

University women producing better grades than men

People disagree about whether the statistic is valid or coincidental

By Erin Snelgrove
Oregon Daily Emerald

For decades, the battle of the sexes has ensued. In the category of academics, University women are the reigning champions.

Success can be measured by different methods. When it comes to school, a commonly accepted method is the grade-point average. Comparing the scores of men and women, the females are championing the academic scene.

According to the Office of the Registrar's Profile of Students, the number of females entering the University with 4.0 GPAs is nearly double that of men and has been so since 1995.

This trend of academic superiority continues during college as

well. Women have consistently earned higher GPAs than men at the University. However, the grade gap is not as great.

Although no one can give an answer for why the trend is occurring, everyone has an opinion. Some maintain that the data is coincidental, others declare men and women learn differently.

Susan Lesyk, the director for the Center for Academic Learning Services, said she believes the difference between male and female academic performance relates to how gender roles have changed.

"My opinion is that for the past decade there has been a shift in what women are taught to expect from themselves," Lesyk said. "Now women know their minds are worth more than their appearances. Because of the belief, they devote more energy towards receiving an education."

Lesyk said the discrepancies

between the grades can also be traced to the differences in childhood behavior. As a mother of a son and a daughter and as a classroom volunteer, Lesyk has seen dramatic differences in gender behavior in school.

While working in her daughter's classroom, Lesyk has seen how boys and girls each apply themselves to assignments.

"The boys tend to want immediate gratification," Lesyk said. "When doing a math problem, they wouldn't show all the steps they took to reach the answers, even though the teachers requested the information. The girls, though, listened to the teacher and followed the directions."

Chelsea Cochran, a University senior, said she is an A student. She agrees with Lesyk's views about why women have recently been gaining academic success. "Women are now more accepted

in the workplace," Cochran said. "They used to only see themselves as wives and homemakers, but now they know they can do more. By working hard, they can be anything they want to be."

Jonas Allen is a junior who has consistently maintained a 4.0 GPA while at the University. He said he hadn't noticed whether women or men receive higher grades. However, he does have a theory on the subject.

"I think guys tend to devote their energies to sports while girls engage in academic-oriented activities," Allen said. "For myself, I've been motivated to get good grades because I've always been pushed to do so. I went to a private high school when I was younger, and good grades were expected."

Allen said he also works for academic excellence because he wants to have a successful future.

"I had taken a year off from college after high school," Allen said. "During that time, I realized I didn't want to be flipping burgers for the rest of my life. I came back to school with increased motivation."

Laurene Larson, a senior coun-

selor at South Eugene High School, finds the Profile of Students statistic hard to believe. She said South's graduating class consists of an equal number of men and women who have an outstanding academic standing.

"I find the statistic to be very surprising," Larson said. "It doesn't corroborate with what I see at South."

Diana Vranas, a counselor at North Eugene High School, said she has seen a difference in grade performance where she works. Unlike the students at South, nine out of ten seniors at North who score in the top 5% of the class are women.

"I don't know why this trend is taking place," Vranas said. "However, grades by themselves don't mean that much to me. The quality of the courses and their difficulty also needs to be taken into consideration."

Despite the grade gaps between men and women, Steve Stolp, an associate director of the Office of Academic Advising, said he believes anyone can receive good grades with hard work and determination.

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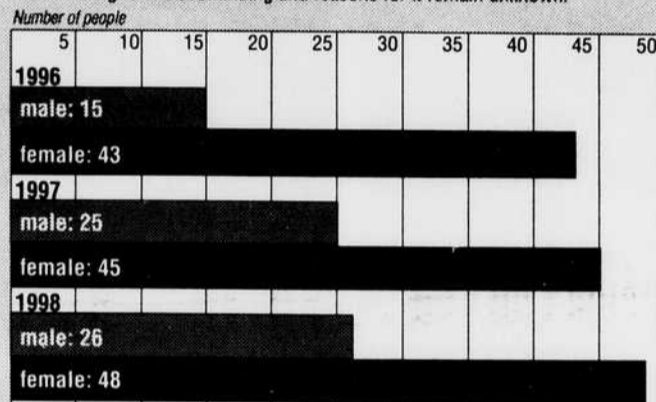
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Who makes the grade?

Profile of entering students with a 4.0 GPA

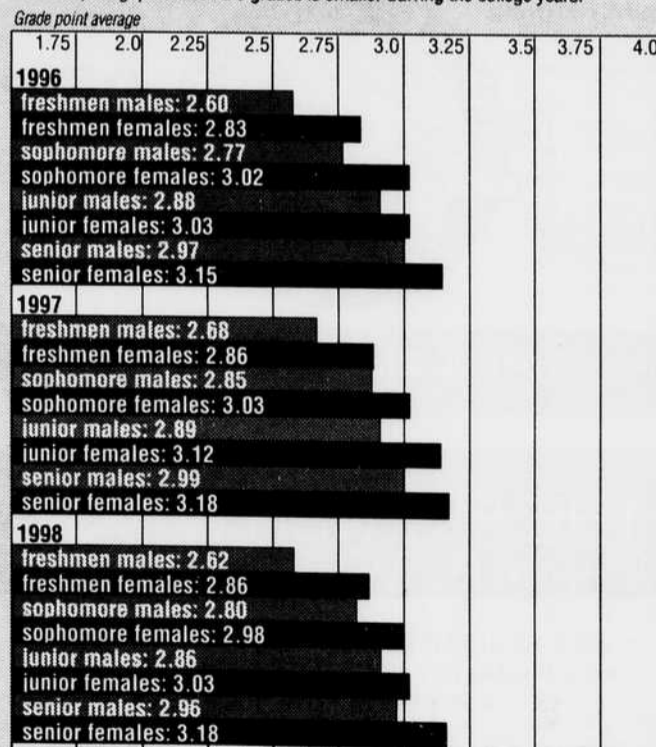
More women than men have been entering the University with 4.0 GPAs. The trend shows no signs of discontinuing and reasons for it remain unknown.



SOURCE: Fall Fourth Week Statistical Files from 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998

Average GPAs by class level and sex

Even after entering the University, women continue to earn better grades than men. However, the gap between the grades is smaller during the college years.



SOURCE: University Resource Management Office

Katie Nesse/Emerald

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