The profs protest: Now that pupils are giving the grades, faculty reacts

by ALISON HARVEY

Student evaluations of faculty, introduced as a permanent feature of campus personnel policy last year, has been coming under fire recently from disgruntled faculty members.

The primary purpose of the evaluations, as set out in the Campus Administrative Manual, was to assist in improving the quality and effectiveness of the instructional program.

Complaints center on the validity of the concept of student evaluations and the reduction of results to a number in teachers' files.

Last spring, the faculty of the Economics Department requested the abolition of the evaluation procedure in a memo to Pres. Robert E. Kennedy and last month a study of the procedure was undertaken by the Personnel Committee of the Academic Senate.

For its overinclusion of student evaluations, the Academic Senate never should have accepted the guidelines.

The procedure results in a number (grade point average for each course and overall) the only number in promotional evaluations, according to Sennett, "No one knows what these numbers mean," he says.

Sennett says the evaluations were pushed through and are "a great disservice to the university." They are not doing what they were originally intended to do, he says, and the Academic Senate never should have accepted the guidelines.

Michael Pimentel of the Biology Department charges the existence of the evaluations force instructors to direct their efforts at fulfilling the requirements of the forms and not at what they consider good instructional quality.

"What," he asks, "is an instructor supposed to do? Create a pleasant environment or impart information?" Pimentel dismisses the evaluations as based mostly of extraneous factors that the students are not even aware of.

He came to this conclusion after a qualitative computer comparison of evaluation results and factors external to instructional quality. His study's astounding conclusion was that 68 per cent of evaluation results were influenced by extraneous factors.

Pimentel's study found that: teachers who insist on being called "Doctor" rated lower.

In all, Pimentel found 33 such external factors as influences in student evaluations. He sent copies of his study to President Kennedy, all the vice-presidents, department heads, and the Academic Senate with little result.

"Students have the misconception that student evaluations will have a positive influence on instruction, they only have a negative effect on instructor morale," concludes Pimentel.

Rather, said the Rodin study, "There is evidence that student evaluations in a large extent, tend to reflect the personal and social qualities of an instructor, 'who he is' rather than 'what he does.'"

This influence of teacher characteristics was also found in a more recent study by James and Chen-Lin Kullik of the University of Michigan, published in "Teaching of Psychology" magazine.

Their conclusions were that the

(continued on page 8)

Seeks Cuesta trustee post

Poly prof is candidate

by DAVID RICH

"Being a teacher, I'm a little more interested in seeing money going into actual academics and a little bit less into fixtures and landscaping," said Dr. Stan Dundon, associate professor of Philosophy and candidate in the approaching election for a position on the Board of Trustees at Cuesta College.

Thirteen candidates will be running for the three seats on the Board of Trustees in the March 4 election. Dundon will be the only candidate with both teaching and administrative experience. He has been an instructor at Cal Poly since Jan. 1970 and acted as the associate dean, School of Communicative Arts and Humanities last year.

Dundon said, "A faculty member on the board may be able to argue persuasively to get other board members to see what the students need.

"The faculty member has a hard time making trustees, who don't know what is going on in the classroom, aware of how impossible it is to teach anything if students don't read and write well." It was for these reasons that Dundon would like to see courses added in the college curriculum such as remedial reading and writing that would help students.

Dundon added that he would like to assist the board in budget decisions to preserve and improve academic excellence. This includes both vocational and general education teaching, he said.

Dundon felt that trustees on the board do not act

(continued on page 8)
Editorial

The vote counts

The possible extermination of AB 3116 brings mixed emotions. Yet part of my conscience that’s jumping up and down, screaming its support of Governor Brown’s decision, seems to be winning out.

Granted, with the state money allocated for instructionally related activities, the ASI did have more room to grow in the area of programming-concerts, speakers, etc.

And without the funds from the bill, ASI activities have probably reached their maximum potential. However, funding from the state raises serious questions, particularly in reference to independent organisations such as Messaing Daily.

How much state control would state funding bring? That question, asked many times, has yet to be answered to my satisfaction.

Why? Because no one really knows. Nothing like AB 3116 has ever been available before.

No one knows if the state would make use of its right to supervise its budgeted monies, most probably through its campus representative Pres. Robert Kennedy.

No one knows if the state would encourage participation of its favored programs, and ditto in the area of ASI activities have probably dependent organisations such as Messaing Daily.

The possible extermination of AB 3116 would be less than a tragedy on this campus, unless more concerts, speakers, etc., are cut out of an already meager schedule. Those concerts, speakers, etc., are worth other sacrifices.

Couldn’t that money be better spent by the state on community projects? I’m sure it could.

I’ve been told by some that students want their representatives to do their jobs. Personally, I can’t agree. I believe that the state does not need student representatives to perform their duties. But the students do need representatives to do their duties.

That’s who’s saying—no one knows...

No elimination of AB 3116 would be less than a tragedy on this campus, unless more concerts, speakers, etc., are cut out of an already meager schedule. Those concerts, speakers, etc., are worth other sacrifices.

Keeping the strings attached on the ASI Programming Board.

Student opinion who cares?

President Robert E. Kennedy is attempting to muzzle a student group’s legitimate interest in the termination of assistant professor Bradford Smith.

Last month the Political Action Club wrote a letter to Kennedy and individuals involved in the case asking their cooperation in the group’s attempt to “investigate with total fairness and complete objectivity the issues surrounding the decision to terminate Brad Smith.”

The club felt that serious questions had been raised by the firing that “have a direct effect on the student community here at Cal Poly.”

In response, Kennedy said, “it is impossible to provide this club or any other such student organisation the information the group seeks,” because of the grievance procedure that has begun.

Kennedy has also said he considered the “best interests of the department, the school and ultimately the university” in making the decision to fire Smith.

He took advice, he said, “from those who are the most qualified to make the recommendation in this case, the faculty, department head and dean who know the case best.” (It, would seem from the 16 member Personnel Review Committee, which ruled that, in Smith’s case, established procedures were not followed, the action was based on discrimination or prejudice, and sufficient information was not considered.

What Kennedy seems to be forgetting in all this is the students. Remember them? They are the reason Brad Smith was hired, the dean was hired and, yes, even Kennedy himself.

What do the students have to say? Brad Smith has the highest student evaluations in the Sociology Department, he has received a flood of unsolicited letters from students expressing concern over his firing and now the Political Action Club would like to understand the mechanism that fired an excellent, young instructor.

The students are concerned when a good teacher gets fired. Their concern is legitimate and it makes waves and the administration likes smooth sailing.

The problem here is that college administrations are getting too big for their britches. Any operation the size of a university needs a branch to handle the paperwork—but it should stick to its paper shuffling.

The students and faculty are the ones participating in real university business. They should be the ones to make the university policy decisions.

Brad Smith’s termination was decided by the five tenured faculty of his department, those voted on a motion that had no evidence of having visited all. Tenured faculty members were not even consulted.

Sociology students’ opinions were in Smith’s student evaluations, but were passed over in favor of the tenured faculty’s personal conflicts with Smith.

And now Kennedy considers it “inappropriate” for the Political Action Club to investigate the decision. It is a legitimate Nonpropriety of the Pentagon Papers.

But the Political Action Club will persevere in its investigation, according to club member Bruce Orr, and still seeks information, including testimony from students.

Students can also send testimony in Brad Smith’s case to State Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, Joint Committee on Higher Education, Sacramento, and to:

American Civil Liberties Union
355 S. B Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attn. Ruth Abeles

Plotkin’s report to SAC tonight:

‘We’ll still have fee referendum’

The referendum on AB 3116 still will be held despite the recommendation of legislative analyst Plotkin that the money not be approved in the final state budget.

This is the message that all student relevant organizations are passing out on campus. The recommendation that the money not be approved in the final state budget is not according to Plotkin.

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Bermuda Triangle. By Charles Berlitz. Doubleday; 382 pp; $7.95 (Available at El Corral)

From cover to cover, it is evident that Charles Berlitz is enthralled with making sense of the wonder dubbed the Bermuda Triangle.

The Bermuda Triangle, the Hoodo Sea or the Graveyard of the Bahamas.

For the most part, the book is highly entertaining and thought provoking. Even if you are not convinced that there is any substance to the phenomenon, you will definitely be intrigued with his well-researched probe, however one-sided it may be.

Berlitz provides an armchair Sherlockian smorgasbord of theories, but a frank statement however one-sided it may be.

The heartfelt applause and air of respect allowed Dory to relax and let the humor dominate, touching, and personal atmosphere that both she and her music deserve, prevailed. There was pleasant surprise in her eyes when she

Steinhardt performance on Saturday
A program of ragtime and classical music will be presented by pianist Victor Steinhardt this Saturday.

The performance will be held in Room 111 of the Harold P. Davidson Music Center. The two performances will be at 4:30 and 8:30 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased at the University Union ticket office.

The first half of Steinhardt's performance will include ragtime pieces. They are "Ragtime Nightingale," "Chronomatic Rag," "The Entertainer," "Maple Leaf Rag" and others.

The second half of the concert will include 24 preludes from Frederic Chopin's Opus 28.

The concert is sponsored by the Fine Arts Committee of Cal Poly.
WASHINGTON (UPI) — Defense secretary James R. Schlesinger said Tuesday Saudi Arabia and Iran at Pentagon urging had agreed to hire American civilians to train their troops in using U.S. made weapons.

Schlesinger said the U.S. military had 56 instructors in Saudi Arabia and 728 in Iran training their forces—and the demand is increasing.

"Accordingly, we are urging the governments of Iran and Saudi Arabia to hire U.S. civilian technicians to the greatest extent possible," Schlesinger said in his annual report to Congress. Schlesinger’s report was released Tuesday but written before the weekend reports that a California firm was hiring American military veterans for the training assignments.

WASHINGTON (UPI) - Valentine’s Special Feb. 14,15&16 20% off on all jewelry in stock!!

Campus Store
M-F 12-5:45 p.m.
Sat 10-1 p.m.

On Flower Shop
M-F 1-5 p.m.
Sat 8-5 p.m.

LOVABLE PLANTS for VALENTINE'S DAY

the gold concept
Valentine’s Special Feb. 14,15&16 20% off on all jewelry in stock!!

CHICAGO (UPI) - Cheryl Rich passed through a nursery window Tuesday at her home and was surprised to find a pink flower on a strawberry plant.

"Oh, my goodness...I was so surprised," she said.

Rich is one of many people who have been buying flowers at the new nursery in the suburbs of Chicago.

"People are really enjoying the idea of flowers being available in their own homes," said the nursery owner.

WASHINGTON (UPI) - "According to the philosophy of Artificial Intelligence," said Dr. Robert Hoover of the Social Sciences Department at the University of California, "the universe runs itself — no outside conception machine with a sense of a place possible." Hoover said this at the eighth seminar in the series of "The Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence" programs.

"A small truck caravan is being organized for a Saturday, March 1, excursion to Hearst Castle. Enroute to the famous mansion, the group will take time out to enjoy the coastal sights between San Luis Obispo and San Simeon. All interested small truck owners, or anyone who would like to accompany the caravan, should contact Martin Mundare, at 543-8471, for further details.

WASHINGTON (UPI) - Mrs. Thatcher's husband, a blond housewife, frequently called the Barry Goldwater of British politics, was selected leader of the opposition Conservative party Tuesday, Feb. 11 in Rm. 230 of the University Union.

Mrs. Thatcher, 49, education secretary in the 1970-74 government, will be the country's first woman prime minister.

Mrs. Thatcher succeeded Conservative minister Edward Heath, won the party's top job in a contest of ballots by 156 votes, seven more than the absolute majority of 159. Her closest challenger, trailed with 79 votes.

Mrs. Thatcher, 49, will be the country's first woman prime minister as party leader. She resigned last week after she upset him in the first round of voting by the 171 Conservative members of Parliament.

WASHINGTON (UPI) - "A review of the case of 'Uncle Grisha,'" said Dr. Robert Hoover of the Social Sciences Department at the University of California, "is being prepared for publication." Hoover said this at the first seminar in the series of "The Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence" programs.

LUSK, California at San Diego, will present Thursday Feb. 11, 11:10 a.m. a Science Seminar at the Cal Poly campus.

Yosemite National Park will present Thursday Feb. 11, 11:10 a.m. a Science Seminar at the Cal Poly campus.

YoSEMITE FELD SEMINARS:

Five-day field classes in earth sciences. Three quarter units, non-credit. Fee from UCD, 231, 249.

Tuition includes: lodging, all meals, transportation and all field expenses.

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Yosemite National History Association
P.O. Box 346
Yosemite CA 95389

WOODSTOCK FELD SEMINARS:

Taught by Dr. Norman T. Culbertson of the University of California, San Diego.

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Thee are the crlaa aomt members of tho Cal Poly Pane Taam yall out durlnf a bout, not because they are hit, but In order to jar the attention of their opponent during a split second attack.

Fandnf la a thinking man’s woman’s game bacauaa one* a few basic skills are mastered the real satisfaction comes from outwitting your opponent. There are several fencing classes offered here each quarter for both men and women. The Cal Poly Fencing Team offers intercollegiate competition for its members.

Photos by Ken Chen

Bruce Faulkner and Kevin Hickman practice basic moves. Many hours of drill are necessary in order for actions to become reactions.
The faculty members would then write a report acceptable to the students and themselves. This would be used for self-improvement by the instructor and in personal procedure.

The individual anonymity of the students involved would be preserved, but their remarks about a teacher would have to be justified.

The authors conducted a pilot study of five teachers in the Aeronautical Engineering Department. They found that the procedure took about four hours to complete a report, but felt the time would be reduced as those involved became more familiar with the process.

They found the presence of peers made the students more candid and accurate in their remarks, and concluded, was corrected before the report was finalized.

Andreoli would like to see his plan in use because, he says, students in general don’t realize the weight of the decisions they are making when they fill out an IBM form.

The faculty members would especially be characterized by verbal fluency and communication ability. They also found, in agreement with the Pilone study, that class size, selected vs. required status of the course and discipline or department of the course affected teacher ratings.

The Kusik article found, in addition, "There is no convincing evidence that teachers use information available on student ratings to improve their courses or their course ratings."

This, they claim, is due in part to the anonymous nature of student evaluations. It is just this quality of anonymity that prompted Al Andreoli of the Aeronautical Engineering Department to say of the evaluation procedure, "It strikes and the well-being of the institution is at stake in the long run." Robert Bennett, Ritter Larsen and Andreoli, who is chairman of the Academic Senate Personal Review Committee, are co-authors of an alternate proposal they feel would avoid the pitfalls found in studies of student evaluations. Rather than having an entire class respond in a questionnaire, Andreoli would have five students a cross section of the class, meet with two reviewing faculty members to evaluate an instructor’s performance.

The faculty would like to see his plan in use because, he says, students in general don’t realize the weight of the decisions they are making when they fill out an IBM form.
Track coach has key

by CURTIS BYRD

You might say track coach Steve Simmons is a "coach with the curse." Last season Simmons cured his team's "underestimated" young team members, and continued to do so throughout the season. He is a second team that placed third in the NCAA College Division.

The Mustangs scored 48.5 points, only 1.5 points behind fourth place Eastern Illinois.

In Simmons' four years as head coach, there have been 15 NCAA Division records set every College Division record for 10 years and Cal Poly records. Simmons has authored numerous magazine articles on secretarial skills, work habits, and outdoor national records. He has authored numerous magazine articles on track and field.

Steve Simmons

Simmons is in his ninth year of coaching. He came to Cal Poly as head coach in 1971 after five years as assistant coach at Chapman College.

He attended high school in Ohio, where he was a member of the state champion track team in 1961. He was a two-year all-league basketball player at Los Angeles City College.

Simmons has been named to the 1974 high jump, 1975 triple jump, and 1976 pole vault teams by National Collegiate Track Coaches Association and edited the group's newsletter. He has authored numerous magazine articles on track and field.

He then went to Chapman College where he assisted in basketball and track. In 1966 he was an All-American NCAA College Division hurdler, placing fourth. He still holds school records in the 110 high hurdles and the 300 and 440 intermediates at Chapman College. Some of his outstanding performances were in the field of track. The collegiate and US rankings are based on the simple formula: first place + second place + third place = total points. The formula is generally accepted as the definite best performance of the year.

Simmons is the only consideration. Simonds' outdoor national ranking is generally accepted as the definite best performance of the year. Simonds' outdoor national ranking is generally accepted as the definite best performance of the year.

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