on Oct. 8.

"We were expecting to see a drop in enrollment for several reasons," Buch said. "We raised admission standards for

in-state freshman from a 2.5 high school grade point average to 2.75. In addition, the number of students graduating from Oregon high schools last year was the lowest since 1966."

A total of 30,400 high school students graduated last year compared with 31,339 in 1981 and 30,176 in 1966.

Buch says it is still too early for a clear interpretation of exactly which reasons account for the decline, but he estimated that about one-third of the difference may have been caused by the decrease in the number of high school graduates and two-thirds through the change in admissions requirements.

Buch, along with University Registrar Wanda Johnson, also cited the poor state of the economy as having an effect on the decision to attend college.

"It may be that fewer students are choosing to go to college at all, and a good number apparently are deciding to

go to community colleges, which have lower tuition costs," Johnson said.

"The real unknown is the economy," Buch said, adding that Lane Community College is experiencing an increase in the number of students enrolled in courses that can be transferred to a four-year public institution.

Perhaps the most meaningful aspect of the decline in registration will be the fate of four University "extension" programs.

After the legislature's special session last June, and a subsequent order to cut \$500,000 from the University's budget, University Pres. Paul Olum proposed the elimination of the Bureau of Governmental Research, the Learning and Education Resource Center, the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, and University radio station KWAX.

Olum put that decision on hold at the request of Chancellor Bud Davis, to de-

termine whether enrollment figures would allow the continuation of the programs.

Olum was unavailable for comment today on the effect of the registration figures. Davis and University Provost Richard Hill were also unavailable for comment.

However, one University official says any decision about eliminating the four programs, based on the preliminary figures, is likely to be premature and a decision will probably be made after final registration figures are announced the fourth week of fall term.

Additionally, the decision is based on enrollment at all eight institutions in the state system and not solely at the University.

The official said similar enrollment declines are apparently being experienced at other colleges and universities in the state system.

Studying under the influence



Photo by Bob Baker

By **Sandy Johnstone**

White males who live in a fraternity, have less than a 3.0 grade point average, come from a well-off family and have no strong religious ties may have another characteristic in common — heavy drinking.

At least that's the conclusion of a study of 490 University students conducted last spring by sociology professor Patty Gwartney-Gibbs.

Heavy drinkers probably have some, but not all, of these characteristics, Gwartney-Gibbs says.

The mailed-in survey responses indicate "large and significant" differences in the drinking patterns of male and female students.

Some 10.6 percent of the males averaged between 1.5 and 7.2 drinks per day and had 12 or more drinks on at least one day in the month before the survey. Only 1.6 percent of the women surveyed drank similar amounts.

However, men also were found more likely to be nondrinkers. Eight percent of the students sampled were nondrinkers and 55 percent of those were male.

The study notes that grade point average is "correlated strongly and negatively with alcohol consumption."

Students with C averages drink more heavily than B or A average students, but the survey also reports those

with the best and worst grades are equally likely to be nondrinkers.

The study also supports the "myth" of heavy drinking in Greek residences.

Of those living in sororities and fraternities, only 2.4 percent had not had a drink in the month prior to the survey. That compares to 21 percent of students living in dorms, 18 percent of students living with parents and 14 percent of those living off campus.

"One peculiar finding concerned the availability of alcohol to women in sororities. Over one-third said they never had alcohol on hand and about two-thirds said they never or rarely did, yet sorority women are heavier drinkers than women in other living situations," Gwartney-Gibbs says.

A family's financial status also had a bearing on drinking patterns.

The students from families whose parents made more than \$50,000 per year drank about one-third of a drink more a day than those whose parents made less.

Religious beliefs also were associated with alcohol use.

Those with the strongest beliefs were least likely to be heavy drinkers, the study showed. For example, in the week prior to the survey, students with strong religious feelings drank about half as much as those

with no religious beliefs.

Survey results showed drinking had little correlation with ethnic background, employment status, marital status, age, year in school or level of happiness.

The survey also tested general and legal knowledge about alcohol consumption to test the need for an alcohol information service.

"Students are relatively well informed — probably because of the required health education — except in the legal area, which could be because the laws were recently changed," Gwartney-Gibbs says.

In the legal area, about 45 percent of the students were "not sure" about certain laws, and laws regarding drunk driving were the least known.

Heavy drinkers know a lot more about the effects of alcohol than light or moderate drinkers, Gwartney-Gibbs says.

An intervention program to prevent potential or actual alcohol abuse may be more useful than an informational program, she says. But informational sessions still are important for students who aren't heavy drinkers.

Gwartney-Gibbs is developing a program based on the study. Although she is waiting for approval of a grant proposal, she says the program could get going by the middle of winter term.