

campus

# Students allowed to grade profs

By PAMELA RIMOLDI  
Battalion Reporter

Late in the semester many students get the chance to turn the tables and grade their teachers for a change, in the form of a teacher evaluation.

The various colleges at Texas A&M University have different policies and ideas about the usefulness of student evaluation of teachers. The College of Liberal Arts weighs teacher evaluations heavily and requires every teacher to administer one to each class he teaches. A teaching excellence committee formed within the College of Liberal Arts administers and processes the standardized evaluation forms, designed especially for the college.

The questions on the evaluations try to find out how the instructor presented the course, how well prepared he was and how long he took to grade papers. They also asked students to rate the quality of the lectures.

Results of these evaluations influence decisions on future promotions and merit awards for the teacher, said Dr. Richard Benschel, a member of the teaching excellence committee. Although a teacher is required to administer the evaluation, he does not have to submit the results to the department, Benschel said.

Student reactions are valuable to a teacher not only because of possible positive influence on promotions, Benschel said, but also as a feedback on how closely a teacher is meeting the objectives he set for the course. Through an evaluation, a teacher can see which aspects of

the presentation of his course need improvement.

The College of Engineering and the College of Agriculture do not require the teachers to hand out the evaluations. They encourage their use to help the teacher see how he is coming across to the students.

Teachers in the College of Agriculture must submit some form of student evaluation each year, but it is not necessarily a standardized form, said Dr. Marriott Kunkel, dean of Agriculture.

Dr. Bryan Cole, assistant dean of the College of Education, said he thinks the value of such student opinion is questionable because the student may have a tendency to evaluate the personality of the teacher.

A question which asks about the quality of the lecture can be interpreted in many different ways, Cole said. If a student likes a teacher he may say the lecture was effective. But if there is a personality clash between the student and professor, the evaluation may indicate the lecture was ineffective. This means that students' opinions can vary greatly, Cole said.

Teachers in the College of Education do use student evaluations sometimes, and Cole said they can be useful when combined with other measures of a teacher's competence.

The College of Science doesn't require the use of these evaluations either, but in classes where they are used, the student is encouraged to write constructive criticism besides simply answering questions with limited choice of answers, said John Beckham, associate dean of the College.

# Colleges expected to have decrease in enrollment

By MARCY BOYCE  
Battalion Reporter

Before its recent shift "back to the basics," educators were questioning the quality of education.

But today, as enrollment barometers indicate a leveling off and an imminent drop, quantity, not quality is the issue. Higher education, in particular, is feeling the pinch of student shortages.

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. labor force has experienced a steady influx of college graduates. By 1976, one out of four 25 to 29 year olds held a bachelor's degree, compared to one out of 20 in 1940.

But despite expectations of an additional 3 percent increase in the number of students enrolled in college during January the National Center for Educational Statistics reported a drop of 60,000 students.

With total enrollment at 31,331 this year, up from 30,901 in 1978-79, Texas A&M University has not encountered such a decline. But Associate Registrar Don Carter says, "We are increasing each year at a decreasing rate."

During the early 1970s, enrollment was climbing at about an 11-18 percent increase each year. In 1976, it fell to an increase of approximately 5 percent and this year was only 1 percent.

In the freshman class especially, the trend is leveling." Director of Admissions Bob Lay said.

According to Lay, a majority of the decline can be attributed to the decreasing number of 18 year olds. The baby-boom peaked in the mid-60s, families are having fewer children and now, fewer are of college age, he said.

In fact, some predictions have indicated that by 1990, the number of 18 year olds will approach a decrease of 25 percent.

And moreover, of those college age, many choose alternative routes to the university program.

"You don't need an engineering degree to become an engineer," said Tony Whitehead, a student in an 18-month electronics training program at the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

"Once you get your foot in the door and make various contacts within industry, a college degree just becomes a piece of paper." Instead, it's ability that brings success, he said.

And others, like Sean Elledge, said that while they get out of school quicker, the jobs offered to graduates of the training program are only about \$150 a month less than electrical engineers receive.

John Lancaster, who was an electrical engineering major at Texas A&M for one semester, said that upon "realizing that I wouldn't see anything really concerning electronics for two, maybe three years," he enrolled in the 18-month program.

Now, he said, he is concentrating on practical experience, instead of theory, which seemed to be the emphasized at the University.

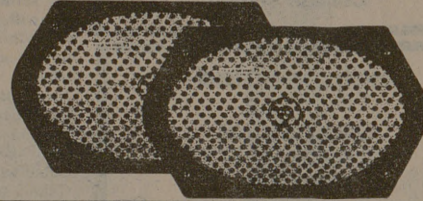
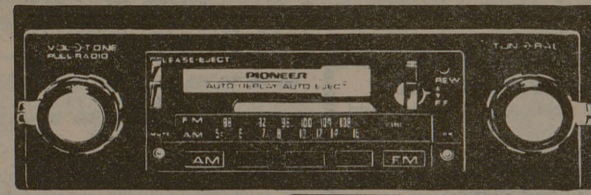
High school vocational programs also emphasize practical experience. And both Peggy White, a counselor at Bryan High School and Joe Wiese, a counselor at A&M Consolidated High School, said they have seen a remarkable increasing interest in these programs, a few of which are cosmetology, auto mechanics, industrial cooperative training and building trades.

"I think a lot of students are finally waking up to the fact that college isn't for everyone," White said. Starting wages for blue-collar workers are beginning to look more and more inviting to high school graduates, she added. However, Wiese said about 65 percent of the students

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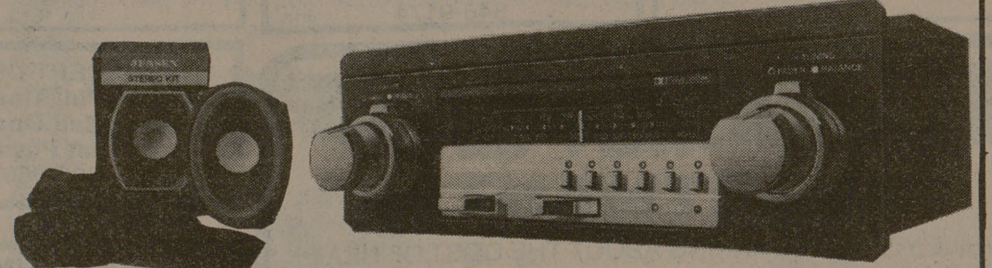


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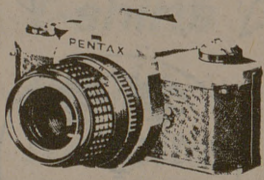
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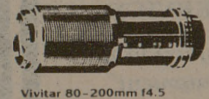
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