

University hosts computerized testing site on campus

GRE, GMAT and TOEFL tests on computer are offered by Testing Services

By Tricia Schwennesen
Oregon Daily Emerald

Standardized testing is changing all over the world.

What was once a challenge of rising early to attend a mass testing at a preordained site with two No. 2 pencils in hand is no more.

Students can schedule individual appointments to take the Graduate Record Exam, the Graduate Management Admission Test or the Test of English as a Foreign Language by computer.

The University Testing Office got the OK from Educational Testing Services, a national company that devises standardized tests, to be an institutional testing site for computer-based testing. Testing began about three weeks ago.

"There was a long-standing tradition of a cooperative effort between Educational Testing Service and colleges and universities," David Espinoza, a psychometrist in the testing office. "When ETS converted to the computer-based test, it chose to enter into an agreement with Sylvan Learning Systems to administer the tests."

Sylvan Learning System's testing centers are independently-owned franchises located throughout the United States.

"Sylvan is the sole commercial provider for computer-based testing," said Kevin Gonzalez, spokesman for ETS. "They still are — exclusively."

Colleges and universities have always been part of the testing program but on a smaller scale, Gonzalez said.

Jill Noland, owner of the Eugene Sylvan Learning Center, said the University testing site isn't really competition and will probably have no effect on the number of people who take the standardized tests through Sylvan.

"Sylvan gives 700 different tests," Noland said. "We deliver a lot more professional exams than the University will."

Too few test sites drove ETS to form a task force.

"The task force decided on 100 institutional sites," Espinoza said. "It created an opening for schools to become centers."

Espinoza said the University applied to become one of the institutional test sites and was approved in March.

"We think it's a great thing, and when you look at it, there's not many schools involved," he said.

Having a test site on campus is more convenient for students, Noland said.

"I think it gives more students an opportunity, and it gives anybody their own date and time to take the test," she said.

About 60 colleges and universities are new sites, and there were about 40 campus sites established as part of the pilot program.

In January, the TOEFL became exclusively a computer-based test while the GRE has slowly phased in computer-based testing while phasing out paper-and-pencil testing.

"The idea was to be on-line by September," Espinoza said. "We weren't able to meet that deadline but we came pretty close."

Educational Testing Services, a national company that devises standardized tests, began piloting the GRE computer test in 1993.

"Before that everyone took the test with paper and pencil," Espinoza said. "As they became more successful they cut back on the number of paper and pencil dates and added more computer dates."

There are still limited dates on which students can take the GRE with paper and pencil instead of the computer.

Some students may feel greater

anxiety about taking a test on the computer, Espinoza said.

"The way the testing is done is completely different than anything they've ever done," he said.

There is a tutorial available for students who are concerned about testing on the computer, he said.

"The computer skills involved are no more than pointing and clicking," he said. "The current generation of students is much more confident with testing on the computer."

Espinoza said the one disadvantage to testing on the computer is the test-takers' inability to go back to a previously answered question.

"You're sitting there in front of a computer system and then boom, it's gone," he said. "You don't get to reconsider the question."

Greater convenience, immediate test results and adaptive questioning are advantages to testing on the computer.

The test begins with questions from a large pool that are in the middle range of difficulty. Depending on the test-taker's answers, the computer adapts to the test-taker's skill level.

Students also have the ability to retest promptly.

"It does cost you every time you take the test, but with paper and

Computerized testing

Even though the new computer based standardized tests are eliminating paper, proctors, and the need to rent rooms the cost for the tests has gone up. Some people would say test costs cover the expense of the new network and surveillance systems.

THE COSTS:

GMAT— as of Jan 1997 \$85 up to \$150
GRE—prior to 1998 about \$60 up to \$96
TOEFL—\$55 up to \$100

Previous costs are for tests taken with paper and pencil.

pencil you have to test only on the days that it's offered," Espinoza said.

The test site is a remodeled room in the Student Health Center. The five computer work stations are sectioned off into private cubicles, but the surveillance cameras and three parabolic mirrors help keep test-takers honest.

Students can make appointments to take the GRE, GMAT or the TOEFL by calling the testing center at 346-2772.

Internship information available at center

The Career Center helps students find internships through counseling and an updated database

By Cindy Lundeen
for the Emerald

Just ask the staff at the University Career Center, and they will tell you everything you need to know about pursuing an internship. They will also tell you the time to begin pursuing one is now.

Deadlines will vary for internships, but many are due soon for the next two terms. Also, the deadline for proposing an alternative internship for winter term is Nov. 20.

The Career Center, 244 Hendricks, offers career-related services to all University students. And to help students prepare for internships, the staff is holding several orientation meetings in the coming weeks. Orientations provide specific internship descriptions and a chance for students to sign up for interviews.

The center carries updated information on internships from the local to international level. Tina Songer, career information specialist, maintains volumes of hard copy and Web page versions of in-

ternship notices.

"If students are unsure how to begin their search, I could be one of the first staff members they are directed to," Songer said.

Students may review notices during the center's hours from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Web site is available to anyone at uocareer.uoregon.edu.

If the internships posted through the center aren't appealing, staff will help students develop their own internship. The student will work closely with an advisor to create a proposal for an alternative internship.

"We try to give students the tools and resources to come up with their own internship if they're not finding anything in our listings," Songer said.

Students can get both academic credit and job experience through internships, said Beth Pfeiffer, assistant director of internships at the center. The center can grant some upper-division elective credit, but upper-division credit specific to a major must be approved through that department.

Pfeiffer said the process can be confusing, and students need to be sure they understand what kind of credit they will end up with at the

Meetings

All orientation sessions will be held in 12 Hendricks. For more information, contact the Career Center at 346-3235.

■ Thursday, Nov. 5, 3:30-4:30 p.m.
■ Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2-3 p.m.
■ Thursday, Nov. 13, 1-2 p.m.

end of the internship.

"Students need to be resourceful and informed in gathering information from the departments and the Career Center," Pfeiffer said.

But the experience is worth it. Pfeiffer said internships make students more competitive in the job market because employers are looking for graduates with some kind of experience. Regardless of grade point average, an internship or two on a resume may mean the difference between getting a job or not.

Internship orientation meetings will be held 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Thursday; 2 to 3 p.m. on Nov. 10; and 1 to 2 p.m. on Nov. 13. All meetings will be held in 12 Hendricks. For more information, contact the Career Center at 346-3235.

Astronauts retrieve satellite with pictures of sun

By Marcia Dunn
The Associated Press

SPACE CENTER, Houston — Two days after setting it free, space shuttle Discovery's astronauts retrieved a satellite brimming with hundreds of blazing images of the sun Tuesday.

The smooth capture was a vindication of sorts for NASA, which botched an earlier attempt to use the satellite, Spartan, during a flight last year.

Shuttle commander Curtis Brown Jr. pulled up alongside Spartan, and Stephen Robinson slowly latched onto the 1 1/2-ton satellite with the shuttle robot arm as the spacecraft soared some 340 miles above South America.

"Got a good grapple of Spartan," Robinson reported.

"Great job," Mission Control

replied.

There was no immediate word from Discovery on whether John Glenn broke away from his geriatric research to watch the capture. On Sunday, he peered over his crewmates' shoulders with delight when Spartan was released from the shuttle.

"To be up here and see a satellite launched from a satellite is quite an experience," the 77-year-old senator said.

Back on Earth, Ohio voters elected Gov. George Voinovich to the Senate seat Glenn vacated.

The last time Spartan flew, last November, it tumbled out of control because of crew errors, and two spacewalking astronauts had to go out and haul it in. Not a single solar observation was obtained. Engineers revamped Spar-

tan's software and improved crew training.

"I think today we really saw the flight program hit the ball out of the park," mission manager Craig Tooley said. "I don't think it could have gone any better."

NASA expects some 1,400 images of the sun's outer atmosphere, or corona, and the charged particles streaming off the sun's surface. About 500 images already have been beamed down to ground controllers, including high-quality pictures of at least one solar eruption.

A jubilant Richard Fisher, the mission scientist, said the eruption involved 1 billion tons of charged particles — enough to fill 10,000 super oil tankers — hurtling out into space at nearly 700,000 mph.

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