Proposal for plus/minus grading in front of senate

BY MARY CORBIN

A resolution calling for the addition of plus and minus symbols to letter grades is under consideration by the Academic Senate’s instruction committee according to physics professor Ron Brown, a member of the committee.

With the current grading system, there is a significant jump between two letter grades. The plus/minus would allow for a more honest and accurate account of a student’s work in class, said Brown.

"The addition of plus/minus grading will alter students’ GPA up or down by 3.0 for each plus or minus received. The grade point averages of those students who find themselves consistently just above or just below a grade decision line would more precisely reflect the performance levels of those students,” he said.

The final decision will probably be made by the end of next quarter, he added.

Grades serve as a shorthand evaluation of students regarding achievement of course objectives and performance in courses.

Some discrimination within each letter grade level would allow students to be better informed of their performance level and progress.

Borderline grade decisions between B and C, for example, must still be made. The option to assign B minus and C plus grades to students near that borderline would exist. “Students should be rewarded for what they earn,” said Brown.

Please see page 3

Harris conviction upheld

The man who admitted killing Cal Poly's head librarian in a campus parking lot two years ago has lost his second attempt to have his murder conviction reversed.

Howell Petrey Harris pleaded guilty in January, 1979, to the fatal shooting of head librarian Norman Alexander after an argument in the library parking lot. He was convicted and sentenced to serve 25 years for murder, with one two-year term and a one-year term stemming from firearm charges.

The 5th District Court of Appeals on Wednesday, March 4, 1981, upheld Harris' conviction, saying, "The addition of plus/minus grading in front of senate would more precisely reflect the performance levels of those students," he said.

The final decision will probably be made by the end of next quarter, he said.

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Please see page 3

Controversial research plan might become policy

BY MIKE CARROLL

A controversial document, drawn up by a committee that last year faced internal dissent, calling for the expansion of research opportunities at Cal Poly is moving closer to becoming university policy.

The research committee has not been without internal discord. George Suchand, a social sciences professor who served a temporary assignment on the committee during winter and spring quarters last year, questioned the majority view of the committee.

The research committee’s report, dated Feb. 4, is a revised version of a draft document the committee distributed to faculty and administrators in the fall of 1980. The final report incorporates reactions of the academic community to the original draft document.

Del Dingus, chairman of the research committee, said if the report is passed by the senate, it would serve as a "guiding philosophy" for the university. If adopted, Dingus said, the document should stimulate policy changes that would make it easier for faculty who want to engage in research to do so.

The research committee has asked that the report, if passed, be forwarded to President Warren Baker. Dingus said there will be "individuals vocally against us"—notably some faculty in the School of Agriculture and natural Resources—who question expanding research opportunities at Cal Poly.

Some faculty fear the research report will require all faculty to engage in research, which he said, is not the case.

According to the committee's report, the benefits of research include a more effective instructional program, enhanced resources through grants and contracts and greater attraction of qualified faculty to the university.

But, according to George Suchand, "Redirection of the university away from an emphasis on teaching to a greater emphasis on research is not in the best interest of the university community."

Suchand indicated he had "professional differences" with the committee. He said he disagreed with aspects in the original draft document including a provision that advocated larger classroom sections.

Suchand said his major regret was that there was no small student involve ment on the committee. Also, the senate’s personnel policies committee should have been more involved in the formulation of the research statement, he said, because research could become more important in tenure and promotion procedures.

In addition, if faculty are required to spend more time doing research, a price may be paid through a decrease in faculty-student communication, Suchand said.
B-52 takeoff time may shorten

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Reagan administration likely will seek runway improvements on the mid-Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia to allow the nation's mainstay bomber, the B-52, within shorter striking range of the Persian Gulf. Pentagon sources say.

The sources, who asked not to be named, said a request likely will be submitted to Congress on Wednesday to provide $93 million for the runway-widening project. The purpose, they said, will be to shorten by many hours the time it takes to fly B-52s over the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf area and return to base.

B-52 bombers have flown 27 surveillance missions over that region from the mid-Pacific island of Guam since former President Carter ordered such flights in January 1980 as part of his effort to show the Russians a U.S. resolve.

Air Force officials say round-trip flights out of Guam to the Arabian Sea normally take about 30 hours. Diego Garcia, about 2,300 miles from the mouth of the Persian Gulf, is much closer to the objective area than Guam.

Diego Garcia, a British-owned island, has been gradually developed over the past seven or eight years into a key base for U.S. naval forces operating in the Indian Ocean. The Carter administration's five-year budget recommended about $700 million this year and next for military construction on Diego Garcia to support rapid deployment forces.

Notably, the B-52 proposal would follow within days the state visit, including talks at the Pentagon, of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. But no details were available concerning her possible role in the decision.

Among other things, the United States has stationed seven cargo ships loaded with equipment to allow the Marine brigade of about 12,000 men near Diego Garcia.

In the past, Indian and other third-world nations in that region have strongly objected to American use of Diego Garcia as a military base.

Pentagon officials said they do not expect permanent basing of B-52s on Diego Garcia, but the widening of the runways will give the Air Force the ability to operate the bombers from that island on a temporary basis whenever needed. Guam is a permanent base for B-52s.

El Salvador 'cleans up' leftists

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) - Soldiers and anti-junta guerrillas were jacked in gun battles in the northeast Tuesday in what the military claimed was a "clean up" of leftist strongholds.

In Washington, the Reagan administration waged a closed-door campaign for congressional support for tripling military aid to the convulsed Central American nation.

The Salvadoran army has succeeded in its objective of bringing peace to the nation with only the help of the people, proclaimed Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia. He said the left had been "smothered" and "every day the situation tends to improve."

Military commanders gave no casualty figures, but said there was fighting in Zacatecoluca and San Esteban Colmena, some 35 miles north of here, and farther north at Arcatao. National police said 16 people were found dead in the capital.

Garcia refused comment on junta President Jose Napoleon Duarte's announcement Monday that he would meet with the Socialist International, an international group espousing non-violent revolution that has offered to be an intermediary in attempts at a political settlement.

"These are political matters in which the military will not intervene," Garcia said.

Duarte, a Christian Democrat who depends on support of the armed forces, did not indicate when or where such negotiations might take place.

Duarte maintains the U.S.-backed military-civilian government's most pressing need is for economic aid, not arms.

"We are not denying the need of military aid, but what we are doing is giving top priority to the economic needs that will permit us to resolve our problems in a framework of peace and social justice," he said Tuesday.

When the only thing you can squeeze between English and German is a Danish...

El Salvador rejects role in Fruit Fly campaign

WASHINGTON (AP) - A leader of the leftist Salvadoran government sought to convince U.S. officials Tuesday to participate in a pre-emptive plan to eradicate the fruit fly in El Salvador. But a State Department spokesman brushed aside the proposal even before it was advanced.

The spokesman, William Drey, said he foresaw no role for such the United States.

"As to whether there is a role for the government of El Salvador whatsoever in these negotiations at this time, that is a matter for the government of El Salvador to decide," Drey said. "I don't see how such a role is in our interest."

Drey said the United States is not a party to a dispute in El Salvador and added: "El Salvador is a client of the United States. El Salvador is a sovereign independent country. We will not tell them what to do."

However, Secretary General Bert Carlsson of the Socialist International, representing non-communist socialist parties around the world, said participating in the United States is essential if mediation of the dispute is to succeed.
Clubs don’t cry over spilled milk cartons

BY ROSEANN WENZ

A spirited crowd of about 150 participants and spectators braved the rain and cold on Saturday to attend the fifth annual Los Lecheros Milk Carton Boat Race at Laguna Lake.

The idea of the race is to build the fastest boat using milk cartons, mostly half-gallon containers.

Trophies are awarded in four divisions: canoe, sail boat, people-powered, and mechanically-powered. Awards are also given to the most imaginative boat and the one using the most milk cartons.

Confusion reigned this year as many entrants were unable to hear their boat being called until the last moment. Finally some of the people-powered crafts fought it out, with the Rose Float Committee emerging as first-place winners, and the Society for Women Engineers coming in second.

In the second heat the Farm Management boat easily beat out the other contestants in the canoe division. The large chicken boat of the Poultry Club took second. The Rose Float Club won the second of people-powered division, and a close second was taken by the Agricultural Business Management entry.

College Future Farmers of America livened up the race when their boat slowly but surely began to sink. The Poultry Club saved the wet and embarrassed crew in the chicken boat, and Farm Management later towed in the unfortunate craft.

American Society of Agricultural Engineers-Agricultural Engineering Society won the mechanical-power division with no opponents. Its entry was an interesting paddleboat manned by four people.

In the third people-powered heat, the Boats and Spurs entry tipped over just after starting, and its crew had to swim to shore. Alpha Gamma Rho’s boat was second and Alpha Gamma Rho’s boat craft took an easy victory.

Student enrollment at Cal Poly has increased by almost 200 over the number registered at the same time last year, according to a report released by the university.

The Winter Quarter Internal Report on Enrollment from the university’s Institutional Research Office shows that 15,949 students were enrolled on Jan. 23, the quarter currently in progress. That is 179, or 1.2 percent, more than were enrolled on a similar date last year.

L.H. “Tom” Dunigan, director of Institutional Research at Cal Poly since 1961, said he is somewhat surprised about the decline in registration between the 1980 Fall Quarter, which ended in December, and that the present Winter Quarter is not larger.

He said that the decline of 99 from the 16,048 students who were enrolled on Jan. 23, the quarter currently in progress, is less than the drop of between 200 and 300 that has been recorded in recent years.

Of the 15,949 students included in the new report, 8,658 are freshmen; 2,831 sophomores; 3,739 juniors; 5,829 seniors; and 395 graduate students.

When the Cal Poly student body is divided by discipline, the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources continues to be the largest of the university’s seven academic schools with 3,596 students.

Close behind is the School of Engineering and Technology with 3,454. Totals for other schools are: School of Architecture and Environmental Design, 1,528; School of Business, 1,502; School of Communicative Arts and Humanities, 999; School of Development and Education, 1,408; and Science and Mathematics, 1,676.

Comments from polled faculty members include: “The current system has too much distinction between grade levels. The plus/minus would allow us to keep our basic system and would add flexibility to each grade.”

“You would give more flexibility in determining borderline results.”

“More grade decision lines mean more hassles regarding the decisions.”

“A change to plus/minus will require more work on the part of the faculty, the Records Office, and academic advisors.”

Brown added, “The plus/minus grading would give instructors a better perception of how their class material is presented to students.”

“With the system as it is now, a great deal of work must be made to raise a whole grade. Therefore many students in their last few weeks of a quarter might feel a great difficulty in being able to raise their grade a whole notch. If the plus/minus was added, then it might encourage students to make that little bit extra effort when they’re in the middle of a grade level.”

The instruction committee’s recommendation must still be considered by the executive committee of the academic senate and the senate body itself.
Feminist ties her goals to those of women's center

BY KATHLEEN RILEY

"A feminist is any person, male or female, who believes that women, born on the same planet as men, deserve equality. This also includes anyone who believes the environment for both sexes needs to be improved."

The coordinator of the Cal Poly Women's Center used this definition in describing herself as a strong feminist.

Born in San Diego, but raised in the San Francisco Bay area, Kim Laurila grew up in an educated environment.

Her father, a Cal Poly engineer, encouraged her to watch the news and keep up on the political scene. A good student, Laurila became bored in high school and was "searching for a way out of the system."

By then she had moved back to San Diego and became a volunteer with North County Lifeline.

Though only 15, after two months she was hired part-time as a caseworker. Most caseworkers had degrees just she kept up with the best of them.

Participating in programs like mobility training for the blind, Laurila continued to work for a lifetime until graduating from high school.

"Laurila had become interested in women's causes by this time. It was only natural that when enrolling at Palomar College in San Diego County, she got involved in the Women's Center. To her surprise there was no center, so she looked for the help of other women she established one on the campus."

Hiring friends in the San Luis Obispo area, Laurila spent summers here visiting and fell in love with the area—she moved here in 1979.

"I moved at Gauge College, because I needed some time to recover some of the energy used at Palomar," she said. It took her a year to get started again, this time at Cal Poly majoring in political science.

"I've put to good use," she added, "what I learned in Army ROTC."

His first year out of college

FRANK QUACKENBUSH RENOVATED THREE BUILDINGS, WORKED ON A DAM, PAVED A ROAD, AND BUILT TWO CHOPPER PADS.

"Most of the engineers I graduated with probably wound up as an assistant engineer to somebody else. Maybe doing the details for somebody else's design or supervising some small aspect of construction."

"But my first year as Engineer Lt., I've designed many of my own projects and supervised the construction on everything from baseball dugouts to the concrete work on a dam. Earthmoving, grading, filling, paving, concrete work, masonry—you name it, I've supervised it."

"Whether I stay in the Army or go into civilian construction work later, I've experienced that some engineers won't have when they're 30."

"More than supervising construction, I've learned how to manage people. I've got right now I know how to plan for and see to it in terms of a myriad of details of their lives."

"What I learned in the Army ROTC about leadership and management, I've put to good use."

"Army ROTC gave me an off to a good start, and it can do the same for you whether you're a civil engineer or an English major. You will also have an extra year during your last two years. You can start ROTC this summer at Cal Poly, or you can go to ROTC Basic Camp and earn an extra $500."

Kim Laurila, coordinator of the Cal Poly Women's Center, takes a call in her office.

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City slickers brave Sequoia cold in snow cabins

The snow fell gently on the treetops, blankets of white stretching as far as the eye could see. The air was crisp, the sun's rays piercing through the branches. The sound of skis gliding over the snow filled the air, a symphony of adventure.

BY RALPH THOMAS

The mini-convoy made its way up the winding road leading into the giant Sequoia National Park, the snow campers eager for their first look at the snow cabins. The group was "on the road again" just two hours behind schedule.

Early morning fire is the perfect remedy for chilly hands and feet. The first night would be spent in cabins. By the time everyone had all the necessary rental equipment they had an hour of daylight left for a quick lesson from Doug Moon. After frequent falls the most common way to accommodate the snow — the skis didn't work quite the same as downtown. With electric light, warm water and beds the first night was far from "roughing it." Knowing that harsher conditions would be encountered the next day and night, the group took advantage of the Giant Forest Lodge and the fireplace at the bar. BacK in the cabins a few songs were sung and jokes exchanged and Saturday was on its way.

With the snow falling, a threatening rate, the snow camping group, lead by Doug Moon, decided to go ahead as planned — a decision they never had to regret.

As planned, they skied with packs containing overnight gear a little over a mile from the village area and chose a spot to set up camp. Using their hands and frisbees as tools they spent the last three hours of daylight building snow cabins. The group of eleven came up with five cabins of various size and design — all proved adequate. Some crawled into their chilly sleeping bags fairly early. The rest did their best to maintain a campfire and exchange some more jokes and songs. One of the most challenging tasks for many was getting water usefully hot. Some drifted off to sleep after the group spent Saturday night back at the Giant Forest Village cabins after an afternoon ski trip to an icy version of the central coast's Morro Rock.

The two groups were reunited Sunday morning to prepare for the trip home. The snow campers enjoyed much needed showers. Once back packed back into the cars, far from strangers, the class made its way back to Obispo, some were curious about two of the Central Coast's most famous inhabitants: the peregrine falcon and the Morro Rock ghost. At 10 a.m., Sharon Lovejoy will lead observers along the cliffs at Montana de Oro State Park to watch the peregrines and sea otters. Meet at the Park headquarter for the one-mile, one and one-half hour hike. Closing out Saturday's activities will be a one-hour discourse on the famous Monarch butterfly.

On Sunday, March 8, the wildlife inhabiting the shelter of the ancient tree at the Los Osos Oaks Reserve will be the subject of Greg Forbes talk. Wood rats, bee trees, foxes and raccoons will all star in the one and one quarter hour walk talk.

First light of morning shine through the pines above one of the snow cabins built by Recreation 103 class members.

Course to study desert ecology in Poly extension offering

Desert lovers and aspiring naturalists can sign up for a Cal Poly extension course, "Ecology of Anza-Borrego Desert," to be offered during quarter break.
PARKING TICKET FINES SUBSIDIZE OTHER TRANSPORTATION

BY TOM CONLON

You have just paid the cashier $12 for the half dozen parking tickets that have been accumulating in your glovebox all quarter long, and you are left with barely enough money to buy the gas to get you where you want to go over the weekend and nothing to spend once you get there. At this point you start to wonder that with all the money they must collect, why don't the parking situation get any better so you don't have to park illegally all the time?

Although $47,000 was collected by Cal Poly cashiers last year for parking and traffic violations, the money cannot be used for the funding of construction on additional parking facilities, Director of Business Affairs Jim Landreth said.

According to Landreth, a California educational code requires "the revenue brought in from fines and forfeitures only be used for the support of alternative transportation systems."

As Cal Poly, the administrator said, the money is budgeted for three priorities. The number one priority is the subsidizing of bus tokens for students. Close to $17,000 a year is spent to provide students with a 10 cent discount on the normal bus fee of 35 cents, Landreth said.

The second priority is the funding of the university's bike program, which includes the purchasing of bike racks, the licensing of bikes, and the creation and widening of bike lanes. Landreth said sufficient funds have been unavailable for the construction of some kind of cover over the campus bus stops—the third priority.

He said the university administration, with the approval of the California State Universities and Colleges Chancellor's Office—ultimately makes the final decision on what the money is to be used for, but they are open to recommendations from the Traffic Commission composed of Poly faculty, staff, and two student representatives appointed by the ASI president.

Landreth added that even if the money could be used to provide additional parking spaces it is unlikely much could be done to alleviate the parking problem.

Landreth explained a major obstacle in the construction of new parking facilities is lack of space. He said a new big lot is planned for the area across the street from the faculty office building, but that would mean Plant Operations would have to be moved out on Highland Drive. To make up for the lack of space the building of a second level to

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Swimmers win SCAA league title

"I don't think there is any doubt that we will win the conference meet this season," said a confident women's swim coach Kathy Bartels at the beginning of the season. Despite a challenging dual meet season, the women's swim team went south last weekend ready to swim and walked away with their third straight Southern California Athletic Association conference championship.

The Cal Poly Mustangs relied on a balanced team scoring to overtake dual meet losses to Santa Barbara and Northridge. The Mustangs used a strong first day to outdistance second place Santa Barbara by 97 points and Northridge by 252 points. Last weekend Mustangs racked up 642 points to claim the SCAA title. Santa Barbara was second with 545 points followed by UC Irvine 400, Cal State Northridge 390, University of San Diego 239, and Cal State Los Angeles.

Last year's conference meet was a highlight as Cal Poly outscored Santa Barbara 630-465.

The Mustangs had another batch of qualifying standards met as 11 have now qualified for the All American Championships. Qualifiers include Pam Miao (50 back, 50 fly, 200 medley relay), Sally Baldwin (400 IM, 100 breast), Lori Jemison (100 breast, 200 breast relay), Lori Davis (100 fly, 400 medley relay), Heath Davis (200 medley relay, 50 breast, 100 breast), Kelly Krelligan (200 medley relay, 50 back), Ruth Cranston (200 medley relay, 400 medley relay), Val Young 100 free, 100 breast, Kristin Totten (100 back, 100 breast), Jody Jennison (100 breast, 400 IM, 100 free, 200 breast relay, 200 medley relay), Baldaclan (100 breast, 50 breast, 100 breast, 200 breast relay, 200 free relay), and Jonathan Taylor (the one and three-meter diving).

PE deadline

Any physical education equipment checked out by students must be returned by March 14.

Students who have checked out towels, locks, or clothing must return the equipment or they face a $2 fine and a hold on their grades.

Swimmers win SCAA league title

The Cal Poly softball team will seek its first win of the year this weekend after losing two to Fresno State. Poly's Lorene Yoshinara has this Fresno runner dead to three runs to the one run it had scored in the first inning.

In direct contrast to this however, Poly displayed some excellent offensive work in that same inning, scoring three runs itself.

Despite the errors, the Mustangs did display some excellent defensive work in the second game, in the form of catcher Lorie Fieltl, with several pick-offs. And Cal Poly's pitchers, Sheila Lasgrock and Martha Eymer, both pitched excellent games.

Mustang Coach Kim Graham said that she has had to do some player changes in the field due to the injuries and ineligibilities, but added that it probably was not responsible for the defensive errors.

"We had some dumb mistakes," said Graham, but she stated that the team's ability to do well this year is evidenced by the fact that despite the errors on the part of the Mustangs, they were able to hold Fresno to a one-run lead in both games.

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Sports

Bowlers chalk up second in tourney

The Cal Poly men's bowling team got its final tune-up in before the sectional tournament as it finished second to San Jose State in the final round of the Northern California Intercollegiate Masters League. A strong team performance led Cal Poly to its second place honors as all five bowlers averaged above 185 game.

Ron Majakejo and Andy Mitchell led the charge as they both rolled over the 200 pins a game mark. Chris Perrin and Mike Fong followed in the 190's along with Roger McKee and Mark smartphone.

Cal Poly wound up an impressive tournament season by finishing second in the NCIML, year-long tournament and by winning three of the six tourneys it entered. Cal Poly was only the California team to win three tournaments on the collegiate tournament tour.

Cal Poly's Wood picked up an individual honor by rolling the NCIML high game of 260 last weekend at 269. San Jose State's Marty Schramm rolled the high series at 730.

Cal Poly will be idle until the sectional tournament in Dublin on April 3-4.

Women's club entertains LB

Vengeance will be a main motive this afternoon as the Cal Poly women's soccer club enters Santa Barbara. The two teams met earlier in the season at Santa Barbara No. 2 walked away with a hard fought 2-1 victory. The rematch has been scheduled for a 3:30 p.m. start on the lower soccer field next to the baseball diamond.

The Cal Poly club is fresh off a win over Long Beach last weekend. Four scored goals for Poly edged Long Beach 5-2.

Katelyn Kennedy led the charge as she scored two goals including one on a penalty kick. Kathy Lyons scored one and Nancy Wilson headed one tally into the back of the net. Hol­ ly Kent was credited with one assist as she scored two goals and maintained a lead in both games.

The Mustangs gave up two runs to Fresno in the top of the fourth inning on fielding errors, but were able to score only one for themselves in the bottom of the fifth, following some excellent work at bat by Vanessa Brown, Lorene Yoshinara, and Sue Strain. The Mustangs rival at bat was cut short by Fresno and they were not able to get the second run.

The second game of the double-header also proved disappointing to the Mustangs, when after six innings, the game was called due to darkness with Fresno again leading by one run.

The Mustangs seemed to run into some trouble defensively in the second inning of that game, when several fielding errors allowed Fresno to add three runs to the one run it had scored in the first inning.

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The omnipotent CIA

BY MIKE CARROLL

One of the less publicized effects of the Ronald Reagan presidency appears to be a revitalized role of the CIA in foreign affairs. For the first time during the post-Watergate morality, the "spooks" are finding themselves in an intelligence renaissance and a rebirth of interest of covert operations.

A climate friendly to the CIA has been created in Washington. Reagan is an advocate of both a strong military and an effective intelligence establishment. For the first time in history, an ex-CIA director is vice-president. The Republican takeover of the Senate has resulted in a new arrangement of staunch, conservative Barry Goldwater as chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Most importantly, Reagan's CIA director, William Casey, reportedly favors expanding American covert operations abroad by a "substantial degree."

Tight Congressional constraints over the CIA that were initiated in the mid-1970s are now all but colliding. In recent years the CIA has been required to report to Congress on its activities. With Jimmy Carter's signing of the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980, however, the CIA now faces two Congressional committees — and only when covert operations are being prepared.

David Wise, a long-time CIA critic and author of such works as "Spy, Cia, as well as by the store owner. With Jimmy Carter's signing of the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980, wise CIA agencies are necessary to serve the public with the inconveniences of their descriptiveness. Our constant efforts to serve the public with the inconveniences of their descriptiveness. Our constant efforts to serve the public with the inconveniences of their descriptiveness.

Customers' rights

BY CLEO MILLER

What happened to the old saying about the consumer always being right? It must be a fad that went out with "Sonny and Cher."

It is easy to exchange an item or spend enough money in a store that will make you nervous. These are instances when the customer is always right.

Losing a little money back on a purchase you were overtime is no big deal. You are tired of running around the store checking serial numbers on a jacket.

I was thoroughly irritated because the attitude change of the salesgirl when I inquired about the outlandish price on my bill. I was also irritated about the time I had been waiting for them to try to prove me wrong.

Department stores, grocery stores, restaurants, and companies realize they are not flawless. Their customers do not. They must know that naturally you have to protect yourself from getting the business from your companies. You pledged to serve the public with the inconveniences included...

So when you are "checking out" the story of one of your customers about a wrong they feel was committed against them, don't do it accusingly. You'll stay in business that way.

Author Cleo Miller is a junior journalism major and Mustang Daily staff writer.

Reagan's campaign against poverty

Editor:

I read the article in today's Mustang Daily which discussed with holistic scoring with great interest. While the article was generally accurate, if superficial. In its description of the process, there are a number of errors in other elements of the story which your reporter might have investigated further.

As well as speaking with Dr. Cairns and Dr. Curzon about uses of holistic scoring, Ms. Riley might have done well to have interviewed Dr. John Harrington. He is in charge of the Writing Proficiency Test, the only examination or paper for which holistic scoring is used on this campus. I believe that Dr. Curzon recommended that she speak with Dr. Harrington. She did not.

Ms. Riley has told her that to my knowledge nobody in the English department uses holistic scoring on papers written by students for classes. The reason for this is simple. The essence of holistic scoring is to gain rapid, total impression of the paper. Such an impression does not exclude, as Dr. Curzon implies, awareness of grammar, mechanics, spelling, incidentally, but the reader writes no comments on the paper and corrects none of the errors. Because of the nature of the approach using holistic scoring for papers written for any class, but especially for papers written in a class, is pedagogically irresponsible. Students learn from their papers through teachers and peers' comments. Using holistic scoring, the teacher does not write comments, nor can be prepared himself adequately to lead his students in a discussion of the paper.

Holistic scoring can be exceedingly useful when there are a great many papers to read in a short period of time and when the papers are not returned to the students. For example, we use holistic scoring when we read the Writing Proficiency Tests on this campus. It is also used in the reading the statewide English Proficiency Test and the English Equivalency Examination. As Dr. Cairns pointed out, a great deal of study has been done on this method of evaluating writing. The studies established that the accuracy of scoring using the holistic approach compared favorably with the grades arising from a more leisurely approach. The only differences stem from the absence of comments on the papers to which the student can respond in turn.

And that distinction eliminates the holistic approach from consideration by educators in the English department. We are not, as your quotation of Curzon seems to do, interested in fostering mediocrity. Our concern is to that the student learn through the experience of himself and the professor and other students. Not that the student simply receive a grade for each paper. No teacher in the English department, full-time or part-time, uses holistic scoring in their course, not even in their own classes. The teacher does not write comments, nor can prepare himself adequately to lead his students in a discussion of the paper.

Editor:

David Kann
Director of Writing Programs
English Department