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## First-rate education at a second-hand price

University Honors College, a homegrown Harvard

The program is open to those willing to work

**By Frank Shaw  
Of the Emerald**

Think of a school with a small enrollment, where the average class-size is only 15 to 18 students, where requirements for admission are a grade point average of about 3.6 and Scholastic Aptitude Test scores of 1200 or better.

Reed? Harvard? Yale?

Try the University Honors College.

Alan Kimball, Honors College director, says the program has one of the most challenging undergraduate curriculums in the world.

While other University departments face continuing budget cuts and some undergraduate classes have enrollments of more than 300 students, Kimball says Honors College students deserve the high quality instruction they receive.

"I think the program is not only fair but essential," he says. "The program is open to anyone who was willing to work hard and get good grades (in high school)."

Karin Keutzer, an Honors College junior, agrees that everyone has the opportunity to be in the Honors College if they're willing to work hard. She stresses that Honors College students are here primarily to get a quality education.

However, Katherine Richards, a junior in business, is not so sure the Honors College is equitable.

"In a way it's not really fair that they're paying the same amount of money and getting a better education," she says.

That problem has to be put in a proper perspective, Kimball says.

Many students in the state and in the nation would like to go to college but cannot afford tuition, he says. They are, in effect, in the same

situation as the other students at the University are in regard to the Honors College, he says.

"If there were no Honors College, world-class undergraduate education would be available only to the very rich," Kimball says.

Kimball says the Honors College attempts to keep Oregon's brightest high school students in the state system of higher education. Without the Honors College many of these students couldn't afford a comparable education, he says.

Tim Jones, a fifth-year architecture senior, says the system is a good one but needs improvement. He says the University's new policy of charging students more for remedial classes should be applied to the Honors College.

One of the benefits Honors College students receive is smaller classes.

"A small class is much more interactive, and there is much more dialogue between the students," says Steven Keele, a psychology professor who teaches both Honors College and regular University classes.

John Givens, a junior who has taken several Honors College courses, agrees honors courses are better "Because classes are smaller, and teachers can interact more with you and with the class."

With only a few exceptions, class sizes are limited to 25 or fewer, Kimball says. And 100-level courses are restricted to Honors College students only.

But everyone who enters the Honors College doesn't graduate from the program.

Junior Laura Blakemore was in the Honors College and withdrew after two years. One reason she gave for her withdrawal was because she felt she "wasn't experiencing the real college life."



Photo by Bob Baker

Average class size in the University's Honors College is 15 to 18 students.

### Tougher college entry plan has school districts balking

**PORTLAND (AP)** — Oregon's smaller school districts are balking at a proposal to toughen entrance requirements for Oregon's state colleges and universities.

The 109-member Oregon Small Schools Association voted unanimously this month to ask Chancellor Bud Davis, to postpone his proposal for more rigorous course requirements to allow further study.

Even some of the state's largest school districts are concerned that Davis may be pushing too quickly for high schools and students to meet the new requirements.

Davis, however, said this week that he will resist attempts to postpone his plan, which will be discussed today by the State Board of Higher Education.

Davis proposed that high school graduates seeking admission to state colleges or universities in the fall of 1985 be required to have taken four years of English, three years of mathematics, two years of science, three years of social studies and two years of other college preparatory classes.

Many school districts worry that they will not be able to adjust their curricula in time to meet the 1985 deadline.

"We have about 300 enrolled in our high school," said Glenn Dorn, Jefferson School District superintendent.

"There is no question this will cause us some problems.

"We teach some of these subjects only every other year," he said. "And we don't have enough staff as it is now."

Don Miller, OSSA executive director, said Davis' proposal involves an important policy issue. The association is concerned that Davis' toughened requirements are in effect telling high schools what courses they should offer, he said.

In exchange for the tougher graduation requirements, Davis said he is willing to back off from a requirement that students attain a high school grade-point average of 2.75 to be admitted at the University or Oregon State University. That requirement was raised from 2.5 this fall.

A 2.5 average in the college preparatory classes he is proposing will be a better indicator of potential college success than a 2.75 average in the current high school program, he said.

Tougher course requirements will mean a more rigorous senior year for many students, Davis said. For many students, who have completed nearly all their graduation requirements by their senior year, the final year is a "time of frivolity and fun" rather than academic growth, he said.

### Writing your own text book may cause thesis blues

**By Joan Herman  
Of the Emerald**

Most University students read texts written by someone else.

Honors College seniors write their own kind of text: the thesis — and therein lies a problem.

About half of the students who fail to graduate from the Honors College do so because "they just don't know how to deal emotionally with the thesis," says Alan Kimball, honors college director.

"It's fear. Greek roots. Thesis. It sounds like something only egg-heads and bookworms of the most arcane sort would ever do," Kimball says.

And the first problem hits before the student even starts writing — coming up with a solid idea.

Kimball says it's difficult for students to choose a specific topic because they "don't get a chance to do this type of original scholarship very often.

"That's part of the whole process, learning how to define a problem, to reduce it to terms that can be handled, to start work gathering that material, then focusing on it and making a narrative out of it," he says.

This "text of significance," as Kimball dubs it, can be anywhere from 20 to 100 pages long, but the average length is about 40 to 60 pages.

Carl Leshner, a senior in English literature, agrees.

chance to take everything I've learned so far in the course of this college experience and try to do something with it," says Leshner.

Kimball says thesis topics vary as much as the students writing them and range from Leshner's analysis of T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" to a physics project on quantum mechanics. About 40 percent of the theses are in technical fields, and 60 percent are in the liberal and fine arts area.

The process begins at the end of the junior year when students choose topics in their major fields, find an adviser in that field and develops a reading list.

Once students finish writing their theses, they submit them to a committee comprised of the thesis adviser, a faculty member from the student's department and an honors college faculty member.

The student then must defend the thesis to the committee during an hour-long oral examination. The committee then decides to grant a no-pass, pass or pass with distinction.

Kimball says theses are rarely rejected because the student usually discovers the thesis is not working long before completion.

Some theses even get published, usually those done in the physical science labs where students are able to work with members of the National Academy of the Sciences, he says.