

Students enjoy B average

Study reveals high GPA at CCC

By Steve Williams
Staff Writer

According to the definition of the value each grade given to Clackamas Community College students, a "C" is average. This is all very well until one realizes that the average grade point for last term at CCC is 3.06 -- not exactly a "C" average. In fact, the lowest average grade point average (GPA) for any one term at CCC is 2.89 in the fall of 1970. The overall GPA for the last six years, including last term, is 3.07. The GPA has been above 3.00 every term since the fall of 1972. This doesn't necessarily mean that to get good grades at CCC is relatively easy though that might very well be true. One problem with the "good grades theory" is the high number of withdrawals taken by students instead of receiving "F's". 10.2 per cent of all grades in the previous six-year period were "W's" compared to .4 per cent of all grades being an "F". For example, if the withdrawals last term were counted as an "F", the overall GPA (previously 3.06) would be 2.67. This figure is unrealistically low since it doesn't count for legitimate withdrawals for reasons other than avoiding a bad grade. Even considering this lowest possible figure, withdrawals don't account for all of the alteration of the overall GPA above 3.00. Since the fall of 1972 more "A" grades have been given to CCC students than any other grade -- an average percentage of

29.5 per cent compared to 24.4 per cent for the grade of a "B", 14.2 per cent for a "C" and only 2 per cent for a "D".

In other words, the grades of "A" and "B" account for over half of all the grades given since 1972. There has to be some kind of explanation for this abundance of high grades.

One factor is the different grading philosophies of each teacher have effect on the higher overall GPA. Chuck Adams, CCC director of admissions, points out that many classes come in to his office with mostly "A" grades while others come in on a strict curve -- 5 per cent "A's" and 5 per cent "F's" -- with most grades falling in the "C" category.

These grading philosophies represent the two extremes of the spectrum and most teachers at CCC seem to lean toward the former.

GPA information at Portland Community College and the University of Oregon is unavailable, but at Oregon State University the average grade point of the freshmen and sophomore classes is only 2.54, GPA at Mt. Hood is 2.85, and at Portland State, it is a 3.0.

The main differences between community colleges and state universities falls under the intangible head of atmosphere since the Oregon State System of Higher Education guarantees that all of the material in the state schools is equal in difficulty. This atmosphere for learning is generated by several factors.

OSU has scheduled, in its science department, labs at different terms than the corresponding lectures in order to take advantage of the drop-out rate. This makes more room for lab students and cuts down on expenses.

At CCC, the science labs are part of the lecture classes and not scheduled for different terms. Also, science labs at CCC rarely have more than 20 students in one period.

The low student population at a community college is the main ingredient in advantages like accessibility to teachers, availability of educational equipment, such as audio visual aids, and individual help in the science, math and language labs.

The high GPA of students at Clackamas may be related to the small student-teacher ratio which nurture a pervading "high school" type atmosphere on campus. Other factors, such as the withdrawal rate, make small contributions.

The complete cause of higher grades at a community college compared to a four-year institution is debatable. However, it could "optimistically" be said that a "B" received at Clackamas Community College is closer to an "average" grade than it appears.

Automatic doors establish architectural barrier priority

Poor attendance hampered the success of second meeting between Dean of Students and Monroe and handicapped students held last week.

"We were hoping for direct input from more handicapped people," Monroe said. Despite an all-campus memo and a day's notice in the Today Bulletin, just 15 people attended the session. Only four were handicapped.

Better than twice those numbers took part in the first meeting, held Jan. 5. That discussion produced a list of 28 specific suggestions on Clackamas Community College facilities and the needs of the disabled.

Monroe relayed this information to the board of Education Jan. 12. The board followed by designating \$10,000 for immediate architectural improvements to aid the handicapped.

Upon allocating the money, the board asked the dean to consult further with the students about how it should be spent. Last week's meeting was held for that purpose.

Few conclusions could be made, however, because of the low turnout and a scheduling conflict that forced adjournment after 50 minutes of discussion. The group

did establish that the construction of automatic doors should be the top priority in short range remodeling plans.

Monroe said that another meeting would be held soon, both to talk more about the \$10,000 and to "do some prioritizing" in the area of long range needs.



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Clackamas Community College

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