

Grades scaled

by Jon Oxley
The Meliorist

Under a proposed new grade conversion scheme for the U of A, Lethbridge transfer students may find their marks degraded. U of L Registrar Jack Oviatt brought this matter to the attention of the university community at the last GFC meeting.

According to Oviatt, the problem stems from the U of A's continually difficult task of assessing grade point equivalency from institutions with different marking systems. Since the U of A has a large number of unique programs, they are constantly trying to find an equitable and consistent means of converting grade points to a standard fair to all students.

Now, according to Oviatt, the U of A feels that U of L professors "tend to be more generous (in assigning grades) than counterparts at other institutions." As a result, an A from the U of L is rated as an 8.5 on the U of A stanine scale, while an A from Calgary is granted an 8.7.

The claim to fame of a smaller institution is, as Oviatt put it: "we teach better." But he adds that there is currently no evidence to support any difference in performance in Lethbridge transfer students over their Calgary and Edmonton educated counterparts. This suggests that their higher marks may be artificially so.

Dr. Gary Krivy of the U of C Registrar's office was able to shed a little more light on the matter.

According to Krivy, the U of C received a proposal from the U of A outlining the conversion of grades from 4-point to stanine, in February of this year. He understood that every university in Canada had been contacted by the U of A in this regard.

Calgary formed a subcommittee to respond to the U of A's grade conversion, as they did not approve of it. According to Krivy, the report he saw proposed a grade of A get an 8.7, whether it came from Calgary or Lethbridge.

Krivy also said that the U of L was invited to respond, and since they haven't, he assumed they were happy with the grade conversion table.

The U of C responded with their

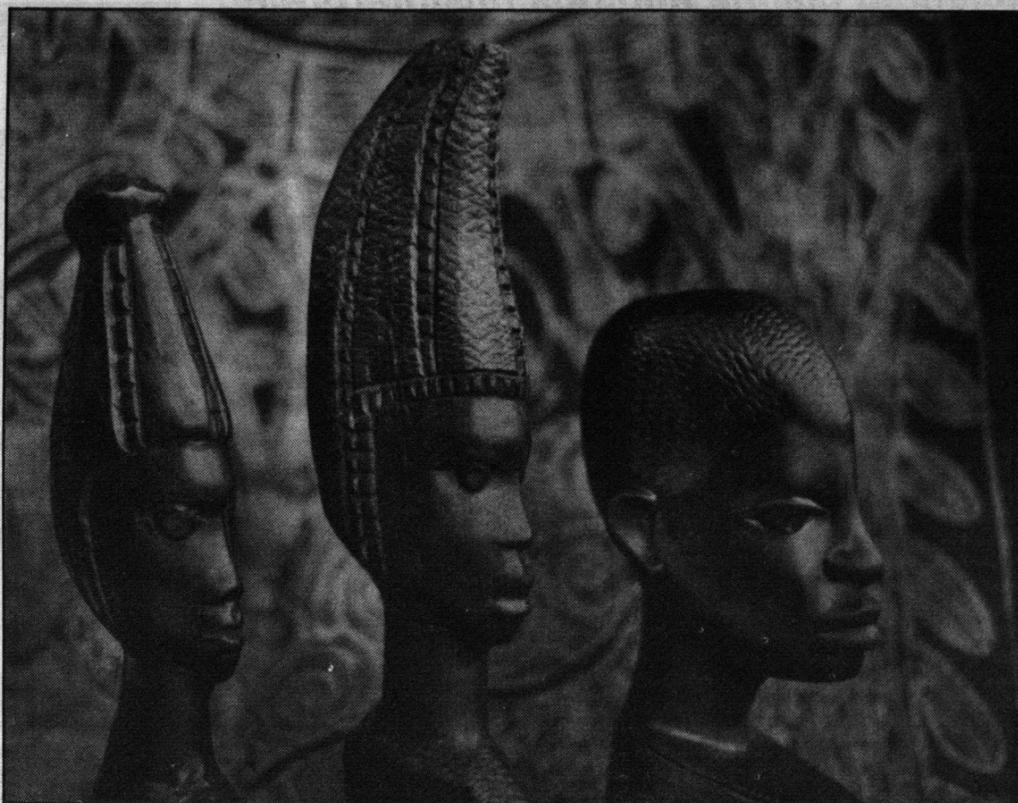
desired alterations to the table on May 16. But as of July 17, Krivy states that the U of A regards an A as 3.7, from either Calgary or Lethbridge.

He also added that a 4.0 GPA equates to a 9.0 on the U of A system. Toward the bottom end of marks (ie, less than 2), there is little agreement. But Krivy stated that disagreement on marks at this level is not considered important.

Meanwhile, Jack Oviatt is presenting his recommendations to the U of L faculty at a GFC meeting on October 2. He declined to provide a copy of his report, so that GFC might first have an opportunity to discuss it.

However, Oviatt did acknowledge that the U of A's grade conversion table would add impetus to Lethbridge's own grade point modification. "I anticipate a grade point system change in time for next academic year," he said. He also acknowledged that this change would entail adopting the plus/minus system of Calgary.

Oviatt concludes in his report that regardless of what conversion scheme any university uses, the U of L should concentrate on excellence in teaching.



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