

## Roberts accepts new post

**Denise Kline**  
**The Print**  
James Roberts, former associate dean of student activities, was appointed to succeed Len Monroe as dean of students at Wednesday's board of education meeting. Monroe resigned from the post in December. Roberts' qualifications speak for themselves. He began at the College 10 years ago, and worked extensively with student activities as well as financial aid since then. During his time with student activities, Roberts was adviser

for the Associated Student Government. Mitch Newton, former ASG senator who was able to work very closely with Roberts on several occasions, has found him to be a "very understandable and reliable person, someone students can depend on."

When asked how he felt about the new position, Roberts replied, "I am really excited and enthusiastic about this job. The excitement is equal to that of my very first teaching job."

Roberts has many projects that he would like to work on, including student retention,

enrollment management, and the guided studies program. Roberts would like to get these programs working so that they will be more beneficial to the students.

He will be holding a workshop Thursday and Friday with student support staff to establish priorities in areas such as counseling and financial aid.

Roberts has been involved in education since 1957 when he took his first teaching position at Thorby-Gardner Junior High. Roberts was with Oregon City Senior High for eight years, four of which he served



**New dean of students Jim Roberts. Photo by Duffy Coffman.**

as vice principal. He then accepted a position as principal of Molalla High School for three years before coming to the College.

Don Porter, ASG president, expresses some regret in losing Roberts as an adviser, but says he is very happy for Roberts in his new position.

## Part II Teachers speak on grading

**Sandy Carter**  
**The Print**  
**Second in a series**  
**Last week's report outlined several contributing factors to grade inflation at CCC. Today's entry continues in the same vein, adding a cross section of typical comments on the present value of specific grades and grades in general.**

**How do teachers feel about having to give grades? Listen:**  
"I think a lot of teachers are afraid that if they give decent grades no one will take their classes," says Don Epstein, history instructor. "Students wouldn't take their grades personally. Grades aren't a reflection of your moral character, your diligence!"  
"I don't like grading," says Chuck Adams, English instructor

records, concurs: "A lot of people perceive grades as punitive," he says, then adds, "but I'm not sure society's ready to give up grades."

From the administration standpoint, John Hooley, chairman of humanities and social science, sees an irony in instructors' responses to their own periodic evaluations. "Interestingly," he says, "when it comes to teachers' evaluations, the teachers don't like to be graded."

Putting together a clear picture from the fragments is difficult.

Adams says that the various departments set their own grading standards.

On this, Hooley says, "At times students will gravitate to the teacher who gives the 'automatic B,' and the other instructors get their noses out of joint." Low enrollment doesn't look good on an instructor's evaluation, so teachers within a department tend to police each other into relative uniformity, according to Hooley.

"Teachers are very nervous about people telling them how to grade," says Shirley Cressler, science instructor, in whose department the subject matter lends itself to objective evaluation.

Florence Lee, teacher in the same department, says simply, "An 'A' means the student has mastered 90 percent of the material," but a closer look reveals some variables, even in the clear-cut realm of science. Admits Lee, "How much you can teach depends a lot on the students. You can't start at point D if they're back trying to figure out point A."

Cressler agrees. "In my zoology," she explains, "I always wait to make out a syllabus until I see who I've got in the class, in terms of science background. You have to start where they are." This is possible in a class where there are less than a dozen students, she says.

If the basis for grading is not cut and dried, neither is the actual definition of the letter grades. Take "A," for example:

—Science's "A" is mastery of 90 percent of the given material as shown by objective testing.

—Humanities' "A" is determined mostly by subjective evaluation. ("How do you judge creativity?" asks Hooley.)

—English's "A," according to Adams, is "superduper!"

—English's "A," according to Unwin, is "excellent work, but not necessarily no errors."

—English's "A," when Hooley last taught it five years ago, was "the work not only done, but showing a higher level of ability and intelligence: that 'something extra!'"

—History's "A," according to Epstein, means "excellent work, well thought out in relationship to the course requirements, showing a high degree of skill in writing and organization."

Obviously, grading standards vary from division to division, department to department, and instructor to instructor. Subject matter may vary from class to class or term to term.

Older students ("Our great strength," says Hooley. "They

take it a little more seriously,") generally speaking, do well in the more intimate relationships at a community college. Many young students, unsure of their path in life, try it and don't like it.

Dropouts take the "Ds" and "Fs" they would have earned with them, leaving, for all practical purposes, a three-point rather than a five-point grading system. Yet "C" remains recognized as average, except by Epstein, who considers it "the minimum acceptable grasp of the subject matter."

What can be done? According to Unwin, "What we need is a five-point scale on which we use all five points." To her, the "ideal system" would yield a "written description of the students' abilities."

Is there an ideal system? Hooley says, "If we had a better way, we'd be doing it." But according to Epstein, the faculty's Academic Affairs Committee has recommended the adoption of a new grading system, which would modify the present five-letter structure. This system could make report cards more representative of actual grade-book averages. The recommendation, discussed at last May's faculty meeting, has not been heard of since.

Given the ambiguity surrounding the traditional "A" to "F" grading system, do grades continue to mean anything to prospective employers?

Cressler responds, "Oh, yeah. We get calls for recom-

mendations all the time, but that's where the subjective evaluation comes in."

Hooley says flatly, "No. Employers don't look at grades. I think employers are kind of in tune with grade inflation. Attendance is more likely to be something they're interested in."

Unwin questions, "Am I being unfair to my students (by grading traditionally) in the face of rising cultural averages? How will an employer know that the 'C' student may have earned in my class could be worth as much as a 'B' somewhere else?"

Do employers really look at grades? Chuck Adams says, "I'm not convinced that they ever did."

"Grades are certainly important to the students who aim at professional schools or postgraduate degrees," he says, "but even in those cases it's not so much the grade (or degree) itself that's important, but the amount of motivation and determination it indicates."

Apparently, the skeleton of inflated grades is in the CCC family closet, but its presence is no secret.

A haunting question remains: How can CCC shut the door on the specter of grade inflation, when the basic qualities which make a community college a pleasant place to learn also make it a hotbed for "A"s and "B"s?

**NEXT WEEK: Student response, and is there still interest in a new grading system?**

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