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ETS limits GRE computer tests

Amy Columbo
Oregon Daily Emerald

Availability of the Graduate Record Examination in computerized form has been reduced because of concern that students can cheat on the test.

The Educational Testing Service, which administers the national standardized admissions test for graduate schools, made the announcement after an investigation by the national Kaplan Educational Centers.

"There were rumors on the computer bulletin board that folks were cheating," said Dave Favreault, manager of the Eugene Kaplan study center.

He said the coaching service's investigation included 20 people who took the test and were able to recreate a large majority of the test after taking it because of the small pool of questions asked. Kaplan presented the results to ETS on Dec. 9.

Since then, the ETS has filed a lawsuit alleging Kaplan violated copyright and electronic communication privacy laws in its investigation.

"ETS is trying to divert attention away from the security flaws by shooting the messenger," said Jonathan Grayer, Kaplan president and chief executive officer. "Suing us doesn't stop the fact that the test is easily compromised."

The ETS has announced it wants to eliminate the pencil and paper form of the GRE by 1997 and replace it with the computerized version.

"They were planning to eliminate the paper and pencil version altogether, but this really throws a wrench in the works for ETS," Favreault said.

"If this test is somehow susceptible to being cheated on, it undermines the whole (graduate school) admissions process," he said.

Favreault said by ETS offering the test in one week intervals, it allows the testing service to develop a new set of questions.

Students can take the test from now until Jan. 21. After that, the dates tentatively are: Jan. 30-Feb. 4, March 6-11, April 3-8, May 1-6 and June 5-10.

The computerized version of the GRE is more expensive than the standard pencil and paper form, but the benefit is the speed in which a student knows his/her score.

The cost of the pencil and paper version is \$56 and the computerized version is \$96. It takes six weeks to process scores for the traditional paper and pencil form, but with the computer version a student can find out his or her score immediately after taking the test.

David Espinoza, psychometrist for the University testing center, said computerized GRE testing makes "a lot of sense." He would like to see the University testing center become a computer-based learning center.

"It would make a whole lot more sense to me, if folks could come here and take it," Espinoza said.

Three years ago when the ETS announced the GRE would be offered via computer, he contacted the ETS to find out how to convert the testing center. But they wanted to try it through a national testing service first.

For now the testing service offers only the written version. A student can take the computerized version through the Sylvan Learning Center.

BUDGET

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plan."

He said the University will continue to work to increase productivity according to the University Productivity Plan. Frohnmayer said increasing class size is not part of the plan.

David Conley, associate professor in education policy and management, said, "The ideas for productivity go way beyond bigger classes."

STAFFORD

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ills," said Sean C. Morgan, a senior in journalism. "My rent's late and I haven't bought books yet."

While the University hasn't notified the particular students about the delay, Morgan said when he noticed the lack of loan money on his monthly billing statement, the University business office seemed apologetic about the delay.

"They told me they knew it was a legitimate signature but for whatever reason, the (Department of Education) didn't buy it," Morgan said.

Students who are having trouble paying their bills as a result of the delay can talk to a financial aid advisor about getting interim or temporary loans, said Carol Richard, assistant director of Office of Student Financial Aid. She added the loans would be free of service charges.

In addition to the standard \$200 emergency loan available to all students, Richard said if students are still not able to pay for the essentials, they should talk to a financial aid advisor for further assistance.

Out of the 56 students affected, Richard said she knows of about five students who needed and received temporary loans.

As the Stafford loans are usually additional pieces of aid for students, Heiss said he doesn't think the delay is affecting that many students.

"But if the amount is so great to cover all of a student's costs, then there is much more of an impact than if they only had a \$200 loan, for example," Heiss said.

The Federal Direct Stafford Loan Program began at the University only last fall. Heiss said he's not anticipating similar problems next fall when the University again submits 6,000 to 7,000 more promissory notes.

"I believe (the department) has changed their procedures as a result of this, so I don't think we will see any more of this," Heiss said. "I would be surprised if it happens in the future. Since the 56 that were initially refused, the department hasn't rejected any of the thousands more promissory notes we have sent."

The Department of Education was not available for comment Thursday or Friday.

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