Weekly seminars making strides to promote increased scholarly exchange among faculty

By EDWARD ZABRUSKY
Editor, News Bureau

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He explained, "On a large campus -- and even on small ones -- people appear and disappear on their own schedules, and frequently it may take years to find someone whose interest links with your own, or who could support your own, or provide good criticism."

M A P S : A new progress scale

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MAPS is an acronym for Minimum Academic Progress Scale, introduced this fall in an attempt to provide more fairness and clarity in the criteria for satisfactory academic performance.

The new scale is the product of more than a year's work by a seven-man faculty committee. By the time the group had put the finishing touches on MAPS, it had tested and rejected several other plans.

John Zimmer, assistant dean of natural science and a member of the committee that developed MAPS, said the new scale is fully operative "for all new undergraduates and for all others except those reinstated by it."

The latter provision, he added, is in accord with University policy to make regulation changes retroactive "only when they benefit the student."
Communication on the campus: How much is enough?

Little faculty-student contact, according to study on campus

By GAIL MORRIS
Assistant Editor, News Bureau

The community of scholars is dead. And "depersonalization" is more than just a handy shibboleth in the student body. Charting with MAPS leaves a number of disturbing segments of the academic community faculty-student contacts at MSU.

According to the research, R. Lance Shotland, a doctoral candidate in psychology, "the academic community is highly segmented. Students are isolated from other components of the university and are even isolated from one another."

"There is little contact between students and faculty on the MSU campus," he reports. "The low level of communications between the other segments of the academic community and the students only creates situations leading to misunderstandings."

Shotland, whose study was conducted for the Educational Development Program (EDP), has been interested in student movements since his undergraduate days. "I wanted to find out if the university is the way radicals see it."

He wondered if universities are setting up the conditions that nourish the movement. "The answer I found was yes."

ROBERT H. DAVIS, director of the Learning Service and a professor of psychology, is a member of the University who takes exception to some of Shotland's conclusions.

"The community of scholars still exists," contends Davis, "not at the university level, but at the department level."

Davis believes that there are other criteria, besides knowing people one is affiliated with, for judging the "community" of a university. "Opportunities for intellectual stimulation have to exist," he says, and he believes that at MSU they do.

Shotland's communications study was done during a five-week period in the fall quarter, 1968, using 330 subjects -- 110 each of faculty, administrators and students.

A technique he applied indicated it takes 5.4 intermediaries when a faculty member tries to contact a given student, and 4.3 intermediaries for a student sending a message to a faculty target an average of 4.8. In an experiment by Stanley Milgram at CUNY, it took only five intermediaries to transmit a message from coast to coast.

"It is really very hard to call (the University) a community," Shotland concludes.

"Education implies some kind of dialogue, and you're not going to get it with the faculty-student ratio it is."

BUT DAVIS believes that "we have to face the fact that our opportunities for personal communication across the University are gone."

"Students want more personal contact, a breakdown of the mechanical and formal relations that occur in bureaucracies. And I think we should do everything we can on this campus to provide more students with lots of opportunities to know one another."

"For many kids, the dorm system provides opportunities for close personal relationships," says Davis. "Then there is the sense of intellectual community that comes with department affiliation."

Shotland takes issue with the desirability of students having most of their contacts with students only, which he says is the "status quo."

"IF EACH CLASS of undergraduates enters with a segment of its population holding certain attitudes," he explains, "and these people communicate only with each other, conditions are ripe for the mutual reinforcement of these beliefs."

Typical of an entering freshman attitude is an expectation that a university will be more intellectually stimulating than high school, and that there will be greater student-faculty dialogue, he says.

"If they don't find what they are looking for, this could be bad."

Solutions? Neither Shotland nor Davis views decreased use of CTV as a means to increase student-faculty communications.

"TV classes," says Davis, "free faculty to teach more advanced courses on a more personal basis. If you abandoned TV, you might need as many as 50 or 60 instructors to teach a basic undergraduate course. Then you would have to increase the size of hundreds of other classes."

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APPMJE meet set

An open meeting of the American Professors for Peace in the Middle East will be held Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. in Room 37 of the Union.

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Charting with MAPS...

(continued from page 1)

The scale is printed in the Winter Term Schedule of Courses (page 153) and is being distributed to all undergraduate students.

THE SCALE INDICATES the maximum MSU points below a 2.00 cumulative average that are permitted for acceptable academic performance. It also specifies that a maximum of 225 credits may be attempted for a bachelor's degree, and that a maximum of 30 credits may be repeated.

Zimmer pointed out that while a student who meets the minimum MAPS requirements is eligible for continued enrollment in the University, he is not necessarily eligible to continue in the college or program of his choice. Criteria for the latter vary across the campus.

The Education Policies Committee recently clarified existing special admission requirements of the various colleges and provided guidelines for establishment of relevant new ones.

The committee that developed MAPS was formed in 1968 after MSU's present grading system was approved.
"In the fall and winter of 1857-1858, students chopped down the trees east and south of College Hall and beyond the river. They felled trees in long windrows, cutting out the better oak lengths to be split into firewood for the two furnaces in College Hall. So inadequate were those furnaces, however, that on the coldest days (Prof. T. C.) Abbot dismissed the boys from his freezing classroom that they might seek the warmth of the pot-bellied stoves in their dormitory rooms. In 1859 the furnaces were abandoned, and stoves were placed in the classrooms and the chemistry laboratory."

Weekly seminars making strides to promote increased scholarly exchange among faculty

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Stanley C. Ratner, professor of psychology who helped originate the seminars, is current chairman of the program.

He explained, "On a large campus—and even on small ones—people appear and disappear on their own schedules, and frequently it may take years to find someone whose interest links with your own, on who could support your own, or provide good criticism."

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The new scale is the product of more than a year's work by a seven-man faculty committee. By the time the group had put the finishing touches on the scale, it had tested and rejected several ideas.

The scale is the conventional mechanism for a faculty discussion. "But that is a one-shot thing," Ratner explains. "The seminar is noted in the "Blue Sheet" or equivalent. Some large groups is faculty-student contact diminishing? See page 2.

The colloquium is the conventional mechanism for a faculty discussion. "But that is a one-shot thing," Ratner explains. "The seminar is noted in the "Blue Sheet" or equivalent. Some large groups of people get together. The speaker addresses himself to a topic. The group listens, and then walks out."

HIS FIELD is comparative methods and it was out of his discussions with another faculty member, Bernard J. Paris in comparative literature, that the seminars were formed.

The two found several things they wanted to know about each other's work and reasoned that other faculty would also be interested, not only in their fields but in other topics as well.

With blessings and encouragement from the Provost's Office, the deans and various departmental chairmen, the faculty seminars became reality during winter term, 1969. William E. Cooper, dean of the College of Education, and Paris led a discussion of the works of Dostoievski.

The seminar included symbolic logic, with Prof. Gerald J. Mueny in philosophy, and Prof. Ratner was the leader of a group concerned with comparative methods.

One of this fall's seminars has been led by John H. Useem, professor of sociology. He believes that the seminars present a special challenge for leaders as well as for participants.

"We are a very spread-out institution," Useem points out. "We

Osteopathy, benefits crowd Council slate

At its meeting today (3:15 p.m., Con Con Room of International Programs), the Academic Council is scheduled to consider:

Temporary suspension of section 1.3.1 of the Faculty Bylaws. This relates to the presentation of Distinguished Faculty Awards at the annual February convocation. It has been proposed that those awards be given in the spring at a program that includes conferring the Teacher-Scholar Awards and the Distinguished Teaching Awards for Graduate Assistants.

Recommendation of the ad hoc Committee on the College of Osteopathy. The faculty committee, announced last week and chaired by Richard U. Byrum, dean of natural science, is helping formalize MSU's stance on a proposed osteopathy school.

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Statement on resolving conflict

(Continued on page 4)

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