

Editorial

New requirements improve standings

With the highest Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores of any class in six years, the Freshman class that entered Oregon universities this year nearly doubled the nationwide rate of improvement.

While the massive improvement may be due to luck, a closer look at the situation reveals the real answer. The improved SAT scores have a direct correlation to tough, new high school requirements for Freshmen entering any of Oregon's public universities.

SAT math scores improved by 12 points and verbal scores rose by nine points compared to last year, according to a report by the Oregon State System of Higher Education. Because test scores improved the same year that new admission requirements were instituted, it is clear the requirements are the source of the large jump. State officials should be commended.

The new requirements include stipulations that high school students who wish to enter an Oregon university must complete four years of English, three years of math and social science, and two years of science. Each of these standards, which should have been enacted a long time ago, will work toward giving incoming students a well-rounded, college-preparatory education.

In addition, the higher standards will improve the reputation of Oregon universities as well as boost the morale and academic standing of many incoming students. Professors will be free to concentrate on more in-depth issues without having to cover material that should have been covered at the high school level, new students should be able to finish their lower division requirements sooner, and the need for remedial courses will decrease. Tougher requirements challenge students to improve and work toward perfection.

The standards also could boost the Freshman retention rate and decrease the amount of other students who flunk out each year. The pressures of college academia can be too much to handle for many new students. Integrated English and math classes coupled with proper counseling in high school could make students feel more comfortable with lower-division college material, and could lower their chances of dropping out or transferring to other universities.

The new admission standards were implemented despite criticism from some who said the requirements would limit access to higher education and spark a downward spiral in enrollment. In reality, enrollment increased substantially. Oregon schools averaged a 2.2 percent enrollment increase compared to last year, and the University realized an impressive 3.6 percent increase.

Also, even with the increased admission standards, most students are still meeting the basic admission requirements. Jim Buch, director of admissions and records, said that of 4,511 students who applied for admission to the University, only 796 were denied admission.

High school students serious about attending college had an ample amount of time to complete the required courses before the new requirements were approved two years ago. In addition, the University made a substantial effort to inform high school students of what the new standards would include and when they would be instituted. For students unable to meet the standards, basic requirements can be met through other options, such as community colleges.

The requirements are not intended to be elitist, or to exclude anyone from a college education. They are simply designed to raise the standards, and ultimately the quality of education, for those attending an Oregon university.



Letters

No irrationality

This letter is in response to Robin Stalcup's criticism of a previous letter of mine which had suggested that there is an irrational element in the methodology of science. Unfortunately, his criticism was not directed at the content of my position, but rather was an argumentum ad hominem — an argument directed against me personally. Apparently, Stalcup has not seriously thought about the meaning of science as a cultural accomplishment and instead has uncritically accepted the taken-for-granted views of science as the highest form of human rationality or as the embodiment of the ideal of progress. He ignores the presuppositions at work in science which prevent it from being a truly universal system of rationality, including its implicit dualism of subject and object (the Cartesian heritage), its manipulative experimental method (the victory of artifice and technique over observation and insight), as well as its idealization of the sensible life-world through its abstract mathematizing of nature. The "limitations of space" which I referred to in my previous letter concerned the 250 word limitation on letters to the editor. Professor Marrocco, whose commentary my letter was in response to, had an entire page to develop his arguments while I had to settle for a paragraph. If Stalcup actually wishes to learn more about the evidence for my position he can contact me by

phone. Given the perversely emotional tone of his letter though, I doubt that he has any genuine interest in hearing me out.

Clyde Davenport
U of O

Look again

I have always respected David Herman and his creative film programs, particularly the Reel Changes Cinema which is responsible for unearthing a number of fine features overlooked by the modern film-going community, so I was a little more than upset at the reactionary tone of his letter (ODE, Oct. 21). His claim that American westerns are "trash" and have nothing to do with the "renaissance" of American film is simply a blind attack on an undervalued genre of film that is central not only to the history of cinema, but to our very national identity.

Had Mr. Herman taken the time to attend a few of the Forum's western offerings, and made up his own mind, he would have found a truly subversive Marxist allegory in "The Naked Dawn," a tender study of individualism, friendship and the drive to escape the prison of wage labor in "The Lusty Men," and an analysis of the greed, hate and racism that drove one man from "civilized" America to the Sioux nation to build a new life.

If these values need some excuse in the eyes of Mr. Herman, then I suggest he look again. If he feels that the violence inherent in the genre defeats these values, then I ask him what makes the explicit dismemberment of a Samurai warrior in "Sanjuro" and the brutal knifeing of a nude Janet Leigh in "Psycho" more acceptable portrayals of violence.

Sean Axmaker
Film Coordinator
Cultural Forum

U.S. violations

I would like to correct the most substantive of two changes in my commentary (ODE, Oct. 23) on the civil war in El Salvador. My reference to the aerial bombardment of Salvadoran civilians as an "air war made and directed in the United States," was changed to, "... air war aided by the United States." I strongly question the editors' arrogance and right to change the tone of my article, but they are presumably not the only people who think my case overstated.

Twenty percent of El Salvador's population have fled their homes — driven out of the countryside to deprive the guerrilla forces of their support. Sweeps by the army were limited in effectiveness and left behind all too visible evidence of massacres, so the Pentagon expanded the Salvadoran air force as rapidly as it could push the appropriations by and around Congress.

Obviously the Reagan administration and the Pentagon are not going to admit they direct the deliberate bombing of Salvadoran civilians. But it is fact that the United States trained the Salvadoran air force, continues to keep advisers at all its planning levels, and carries out its own extensive reconnaissance of the countryside. Congressional prohibition of passing on this intelligence is violated by simply broadcasting the information to the United States, while the Salvadoran air force listens in "of its own volition." These and countless other cynical violations take place openly, on top of all the deliberate misinformation of Congress documented in the Hatfield Report on U.S. Aid in El Salvador.

Ken Summers
Committee in Solidarity
with the People of El Salvador

Oregon Daily Emerald

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The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.