

LIFE... IS A DREAM

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DEBT

continued from page 1

"It increases the amount of time it takes people to graduate," he said. Senior Nathan McNary said he has spent six years working toward his undergraduate degree, an extended period due to working 40 to 60 hours a week. He said working so many hours to defray costs didn't always give him enough time to study, but living on a tight budget is just part of being a student. "I think it's just what you got to do when you're in college," he said.

Bickford said students need to face the reality of their financial situation, even if it means passing up that decaffeinated latte every day. She said when people cut down on minor expenses it can translate into less educational debt.

Junior Jessie Dabney said she plans to graduate with a \$14,000 to \$15,000 debt after two years at the University. She said she doesn't like to think about her accruing debt, especially when future job placement is uncertain.

"It's a little overwhelming," she said, adding that she does what she

can to limit spending such as bringing her own lunch to school and not participating in extracurricular activities.

Students can lighten their financial burden in several ways, Bickford said. She stressed the importance of budgeting for students on a fixed income.

"People don't keep track of their budgeting," she said. "They're not keeping track of the small things."

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailymerald.com.

GRADES

continued from page 1

The Lundquist College of Business established a set of grading guidelines in fall 2002 for professors to ensure standardized grading. The guidelines call for professors to ensure overall class GPAs fall within set models, depending on the type of class.

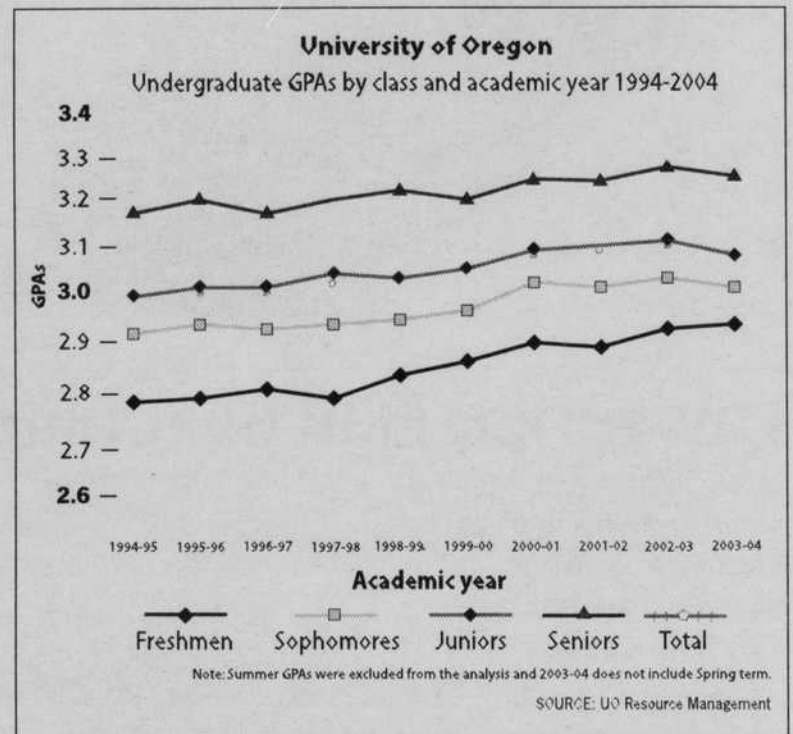
Wendy Mitchell, the business school's assistant dean of undergraduate programs, said the guidelines — which aren't technically mandatory — were meant to guide new faculty members, standardize grading across multiple course sections and maintain academic standards.

"There are a lot of students who consider this important that we distinguish excellence from mediocrity," she said. Some students have even come to her asking how to get other departments to instill the policy, she added.

Mitchell said grade inflation is a problem in all educational institutions because many teachers feel pressure for their students to succeed in an increasingly competitive world.

"It's endemic to the system," she said.

Davis agreed some pressure may come from students feeling the need to succeed, which could cause faculty



to lower the bar.

Grade inflation has also been debated on a national scale for years, and last month officials at Princeton University proposed guidelines for faculty to follow when distributing grades, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education. One of the recommendations calls for faculty members to limit the number of A's to no more than 35 percent of grades in undergraduate courses.

Sociology Assistant Professor Ellen Scott said she doesn't believe in grading curves or guidelines; instead, she prefers using tough standards and high expectations to limit A's.

"I think I am known to be a hard grader," she said. On the other hand, if all of her students performed to the extent of being worthy of A's, she would not hesitate to give them all the grade, she added.

But Davis said even when many students perform well, there are still

ways to differentiate among them.

"Personally, I believe that there is a way to differentiate between levels of excellence," she said.

Scott said while there is no way to nail down the grade inflation problem on campus, she does notice that many students expect to earn higher grades without much effort.

"There are those of us who resist the tendency to inflate grades, and when we do, our students seem surprised and angry," she said.

Stahl said he has also received occasional complaints from students who say a B grade should be the new average, but for now he is sticking with the C.

"When I went to college, a C was average," he said. "I guess I'm just old-fashioned."

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CAMPUS BUZZ

Wednesday
Architecture Brown Bag Talk entitled "Career Options: Consulting with Public and Nonprofit Organizations," Hendricks Hall, noon.
CSWS Brown Bag entitled "Poems for a Wild Place: Reflections on the Landscape, People and History of Oregon's Rogue River Canyon," Room 330, Hendricks Hall, noon-1 p.m.
Student Travel Fund Presentation by planning, public policy and management and international studies GTF Holly LeMasurier, Room 206, Lawrence Hall, noon-1 p.m.

Chinese Film Series featuring "The Duel," Room 115, Pacific Hall, 4-6 p.m. English subtitles.
Romance Languages Lecture entitled "Patriarchism in the Hispanic World," Room 159, Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, 4-6:50 p.m.
Exploring the "Zine" Scene presentation, Special Collections, Second Floor Knight Library, 7 p.m.
Community Conversations entitled "Cult of Congregation?" Dyment Hall Lounge, Walton Complex, 7:30-9 p.m.
Poetry in Song performance by undergraduate students, Beall Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403
The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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