

"ombudsman"

The issue of course withdrawals, which Marilyn Lee Greg Noval raised at GFC recently — see Greg's letter in the Gateway Feb. 3, seems to have struck at the heart of a question that nobody seems to know much about. The only effect of that, over the years, is that passive students have been the losers, as

If you have problems you want the "Ombudsman" to look into, or if you're someone who wants to help solve other students' problems, contact Dirk Schaeffer at 439-6486 or Kevin Schaeffer at 1010 Newton Place, 8515-112 St.) or Kevin Schaeffer in Gateway 432-5178 (Room 282, SUB) or at 424-7055.

As a follow-up, I received a call from a student who complained, in tones of utter frustration, the only way he had ever been able to make an intelligent selection from the courses and sections open to him for study, was to sign up for eight or nine courses at the beginning of each semester, check them out, and then drop all but the best five. Now, he's suddenly learned from Marilyn's letter, his transcript was going to be peppered with as many Ws as grades.

Was that true? Yes, that was true. According to a policy that seems to have developed more as a matter of convenience than as a meaningful part of either selection or evaluation, the Registrar's office tags all courses from which a student withdraws after the deadline for taking new courses, with a W - or W/F if dropped after the deadline for dropping — and retains it on the student's record.

Why? Well, nobody ever thought that it hurt anybody, was one answer I got. Could be, but if so, it wasn't much thinking going on. It should be obvious at least to any faculty member who has attended meetings on the selection or evaluation of graduate students that the phrase "yes, but he's got an awful lot of withdrawals" quite frequently comes up, and in the student's favor. And the best guess, in the

absence of hard information, is that Ws would make a similar difference to prospective employers.

So why retain this information rather than simply delete all reference to dropped courses (at least, those dropped before the deadline) from a student's records? There are several reasons, the only "good" one of which seems to be that involving students who withdraw from all courses in a given semester. This seems to be a sizeable number — several hundred per year, as I recall.

For these students, there would then be no record of their having attended university at all in such a semester, and this could seriously affect their repayment schedules on student loans.

A second reason is that the Registrar's office maintains a permanent file, containing this sort of information, on each student. Transcripts are made up simply by Xeroxing portions of this file. If, as might seem reasonable, the university wished to maintain one permanent file for internal purposes (such as loans, or keeping careful track of student activities) and another for external purposes (such as transcripts) this might involve some moderately costly changes in the Registrar's present mode of operations.

A further — slightly nutty — consideration is that there does not seem to be any university-wide policy regarding withdrawals, regulations for which now seem to be in the hands of individual faculties. Their policies, as laid down in their calendars, appear to range from complete silence to notification of deadlines. The only exception to this rule is Business Administration and

Commerce, whose calendar states in capital letters that students withdrawing before the stated deadline will receive "Ws", those after, "W/Fs". However, the issue now is not really one of withdrawal regulations — which most people seem to be more or less agreed on — as much as what goes into a student's file, or what follows him after he leaves university; here a university-wide policy would seem necessary.

It's tough to get one, though, because of the notion prevalent among much of the faculty and administration, that what university is really about is not just

evaluation, but *competitive* evaluation. Where withdrawals give student a chance to reduce workloads, withdrawing is somehow seen as "cheating" and there is a sort of gut-level desire (I would guess — it never gets clearly expressed) among Faculty and Deans to "get even" — by noting "Ws" in the spirit of black marks. Unfortunately, hardly anyone will ever try to defend this position seriously, since it simply makes a mockery of any reasonable educational principle — but it comes up time and time again in indirect ways — such as the various unsuccessful Pass/Fail proposals, or the stipulation that all student maintain full course loads.

But the situation now is ludicrous — students, unwittingly, have been "penalized" by having "Ws" appear on their records, regardless of the reason for withdrawal, simply because none of them have, until now, stood up to ask why. Although the Registrar's office feels that the phrase "withdrawal without penalty" means "withdrawal without financial penalty" — and nothing more than that — it seems clear that this view was maintained only because they never thought there could be other reasons.

But there are: and concerted student action, pressing either for separate internal and external records, or for straightforward deletion of withdrawn courses from all records, seems to be the only way to get these penalties removed.

And as a final note, the situation is made even more ludicrous by the fact that many students and administrators have long known of a method of dropping courses without having any withdrawals appear on the permanent file at all. Unfortunately, if I tell you what it is, somebody will probably move to have the loop-hole fixed up; on the other hand, if you're one of the fortunates who knows the method, you would seem to have an "unfair" advantage over your less-knowledgeable fellows. All of which leaves me in a terrible ethical dilemma with regard to disclosing this particular device. My best solution is to keep my mouth shut in print, but offer to let anyone know about it that wants to call me. — dls

Moonlighting cut

by Don Truckey

A motion preventing full-time graduate assistants from accepting additional employment from the university was rejected by the Board of Governors (B of G) Friday.

The motion reinstated a university policy abandoned two years ago, which ruled out extra university employment for full-time graduate assistants, and reduced part-time assistants to 12 hours per week on any extra jobs (equivalent total of a full-time graduate appointment).

The reinstated regulation is

designed to emphasize graduate assistants' roles as students and not as employees of the university, according to a report submitted to the B of G by Dr. John Forster, chairman of the Dean's Council Committee on graduate assistance policy.

On July 5, 1974, the B of G replaced the original regulation with a policy stating only: "A full-time graduate student may not concurrently hold more than one full graduate appointment in the university."

The result of this changed policy, Forster's report says, has been "a growing tendency of

some departments to try to hire full-time students who hold full graduate appointments for additional work at rates which make it obvious that the student is being allowed to spend too much time as an employee and too little time as a student ...

"The inevitable result of a continuation of this practice will be a lengthening of the students' programs by at least one year with the consequent higher costs to the university.

"A second, and serious, effect is on the scholarship program since the tendency for departments to make it possible for students to earn more than scholarships provide, has the effect of discouraging the better students from applying for scholarships."

Because of these tendencies, B of G members voted unanimously to reinstate the original G.A. policy.

The hunt is on

Seal hunting season is coming again.

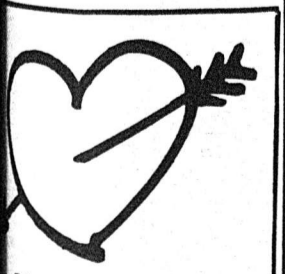
A meeting will be held in Room 104 of SUB Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. to organize a local chapter of the Green Peace Movement to protest or disrupt the seal hunt scheduled to start in the middle of the month.

Green Peace is an international ecology organization for action against nuclear testing in the Pacific Ocean, against seal hunting and the seal hunt.

Plans to send volunteers to protest the seal hunt on the eastern coast


of Canada to protest slaughtering harp seal pups.

Further information is available from Ed Robinson at 433-0733.



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Wed. Feb 9/77 12 - 3 p.m.
Ed Main Floor Lounge

Organic tax dodge

SAN FRANCISCO (ENSCUP) - Organic food can be a deductible medical expense an Illinois court judge has ruled.

The ruling arose when an unidentified Illinois doctor and his wife demanded that the cost of organic food should be a deductible expense because they are allergic to processed foods.

According to the *Wall Street Journal* the couple can not eat foods grown or preserved with chemicals and they are allergic to the linings used in most cans. Processed food give the doctor headaches, nausea and cause rapid breathing while they induced crossed-eyes and fainting spells for his wife.

When the couple first

attempted to deduct about \$3,000 for the food from their income tax the Internal Revenue Service refused. But the court rules that the organic diet "is the only method of effectively treating chemical allergies."

Advance poll

Advance polls for the Students' Union general election will be held Thursday, Feb. 10 in Room 271, SUB from 1 to 5 p.m.

Locations and operation times of regular polling booths on election day, Friday, Feb. 11, will be announced in Thursday's *Gateway*.

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