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years old, the minimum age required to get a GED. Marks-Fife said.

While the younger students live in various dorms, many older students commute to classes from off campus.

"It's been difficult for 28 to 29-year-olds in the dorms," Marks-Fife said.

This year HEP students on campus reside in Hamilton Complex, intermingled with

University students — one of the program's goals, Marks-Fife said.

HEP students in the dorms are required to follow Housing Department rules, in addition to HEP rules, Marks-Fife said. For example, use of alcohol or drugs by the program students is grounds for dismissal, he said.

Efforts at eliminating social isolation of HEP students has

met with mixed success, Marks-Fife said.

"If you look at the entire campus, it's probably pretty unsuccessful," he said. "But I would say it's at a pretty successful rate on an individual basis."

"What's difficult is most dorm students are here for a year, and my students are here for 10 weeks, and then a whole brand-new set comes in the next term," Marks-Fife said. "So as the friendships are made with University students on an ongoing basis, these people come in and feel a little isolated because by winter or spring term there's a lot going on they're not part of. I think the fall term is easier because everybody's brand-new."

In addition, dorm life often presents certain other difficulties for the HEP students.

"It's hard to study in dorms," due to constant dorm activity, said HEP student An-

gelica Nunez.

"We're a minority program on a predominantly white middle-class campus and we stick out," Marks-Fife said, adding that some of that sticking out has run into racial and economic preconceptions and prejudices.

However, "for the most part we've been left untouched and unbothered. It allows us to do what we do but it keeps us isolated much of the time."

"A lot of students feel racism at the University," said University work-study student Kimberley Lyons.

However, Nunez said she had experienced "no difficulties" at the University.

Overall, Marks-Fife said the "Eugene atmosphere is very conducive," to the program, although there aren't "many opportunities in Eugene for anyone, let alone a GED graduate."

Most of the students come from Oregon outside the Eugene area, although the Hispanic population in town is getting larger, Marks-Fife said.

The program only lasts a term for students because it is the most effective way of serving the most people for the funds available, in addition to agricultural and family income considerations, Marks-Fife said.

"The ideal is for a full year, but (this) is the way the grant and the (University) terms are set up," he added.

However, Marks-Fife doesn't feel the program students are being shortchanged. "We're getting good time spent. With the type of students we have we're getting pretty good progress, because it's intensified," he said.

Moreover, the program has an average class size of 10 to 12 students, Lyons said.

"This year 34 University students are here working either as work study, through ESCAPE, or volunteering their time, and it grows all the time, because people have a definite interest in this culture and what's going on," Marks-Fife said.

"We teach everything bilingually and multi-culturally," Marks-Fife said.

He defined multi-cultural as "toleration, respect and understanding of all cultures, (and) taking issues and looking at them from different cultural

perspectives."

For example, "take American history and look at it from a different perspective," Marks-Fife said, citing the Alamo as an example.

Cultural sensitivity is emphasized, he said, adding that "people tend to lump a number of cultures together with the word 'Hispanic,'" when in fact there are a lot of different cultures.

The courses taught in HEP include science, literature, social studies, grammar, math, reading comprehension, career development, along with an introductory computer class and an elective. The program also brings in outside speakers, and provides extracurricular enrichment including tours, LCC training shops and career fairs.

The fall term class will hold its graduation ceremony at the EMU Forum Room Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. The ceremony is open to the public.

About 80 percent of the HEP students graduate from the program, Marks-Fife said, adding that because of that high percentage, 35 to 40 percent go on to higher education of some sort, "because this is what we push."

Oriol Vall, a student from Barcelona, Spain, said the program has "helped me to know what I can do after this (HEP), to make plans and how to get information."

Vall added that he plans to attend LCC and then the University.

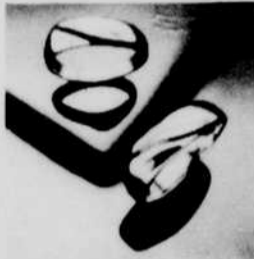
Nunez said the program also has given her an idea of what she wants to do with her future, and she plans to attend Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton next year.

"And they (HEP students) do pretty well at it. They're highly motivated to get some education," Marks-Fife said.

"You don't see a lazy student in the class," Lyons said. "It's almost like a gift for them to come here."

"We don't have attendance, discipline or motivation problems," Marks-Fife said. "The problem is they want extra classes and more tutoring, and I don't have the resources to teach them all they'd like to learn."


"It's why I work in alternative education," Marks-Fife said. "It just makes it a nice place to work."



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