In computer system
Safety measures guard student records

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Of The Print

Clackamas Community College has upgraded its computer capabilities to keep up with the management of information about its students and curriculum, but as it updates, are traditional safeguards to protect the student's right to privacy being observed? Is personal information too easy to get hold of? Will the addition of terminals to the "mainframe" college computer system enable more people to take a look at what a random student is

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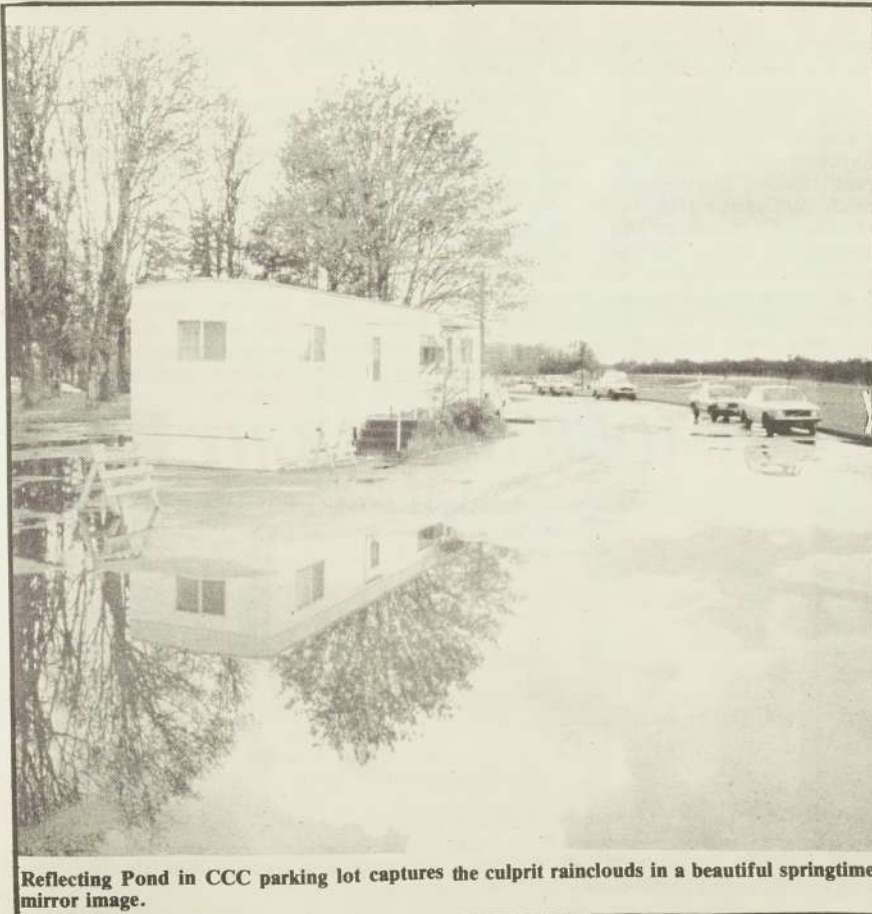
doing, or how he is doing in school? Will financial records of students remain confidential? This report on the proliferation of technology on campus investigates these questions.

Chuck Adams, registrar at the College, and the one chiefly responsible for the security of student records, said recently the proper management of student records is his highest concern since the new computer system was installed.

He also said the security of the system revolves around a series of safety techniques, which include an automatic sign-off, which terminates any access to the computer if there has not been any activity on the keyboard for 20 seconds. Passwords are also constantly changed to hamper illicit entrance into the system, and the timing of those changes are known only to Adams, and are not scheduled. "I would tell you how often I change the passwords, except that I have to vary that just like everything else," Adams said.

"We in the Registrar's office have a heavy responsibility to maintain the accuracy and privacy of a student's records," he said. "Because of that responsibility, we have designed a number of safety features into the mainframe system," Adams said.

"The biggest threat to the system's security is the person who either wants to get a student's records to alter them and perhaps harm the individual's record of good standing, or the person who wants to get his hands on records to use them for his own purposes, like producing a fraudulent transcript," Adams said.

"Aside from discouraging those who want to defraud the system by making it hard to gain access, we also limit the flow of important information in the first place," he added. "For instance, academic information can only be obtained through three terminals; one in my office, one over in the Financial Aid Office and one in the veteran's office.

"Those people who only need to gain limited access to a student's records for the purposes of, say, registering the student for a new term of classes, has only the primary level of a dual-level password system," Adams said.

"They may not gain any information on the student's past performance or his financial aid status, which is why when you register, you have to present that handful of paperwork to the gal at the terminal, to let her know that you are a financial aid student. If we operated on a single level password system, she wouldn't need a shred of paper," he added.

The three terminals that do have access to the student's private records are pretty secure. Adams said that "people just don't walk into my office and use my equipment, for instance, but even if they did, each of the three terminals has its own code that must be entered before the information is accessed. Like I said before, we have tried to make the system as secure as possible."

According to a survey conducted by this paper, students at the College are not really concerned about the security of their personal information, and Adams attributes this confidence in the system to the good track record the College has had. "If we had a reputation for sending incorrect transcripts to other colleges or employers, or had a history of record fraud, then the students would be concerned. As it is, things around here are going pretty well. Of course, as soon as I say that, something somewhere is bound to go wrong," he said. "I know one thing for sure," Adams said, "anything is possible. My job is to keep most of what is possible from happening. So far, it's working."

Reflecting Pond in CCC parking lot captures the culprit rainclouds in a beautiful springtime mirror image.

Friendship class upcoming

Making friends with members of the opposite sex does not have to be a struggle, two clinical social workers who will conduct a seminar on relationships Saturday, May 4 at Clackamas Community College say.

Marv Clifford and Carol Swanson, who also work in private practice counseling families and couples, will lead discussions about male/female friendships, expectations, sexuality, communication and the perception of others.

Clifford said the workshop will help men and women learn how to be friends without having to become romantically involved. Other topics of discussion include how to deal with one's feelings, how to listen and how to effectively share beliefs and values.