

## Proposed legislation eases requirements for student aid

Approximately 20 percent of the students at this College who qualify for federal financial aid because they didn't meet the residency requirements for independent status will qualify next year according to Financial Aid Specialist Ron Hoodye.

Proposed legislation would allow students to live with their parents a maximum of six weeks and still maintain their independent status. Previously students who lived at home for two consecutive weeks were considered ineligible.

"It hurt the person who went to school for nine months and then came home and got a job during the summer," Hoodye said. "It also hurt you if you went home for a break or just for a visit."

Hoodye feels that legislators have finally realized that the two week rule for living at home was unrealistic and have amended it for that.

He also agreed that the rules as they were made perjurers out of students who just didn't notify anyone when they went home for a two week break or to visit for two or three weeks during the summer. Congressman Les AuCoin (D.-3rd district) has introduced these amendments to the bill changing residency requirements that would alter the way independent status is determined:

Students would have to wait for only one year after their parents contributed to their support to be declared independent. Currently students must wait two years.

Students may receive financial assistance from their parents up to an amount equal to the federal income tax dependent deduction and be eligible for independent status.

These changes will make more students eligible for more money at the College, according to Hoodye.

If everyone who qualified for minimal assistance last year was to qualify, they would probably qualify for the maximum assistance under the new proposal," Hoodye said.

AuCoin has also introduced a proposal that calls for providing a non-refundable tax credit for one-half of post-secondary educational expenses up to a maximum of \$750. The credit would be targeted to families with an adjusted gross income ranging from \$9,000 to \$40,000.

AuCoin's legislation would address four different income levels:

For families below the \$9,000 per year income level, the bill provides that government grants and loans will be used to meet educational expenses.

For families with incomes between \$9,000 and \$15,000, the tax credit provided in the bill begins to rise according to a formula which is to be combined with a Basic Educational Opportunity Grant.

For incomes between \$15,000 and \$30,000, families would be eligible for the full tax credit amount.

For incomes between \$30,000 and \$40,000, families would be eligible for a tax credit which drops one percent for every \$100 earned over the \$30,000 level.



Photo by Ted McKenna

Local second grade students celebrate spring with a visit to the College's Environmental Learning Center's Ecology Pond. The baby

ducks recently joined the babyneutrias to increase the ELC's nursery.

## Board approval sought

# Guided Studies program opens door to learning

The open door policy is the philosophy behind community colleges today, said Kent Heaton, college counselor. In order for these institutions to remain viable, in effect, the colleges must retain its students.

Previously, students lacking the academic skills would enroll in the College and find that they could not compete with the academically favored students in terms of progress in the classroom, Heaton said. In the following semester,

"The vanishing student" will become extinct if the present Guided Studies program is approved by the school board this year, Heaton said.

"When a student decides to enroll in the College, we will

require him/her to take a placement test consisting of math, reading and English skills," Heaton said. Many of these students have settled upon a definite major but many of them cannot apply the basic academic fundamentals of math, reading, and English necessary to complete their major.

"Guided Studies is a program designed for those students who lack these necessary academic skills," Heaton said.

The College, realizing the problem after many students were "disappearing" after one term of school, acknowledged the need for something which could solve this, Heaton said. After considerable study and research into this problem, Heaton

said that he employed Guided Studies into the College.

"Our objective in Guided Studies is to put out a competent graduate who can do the job they were supposedly trained to be able to do," he said.

Before, there were three main reasons for students leaving the College and not returning for the following semester. "One is that many of these students had no definite objective in mind. Secondly, nobody really cared about their needs, and thirdly, they lacked the basic academic skills," Heaton said. "It was just one more failure added to their lives."

Guided Studies will help the students learn about themselves, others and help them adapt to the College's environment as well

as society in general, Heaton said.

"The major point of the College is to keep students in the school and make them both successful as responsible human beings and successful in their occupational interest," he said.

Guided Studies will also revise classroom study format, Heaton said. "Before Guided Studies was established, the instructor planned his course of study before the actual class was to begin. The class was prepared to touch on subjects interesting to both the intellectual student, the average student and the academically unfavored student. The instructor then focused his course objective toward the average student, thereby touching on a little of everything. This caused boredom for the intellec-

tual student and confusion for the low skilled student.

Guided Skills should eliminate a little of this by consolidating the low students in a designed course of study, enabling the instructors as well as the intellectual students the chance to venture deeper into more sophisticated material, Heaton said.

"This does not mean that the low skilled students will be treated as refuse, it means that they will now be able to become better familiarized with course material pertaining to their major before returning to their necessary courses of study," he said.

"The students are thinking people. The consensus of the students as well as the non-Guided Studies students is that the program is needed," Heaton said.

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