

Faculty, courses helping freshmen adjust to college

United Press International
The new hot course officials are ordering up for college freshmen? Orientation, or — how to survive in college. For up to three credits.

The mandatory course differs from campus to campus. But a common mix includes assertiveness training, career planning, sexuality education, decision-making, guidelines on responsible drinking, study guidelines, money management, how to handle freedom.

Why this dusting off and updating of a course that was a staple on many campuses years ago? Because, officials say, one out of four college freshmen drops out.

John N. Gardner of the University of South Carolina recently ran the First National Conference on Freshman Orientation. A professor of general studies, he teaches a three-credit-hour orientation course.

Gardner said there was agreement at the conference, which was hosted by South Carolina, that unplanned pregnancy and alcoholism are two prices unprepared new college students pay for not being able to manage the enormous freedom on campus.

"We're producing a lot of post-adolescent alcoholics," he said. "As a result, a high priority with many schools is teaching students how to be responsible drinkers. Alcohol, not narcotics, is the problem."

He and others at the conference claimed students need specific guidance in many other areas and the place to give it to them is in orientation.

"There's increased interest in freshman orientation; we need to help them to survive and help reduce the dropouts — now one out of four," Gardner said. "It's a loss of human resources."

Conferees linked scores of situations to the freshman dropout problem. A freshman may drop out because he or she:

- can't handle the freedom to study or not study, to select friends, to drink to excess or responsibly.
- can't handle the sexual freedom.
- doesn't know proper study skill.
- doesn't know how to form replacements for "significant other human relationships" left behind—the ties with parents and close friends.
- can't resolve conflicts with roommates.
- can't make decisions—about careers, for example. A large number enter with no idea of what they want. Such types are more likely to drop out.

Pontiff sees contrasting countries

Pope John Paul II tours Africa

United Press International
LIBREVILLE, Gabon — Pope John Paul II arrived in Gabon Wednesday, the third stop on his four-nation West African pilgrimage, after a short stop in Marxist Benin where he was given a 24-minute lecture on Communism.

Tens of thousands of Gabonese gathered at Libreville's Leon M'ba airport and gave the pope a joyous singing, dancing and chanting welcome even though the pontiff was an hour and 25 minutes late.

John Paul's arrival in oil-rich Gabon contrasted with his stop earlier in the day in poverty-stricken Benin after a 30-minute flight from neighboring Nigeria. His four-nation west African tour will later take him to Guinea.

In Cotonou, Benin, where he arrived in a thunderstorm, the pontiff looked puzzled as Benin President Col. Mathieu Kerekou

delivered a lecture on "The Socialist Struggle," which listed the achievements of his regime and condemned imperialism.

But the rain, which quickly subsided, did not deter huge crowds in African garb and Western dress cheering and waving papal flags in enthusiastic welcome.

Kerekou said in Benin, where state-church relations have been rocky: "Everybody is free to believe and not to believe in religion."

Most of the more than 3 million population of Benin, formerly known as Dahomey, practice voodoo and worship animals.

Kerekou, who seized power in a military coup in 1972 and declared Benin a Marxist-Leninist state in 1975, told John Paul: "Socialism is a struggle between the forces of progress and the forces of regression." He was only applauded when he

shouted: "Long live the pope."

The pope celebrated mass in French for an exuberant but orderly crowd of 20,000 at Cotonou's soccer stadium before flying to the oil and mineral-rich country of Gabon.

Benin, one of the poorest countries in the world, is run on heavy-handed East European lines. By law, the state-run radio must be played at full volume in all public places.

Tables turning: Mouse bites snake

United Press International
DARWIN, Australia — A Western Taipan, the world's deadliest snake, was near death today, suffering from the bite of a lowly mouse.

Two weeks ago Graeme Gow, a curator at the Darwin Museum, fed a mouse to a Taipan named Goddess. As the snake struck, the mouse bit it on the side of the face.

"When the mouse bit Goddess, its incisors set up a double infection," Gow said today. "Three days later, her face went up like a balloon, then her lower jaw began to swell."

Since the bite, Gow has performed five minor and one major operations and gives Goddess treatment three times a day.

There is no known antidote for a Taipan bite.

Oh, yes — the mouse didn't live to have the last laugh. Goddess ate it.

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