

MULTIPLE CHOICE



ILLUSTRATION BY KIMBLE MEAD

Registering by Remote

Tired of long registration lines? Let your fingers do the waiting: register by telephone, as queue-weary students are doing from Iowa State to Union Community College in New Jersey. Computerized registration is in use or about to be installed at 30 colleges across the country, according to Perception Technology, the Massachusetts firm that introduced the system four years ago.

Armed with a complex packet full of course code numbers, students gain access to their school's computerized registration system by punching the appropriate keys on a touch-tone telephone. Courses can be chosen, added or dropped simply by entering the right codes. If the course is full or another problem arises, a touch of a button can bring a live operator on for assistance. "This is really a 'have-it-your-way' kind of thing," says Perception Technology's product-management director John E. Halde-man. "You're doing it where and when you want."

The process has not been en-

tirely glitch-free, however. When close to 20,000 students first used the system last fall at Texas A&M, the most common complaint was a frequent busy signal. "You have to get in by luck," said Michael Buck, a freshman aerospace-engineering major, who tried to get through to the computer for two hours and then was cut off twice. But most students surveyed loved the convenience. As A&M junior David White put it: "Even when you're waiting with a busy signal you *still* can eat or watch TV." That's not easy to do in most registration lines.

A Closer Shave at BYU

Scrawling mustaches onto paintings is nothing new, but officials at Brigham Young have pulled a reverse twist. BYU's administration asked artist Ron Bell to de-whisker the portrait they had commissioned of Karl G. Maeser, principal of Brigham

Young Academy (BYU's predecessor). Maeser, who headed the academy from 1876 to 1892, was bearded in the old photograph from which Bell painted. But since the hirsute '60s, beards have been banned at the conservative Mormon campus. "They thought it was a conflict of codes," says Bell, who complied and gave his portrait—done for the campus directory—a closer shave.

Student leaders, however, took the opportunity to criticize BYU rules, which prohibit any hairstyle on chin or pate that would draw "undue attention." The story inspired a special edition of the student newspaper headlined CENSORSHIP: DOES BYU HAVE A RESTRAINING HAND? and attracted unwelcome publicity off campus. Both Bell and BYU said the fuss was unwarranted. "Everything made it appear that I was violated as an artist, and that just wasn't true," says Bell. Those who want to see what Maeser really looked like in his hairy days, meanwhile, can always visit the campus statue that memorializes him—beard intact.

Troubling stubble: BYU artist Bell with clean-cut Maeser

GEORGE FREY



Dealing With Bomb Threats

Bomb threats are a fact of life for many big institutions, but Oklahoma State may have achieved some sort of record: 44 threats in the last five years. In addition to disrupting classrooms and dormitories, the threats carry a hefty price tag—about \$330,000 in overtime pay for security forces alone.

Officials at OSU say that some of the threats are phoned in by students who try to disrupt exams. Three years ago police solved the case of a bomb threat in the physical-sciences classroom building after interviewing a professor who was scheduled to give a test there that day. When they found out that one of his students was failing the course, they questioned him—and found their culprit. Over the last five years, police have arrested five students for making bomb threats; all were convicted and paid fines of at least \$500.

Bomb threats have become so common at OSU that officials are reluctant to evacuate a building unless they strongly suspect that someone has really planted a bomb—a policy that makes many students uneasy. "The police are thinking there's only a one in a million instance where a bomb exists," says senior journalism major Greg Blanchard. "But I never want to be in that minority."

Duels Over Divestment

Divestment campaigners at Syracuse want to put their money where their mouths are. After denouncing the board of trustees' refusal to completely divest holdings in companies that do business in South Africa, the Syracuse Student Government Association announced it would police stu-