



# CHAPARRAL

By and for the Employees of Glendale College - Primary Funding by the Glendale College Guild AFT 2276

## Improving Program Review

by Jean Lecuyer, Physical Science Division

When the question came up recently at my division meeting as to whether the college should go from a 6-year to a 4-year cycle for Program Review (PR), the vote was for a 10-year cycle! Program review, it seems, has come to represent for my colleagues one of these pointless obligations that only a bureaucrat could love: lots of work, dubious value, but everybody has to do it because that's the system.

There is some truth to that picture. The reports are so long to prepare that the Guild has balked and demanded that its members be paid \$750 stipends to prepare them. With some 80 different programs in instruction alone, this adds up to \$60,000 and hundreds of hours per cycle. Then there are the validation teams which have to meet and discuss these reports. They were composed of three members, but the

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## Grade Inflation: Is it Happening Here?

by Michael Moreau, English Division

*"He would draw on many examples that would say that the audience's values are not defined by what their knowledge or loyal were but it was explain by that everybody alone does not exist and there is a force telling them what to do."*

This is the writing (altered slightly to protect anonymity, but not for grammar) of a student in English 104, Critical Writing and Argumentation. The same unfortunate accretion of language persists in sentence after sentence and in a succession of essays she has submitted. This student was given —

and the word "given" is used pointedly — an A in English as a Second Language 151 and subsequently a B in English 101, the prerequisite for 104.

I teach English and journalism here and see more of this kind of writing/thinking than I would like to, and I am often told by students

whose writing is not much different from the example above that he or she received a B or even an A in the class that came before. This led me to wonder if grade inflation might be as serious a problem here at Glendale as it apparently is at other colleges and universities. Newspapers

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# Roots of Unity

by Mike Allen, Guild President



## Aloha, Glendale

**W**elcome to my first column as president of the Guild! I would like to begin by thanking those of you whose votes put me here, of course, but I would also like to acknowledge those Guild members who voted for my predecessor. They have made me aware that I will have to work hard to win over a large number of people. Also, both groups of voters contributed to the relatively high turnout in this year's elections, which is always encouraging. I promise you all that I will give my best for the union as a whole.

One of the observations that people have shared with me

since the election is that the long-awaited generational succession at the college may be under way. If I had a dollar for every time during my 16 years here that I've heard Boomer brothers and sisters lament the lack of interest in campus leadership among us Gen X'ers, I think I'd be meeting with STRS about planning an early retirement. However, I am joined on Exec. by Amber Casolari as our new Guild secretary, the new president of the union for classified workers is Nidal Kobaissi, and most recently comes word that Michael Ritterbrown has been elected the new chair of the English division. This isn't exactly what you could call a youth movement, but it may someday come to be seen as the beginning of a shift. In fact, it might not be long before I can start kvetching about those lazy faculty coming from the ranks of Generation Y!

"...one of the things I would like to do with this column each issue is to highlight one of the many types of benefits that are available to faculty who choose to become members of the Guild."

Anyhow, one of the things I would like to do with this column each issue is to highlight one of the many types of benefits that are available to faculty who choose to become members of the Guild. Some of you may be scratching your heads about this "choose" stuff, but it's true that you actually must fill out a membership form in order to be a member of the Guild, vote in its elections, and enjoy the full range of benefits available. You may think you are a member, since everyone pays money to the Guild for the universal services it performs (negotiations, contract enforcement, etc.), but these are service fees rather than membership dues until you fill out the one-page membership form. Since dues are no higher than the service fees most non-members are

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## Chaparral

Printed 3 or 4 times per semester, the *Chaparral* is published by and for the entire staff of GCC. Primary funding is by the Glendale College Guild, AFT 2276. The newsletter is dedicated to providing timely information on the campus community about any issues that affect our college, higher education, and/or professional lives.

Prose, poetry, art work and opinion as well as expository reporting are welcome. The pages of *Chaparral* are open to all faculty, staff, students and administrators. Submissions for publication should be word processed in IBM-compatible Word Perfect, MS Word or ASCII file format. No anonymous submissions will be published. Please e-mail articles to Des Kilkeary (dkilkear). The deadline for submissions is the first working day of each month September through May (except December and January). If you have announcements you wish printed or any questions, contact Des Kilkeary at x5341 or e-mail dkilkear.

The *Chaparral* Editorial Board is composed of volunteers and is open to any college staff members. The current board includes Des Kilkeary (editor-in-chief), Susan Cisco (managing editor), Patricia

Chamroomrat (production manager), Nancy Lopez, Mona Field, Mike Allen, and Michael Moreau.

Columnists are Guild President Mike Allen (Roots of Unity), Academic Senate President Glenn De Lange (Speaking of the Senate), CSEA President Nidal Kobaissi (CSEA Connection), Classified Council President Patricia Chamroomrat (Classified Council Corner), Guild 2nd Vice President Kathy Holland (Adjunct Junction), and Alex Leon (Communications, Marketing, and Foundation).

### Disclaimer

The editors reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and/or relevance; to publish editorial commentaries; to omit materials which in their good-faith judgment is believed to be libelous, obscene and/or offensive, or an invasion of privacy. Questions regarding this editorial policy may be directed to the editor-in-chief. The views expressed in the articles of the *Chaparral* are solely those of the contributing authors. They do not represent the views of Glendale College or the Guild.

# SPEAKING OF THE SENATE...

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## In Pursuit of Its Mission

by Glenn DeLange, Academic Senate President

The mission of the Academic Senate is clearly outlined in AB 1725, the Community College Reform Act, and in subsequent law. The powers of the senate, known as the 10+1 (the “one” being “other”), are ten clearly defined powers describing the foundation of the senate’s mission and the center of its activities. The powers are:

- (1) curriculum, including establishing prerequisites,
- (2) degree and certificate requirements,
- (3) grading policies,
- (4) educational program development,
- (5) standards or policies regarding student preparation and success,
- (6) college governance structures, as related to faculty roles,
- (7) faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes,
- (8) policies for faculty professional development activities,
- (9) processes for program review, and
- (10) processes for institutional planning and budget development. The “plus one” category refers to “other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon.” Thus, the Academic Senate becomes the organization whose primary responsibility is to make recommendations with respect to all academic and professional matters.



The power over educational program development includes assessing the viability of the college’s current programs. The Program Sunset / Enhancement Task Force is developing a policy for this purpose. This year, absent a clear faculty-driven policy that considers program viability, the administration developed an “emergency” program elimination policy. While the administration’s policy was designed to quickly address a budget crisis, the senate’s policy focuses on developing a plan and providing the

resources for program improvement prior to considering reduction or elimination. The Program Enhancement / Sunset Policy is currently before the Academic Senate and hopefully will be finalized by year’s end.

In the area of planning and budgeting, over the past two years

the Academic Senate and administration have developed a collaborative structure for linking programmatic and institutional planning to the budget. The senate has passed this policy with a minor revision. The policy will be sent back to the administration for final agreement. Another senate task force is developing a planning schedule and process for creating an educational master plan that will drive facilities, information systems, and human resources plans.

Other task forces are addressing a wide variety of issues, including the institutional use of student learning outcomes, revisiting our Mutual Gains document, addressing non-contractual grievances, and

“In the area of planning and budgeting, over the past two years the Academic Senate and administration have developed a collaborative structure for linking programmatic and institutional planning to the budget.”

College Services hiring allocations. Senate Launches New Scholarship

One of the highlights of Faculty Institute Day is the awarding of two student scholarships to outstanding transfer students. In the fall, the senate will be offering a third scholarship designed to honor an

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# Adjunct Junction

by Kathy Holland, 2nd Vice President, Guild

## Plan Ahead for Summer



Now that summer is around the corner, it's time to make plans.

Perhaps it's time for a vacation; perhaps it's an opportunity to teach in a summer session. For those of us not teaching, it's

time to consider unemployment insurance, via the Employment Development Department (EDD).

There are some important things to keep in mind when applying for unemployment. First, call EDD directly rather than using its website. As easy as the website is to use, it is not set up to accommodate the unique nuances that affect adjuncts. For example, the website will not

give us the opportunity to cite the *Cervisi* case. The 1989 *Cervisi v. California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board* decision states that adjunct faculty is eligible for benefits because the employment contract does **not** provide "reasonable assurance" of employment, because adjunct contracts are contingent upon funding and enrollment and not an assurance of actual employment. Lastly, it does **not** matter if an

College afterwards (see above paragraph), but when you turn grades in you are unemployed! You also need to keep in mind that there is a week layover in receiving that unemployment check. When you call, have ready your social security number, and the name, address, and phone number of the college.

Something else to keep in mind: some EDD personnel may not be familiar with the *Cervisi* case and

it's time to consider unemployment insurance, via the Employment Development Department (EDD).

adjunct is being paid during winter or summer for work previously completed (once you turn in grades, your work **is** completed!). These facts of the *Cervisi* case will be helpful to you when you call to file for benefits.

When should you file? The best time is the week you finish administering finals. Yes, you may have a paycheck coming from Glendale

may deny your claim to benefits. If that happens, appeal immediately and be prepared to cite the *Cervisi* case again. Our Guild office will be available to help with the appeal, which is not difficult to win.

No matter what your plans are for the summer, have a wonderful vacation. 📖

Kathy Holland

(Continued from page 3)  
SENATE

outstanding vocational education student. For the year 2004-05 the senate is funding this scholarship through special gifts dedicated to this scholarship. The senate welcomes your contributions. In subsequent years, the scholarship is fully funded through a generous gift dedicated to

this special purpose.

### Thanks to Departing Senate Leadership for Outstanding Service

First, thanks is due to all of the dedicated senators who provide invaluable service to our students and faculty by serving on the Academic Senate. At the close of this academic year, several of our senators will be

ending their senate tenure. We thank Guido Girardi, David Jones, Lola Taylor and Pat Zayas.

We also thank Michael Ritterbrown, Senate Secretary, and Joe Denhart, Senate Second Vice President for their years of dedicated service. Joe will continue as a senator, and Michael moves on to chair the English division. 📖

# Luncheon Recognizes Service to College

by Alex Leon, Office of Communications, Marketing, and Foundation

**D**avid Hurst doesn't seek recognition, and he is not thinking about retirement. But after 40 years as a professor of chemistry and astronomy at the college, his lengthy tenure has been a topic of conversation and will continue to be, as he will be one of 120 faculty and staff and four retirees who will be honored at the 11th annual retirement/recognition luncheon Thursday May 27 at 11:45 in the J. Walter Smith Student Center.

said, but it has become a place he looks forward to coming to every day, thanks to the people he works with, the students he teaches and the tremendous facility he works in. "I never would have dreamed when I started teaching here 40 years ago that not only would I still be here, but that I would be fortunate enough to be teaching astronomy classes in our beautiful planetarium," he said. "I spent my first 10 years at the college teaching primarily chemistry, but then I became interested in


**11th annual**  
retirement/recognition luncheon is on  
Thursday May 27 at 11:45 in the  
J. Walter Smith Student Center.

Each honoree in attendance at the event, which is called "Focus on the Future," will be presented a framed certificate denoting their length of service from 10 to 40 years as well as the department they taught or worked in. The four retirees, Lupe Geer, Alfred Martin, Tina Tarnelli and Clarice Taylor, will receive a gift as well as a framed certificate.

Hurst started teaching chemistry at the college in 1964 and began a journey that would not only transform him as a person, but also the campus where he taught every day, Glendale College. It was a different place to teach in those days, Hurst

astronomy, and that has become the area my teaching has been concentrated on. I even teach humanities classes now, and I think that new challenges and the wonderful students we have to work with has made the time go by faster than I could have ever imagined."

The Glendale College Academic Senate, Alumni Association, Associated Students, Bookstore, Classified Council, CSEA, Foundation and Guild sponsor the luncheon.

For more information please call Tracy Adams at x5199. 

## Mortgages Tailored for Union Members




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JUN '04

# Classified Council Corner

by Patricia Chamroonrat, President, Classified Council

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## Classified Employee Week

Classified Council celebrated Classified Employee Week during the week of May 17th. Event highlights included a ping pong tournament, an all-star classified vs. faculty basketball game, a scavenger hunt, a 50/50 raffle, and plenty of cash and opportunity prizes. Proud winners of these activities are listed on our website [www.glendale.edu/classifiedcouncil](http://www.glendale.edu/classifiedcouncil). Thank you for celebrating with us and congratulations winners!

## 2004 Classified Council Student Worker Scholarship

Thanks to successful fundraisers and generous donations from Student Affairs as well as generous donors, Classified Council was able to award \$1,250 in scholarship funds. This year, four wonderful recipients will be recognized and awarded at the end-of-the-year picnic on June 10th. First prize winner is Jacqueline Dermirjian from the Transfer Center. Second prize winners are Meghedi Gharakhanian from Assessment, and Sarah Jennings and Sevana

Hagdadian from Instructional Services. The Scholarship committee had a pleasure reading the students' essays and was touched by the various recommendations submitted by supervisors. Thank you supervisors and congratulations Jacqueline, Meghedi, Sarah, and Sevana!

## End-of-the-Year Picnic

Mark your calendar, everyone! Our picnic is just around the corner, and there will be food on campus! The Classified Council picnic will be held at the Student Center on Thursday, June 10th. There will be two lunch seating times to accommodate everyone's schedule. The picnic is free for Classified Council members and \$5 for non-members. Everyone is welcome.

Picnic flyers will be distributed, and RSVPs are required. All RSVPs must be placed in the Classified Council mailbox by June 4th. If you do not receive a flyer, please go to our website to download a copy and submit your RSVP.

Picnic activities include lunch, student scholarship recognition and awards, ping pong games, 50/50 raffle, and more opportunity prizes!

Please join us for lunch, and celebrate with us the end of the year and the beginning of summer! 📖

Picnic  
June 10th

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RSVP  
Required

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Flyers  
coming  
soon...

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GUILD

already paying, this should be an easy decision. The form is provided to new hires and at least once a year to those who haven't turned one in, but I would be glad to send you another one if you would like. Just email [mallen@glendale.edu](mailto:mallen@glendale.edu) or call me at x5649.

For those of you who have filled one out, the benefit highlights this month have to do with cars.

Planning on buying a vehicle this summer? Check out the Union Plus Auto Buying Service ([www.unionplus.org/autobuying](http://www.unionplus.org/autobuying)) for lists of union-made cars, discounts on vehicle history reports, and professionals who will negotiate the price for you. A coupon for discounts on maintenance and repair through Goodyear is available at [www.unionplus.org/goodyear](http://www.unionplus.org/goodyear). Lastly, even union members like myself who are bus riders can

benefit via the car rental deals (currently Avis and Budget) described at [www.unionplus.org/carrental](http://www.unionplus.org/carrental).

To close, I would like to say a few words about the name of this column. Traditionally, Guild and Senate presidents have given their columns names that are at least loosely connected to their academic disciplines, and that is one reason

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# CSEA CONNECTION

by Nidal Kobaissi, CSEA president

## What happened to the cafeteria?

**T**his is a question that has been on my mind for a few years. It seems to me that for many years we all stood by and watched the cafeteria slowly deteriorate. Every year the subsidy amount increased until we reached an amount over \$100,000, and then it hit us... something was seriously wrong.

We now know that the cafeteria can be self-sufficient, and we continue, as a community, to work at making it even more efficient. But what about all those years in the past? What were we doing? I started to add it all up in my head and came to a shocking conclusion. If you take the amount we spent every year for the past five years, you'd have over \$300,000. That's a

lot of money! Money we could have used in other programs or during a fiscal crisis like the one we're in now.

Why did it take a committee to sit down and basically take apart the entire Food Services Department and reassemble it into a more efficient member of our community? Now that everything seems to be working well, what do we do? Do we dissolve the committee and hope that everything will be fine?

Don't even think about it: the committee should stay and should become permanent. The reason the committee was able to help the cafeteria was that the members acted as a conduit of information from the campus community. The members relayed the needs and wants for food venues and provided the cafeteria staff with information they needed to offer food that the community wanted to eat, not what they had to

"It seems to me that for many years we all stood by and watched the cafeteria slowly deteriorate."

eat because it was the only thing there.

All of this was made possible because faculty, staff, administrators and, most importantly, students came together and shared ideas and investigated options. The cafeteria staff have done an amazing job implementing every committee recommendation. I think they need to be thanked for their hard work. The next time you stop for a bite to eat on campus, let them know how great a job they're doing. 📖

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GUILD

"Roots of Unity" is my choice. In mathematics, the  $n$ th roots of unity are numbers that equal one (unity) when  $n$  copies of themselves are multiplied together, the most familiar being the second or square roots of unity. These are positive and negative 1, since both 1 times 1 and (-1) times (-1) are equal to one. Not to blow your mind, but if you go beyond positive and negative numbers into the realm of "complex" numbers, there are likewise three different third or cube roots of unity,

four different fourth roots of unity, five different fifth roots of unity, and so on.

While the mathematical technique for finding these roots is interesting and elegant, there are other reasons for my choice, of course. My predecessor, Lynn McMurrey, traditionally signed off his Guild communications with "In Unity," and I wanted to follow on that with a unity theme. But as many of you know, I have no patience for facile expressions of unity that attempt to paper over legitimate differences. I am

interested in creating those campus conditions wherein true unity can grow, just like the feelings of justice that are necessary pre-conditions for peace. In this column I intend to examine where the roots of our unity might lie.

OK, everybody, enjoy the warm nights of summer and we'll see you soon—MIKE 📖

*(Continued from page 1)*  
*PROGRAM REVIEW*

Senate now wants to bring the number to four (the request from last year's PR committee was for five!), which would mean 320 committee assignments per PR cycle, a job creation program that would make Mr. Bush envious!

Then you might ask: why 80 programs? Well, that follows the accounting system, and it's not always very sensible. Math, for instance, has only one program, but Physical Sciences, a division half the size, has five different ones. And why are the reports in a given division all done at different times?

each year if not each semester.

It made sense twenty years ago to make a big fuss about getting these numbers together because they were difficult to collect. But with the development of increasingly sophisticated information system software, producing this information is now routine: there is no need for big reports. What the college needs to do instead is to develop some criteria that would be used to flag problem programs and bring them to the attention of all parties concerned. Those programs, and only those, would then be asked to comment and indicate, if appropriate, how they intend to deal with the

well, and the resulting reports would be truly worthy of independent validations and of serving as justifications for resource requests.

A good example of such retreats is the one that the math division does annually, where its members go through essentially the kind of steps described above. For instance, at their retreat of last February, they looked at how they were doing with their common finals, their honors classes, their prerequisites, and their self-paced courses; they discussed how to teach uninterested students and how to improve the performances of Hispanic students and learning-disabled students; they

**"There are two major purposes for program review: to check the health of programs, and to make sure they are aligned with the major goals of the college."**

That's because division chairs feared that the work would otherwise be too overwhelming.

Is all this worthwhile? Could we achieve the same or better results with less work and a more sensible system? Well, the answer to the first question is probably not, and to the second certainly yes! This is what I intend to show in the rest of this article.

There are two major purposes for program review: to check the health of programs, and to make sure they are aligned with the major goals of the college. The first is done through data such as demand for classes, fill rates, student success and persistence, student placement or transfer and hopefully success on the job or at transfer institutions, and also through budget data. Most of that information, if available, is gathered by Institutional Research, and it should be on the desks of division chairs and appropriate deans

problem.

As for the alignment of programs, this is a valid exercise that needs to be done, but it should be done at the level of divisions. Program review should be a time when the members of a whole division, or even of two or three closely related ones, sit together and look at what they are doing, what works and what doesn't, how well they contribute to the realization of the college goals, what needs to be done and what needs to be better coordinated. For that purpose, divisions undergoing program review should be encouraged to go on a two- or three-day retreat, with at least some representatives from other areas; they should be provided with all the relevant data, and they should be given questionnaires, prepared by the PR committee, to guide their self-examinations. This exercise would be enormously valuable just by itself, and probably quite enjoyable as

looked at how well they had implemented their previous plans, and they made new ones.

That's the way it should be done. It makes no sense to break each division into innumerable little programs and look at each one of them independently. It encourages these programs to think and act as little silos, and it emphasizes lack of cohesion and collaboration, one of the perennial complaints about our higher education system. This is not what the college needs, nor is it what students need. It doesn't make much sense either that some programs go through their review at the end of the planning cycle while others do it at the beginning. Why not have every division go through its PR retreat in the first year or in the first two years of each cycle? And why not follow up three years later with a "mini-retreat" to see how things are coming along? Given the

*(Continued on page 12)*

# California's Master Plan: A Promise Broken

by Mona Field, Social Sciences Division

## For the many

employees too young to remember, back in the golden years of the Pat Brown era (1960s), California invested in its future. Highways, bridges, schools, colleges and universities were built, and the funds were available to utilize them.

In order to promote a vision of educational access, the state developed the Master Plan for Higher Education, a document that defines the roles of the three segments of California's post-secondary education: community colleges (then called junior colleges), California State Universities (then often called state colleges), and the University of California.

Each of the segments would serve a specific population: the UC system would accept all eligible high school graduates in the top 12.5 percent of their class; the CSU would accept the top one-third, and the community colleges would be the open door to anyone over eighteen years of age "who can benefit from instruction."

Community colleges had zero fees and the CSU and UC systems were remarkably inexpensive.

Times change. Over the years, community colleges were legally separated from the K-12 systems that many of them were rooted in. Fees were imposed at two-year colleges for the first time in 1982 (not long after Proposition 13 drastically

reduced funding for local schools and community colleges, as well as cities and counties.)

Fees have gone up (and briefly down during the boom years of the late 1990s) and are now being proposed for \$26 per unit starting July, 2004—more than double the fees of July, 2003.

In addition to fee increases at all

returning to college after time in the workforce, will continue to have their access reduced due to fee increases and class cuts.

The community colleges were intended to keep the doors open to higher education. The mission was and continues to be to give every Californian the chance to move up the socio-economic ladder through

Community colleges produce most of the skilled workforce, including nurses and health care technicians, aviation mechanics, graphic artists, police and fire officers, and numerous other technical employees.

three levels of higher education, the current state budget calls for 10 percent of UC and CSU eligible students to be "re-routed" to local community colleges for their first two years of transfer coursework. Of course, many of these students will not attend a two-year college. They worked hard to qualify for universities, and they will seek other alternatives, including private and out-of-state four-year university options.

Meanwhile, the majority of community college students, that is, the underserved, often underprepared, low-income, immigrant students, including many who did not complete high school and/or are

education. Community colleges produce most of the skilled workforce, including nurses and health care technicians, aviation mechanics, graphic artists, police and fire officers, and numerous other technical employees.

To deny access to our two-year colleges and to the four-year universities which Californians take such pride in, is to deny the future workforce its opportunity to maximize potential.

Studies indicate that the two-tier job market is increasing. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, California has lost jobs in higher-

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(Continued from page 1)  
GRADE INFLATION

and professional journals are full of alarming reports of institutions that have virtually eliminated grades below B, thereby rendering grades virtually meaningless. Some of them are taking measures to correct the problem.

Last year Columbia University raised the bar for the dean's list when it found that 75 percent of undergraduates made the list. If the honor was to mean anything, the university reasoned, it would have to raise the GPA from 3.5 to 3.75.

Just last month Princeton, where more than half the grades were A's, decided to limit

A's to 35 percent campus-wide — a move which would still make more than one-third of the grades A. Harvard has taken a hard look at its 90

percent rate of students graduating with honors. UCLA has reported that in a sample of 18 colleges and universities, A's had increased from 22 percent in 1968 to 47 percent in 2002.

Are teachers getting better? Students getting smarter? Most researchers think neither to be the case. They think it is purely grade inflation.

In a 1998 op-ed article headlined "Why Colleges Shower Their Students With A's," Brent Staples of the editorial board of the New York Times said that if colleges continued to pass out A's and B's like party favors "diplomas will become weaker and more ornamental and the years go by."

If grade inflation is a problem in the elite colleges and universities, how does it affect students and teachers in the provinces, the

community colleges that feed many students into those systems of higher learning?

Young Gee, chair of Credit ESL, says "I think generally it is a national problem. You read about it all the time. Glendale is probably no more immune than anyone else."

Gee, like other division chairs, receives printouts of grades every semester. Where he sees potential problems, he talks to individual teachers.

"We [division chairs] talk about the need not to inflate grades, to maintain standards regardless of success rates," says Roger Bowerman, chair of Social Sciences. He says he

If grade inflation is a problem in the elite colleges and universities, how does it affect students and teachers in the provinces, the community colleges that feed many students into those systems of higher learning?

sees people getting too tough, as well as too lenient. Adjuncts, he says, tend to grade higher "and every year we advise them not to be too lenient."

Staples says that adjuncts are under particular pressure to grade higher because of their tenuous job security. But both adjuncts and tenured professors tend to inflate grades "to escape negative evaluations by students" — adjuncts, to keep their jobs, full-timers to make sure their favorite classes aren't cancelled.

While Bowerman says that adjunct teachers wouldn't be evaluated for rehire based solely on the grades they give, he admits that student evaluations can often be deceptive. In the evaluations, as in the new web sites that anonymously rate teachers, a teacher who grades hard may be rated harshly for reasons that cleverly, or not so cleverly, mask the fact

that the real grievance is that the teacher is a hard grader.

The grading statistics that Glendale College has on file may not prove the case for grade inflation one way or the other, but they do indicate that grades on the campus are apparently lower than those at the elite institutions and have not increased over several years.

If Columbia reported 75 percent of undergraduates on the dean's list, Glendale College for fall of 2003 reports a much more modest 7.8 percent. There is a slight upward trend over the 12 years reported by Admissions and Records, but the numbers remain relatively low. With

virtually the same enrollment in the fall of 1991 and the fall of 2003 (15,765 and 15,877), 848 students, or 5.4 percent, made the dean's list in 1991, while 1,235, 7.8 percent made it in 2003.

Overall grade distributions have remained relatively flat over those years, with a slight dip in the late 1990s. Average grades campus-wide were 2.60 in 1990 and 2.50 in fall of 2003.

While these numbers are considerably lower than those reported at the elite institutions, it isn't clear whether it reflects differences in the quality of students or instruction, or whether Glendale professors are dramatically less prone to inflating grades.

Michael Ritterbrown, recently elected chair of the English division, says that English "has always been

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GRADE INFLATION

supportive of instructors who grade by the standards.” He adds that “nobody gets pressured to pass a certain percentage of students.” As to whether students are passed who shouldn’t be, Ritterbrown is less certain.

“I’ve been encouraged to enforce the standards for the classes,” Ritterbrown says.

But does everyone enforce the standards?

One of the standards of the English division is that students who pass English 120 should be sufficiently prepared for English 101.

2.3 mark for much of the 1990s, in the fall of 2003 the average hit 2.51, converging with the campus-wide average of 2.50.

Is this a measure of increased student success? Success rates, Gee admits, are hard to measure. “You can’t really predict that you will succeed in the subsequent class,” the ESL chair says. Other factors come into play: family situations, work requirements, differences in instructors.

Yet English professors and professors in disciplines that require writing provide troubling anecdotal evidence of students surprisingly ill-prepared to express themselves in

forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death.” As is the case with many Supreme Court opinions, Blackmun, in the Roe decision, presents a clear premise, followed by concrete examples and references to prior legal cases, ending with a conclusion reinforcing his premise. In short, he does what we expect of students in advanced composition classes.

Another student, this one in English 101, found The Declaration of Independence to be incomprehensible. He asked if the problem was that it was “old English,” presumably confusing Jefferson’s language with that of *Beowulf*. This was after

a lengthy classroom discussion comparing the original draft of the founding document to the final draft, in which Jefferson had deferred to the masterful editing of his elder, Benjamin

We need to continue to guard against advancing students to classes beyond their skills, and we need to do all we can to encourage all students to become better readers and better writers, and better citizens.

And while the success rate for students who have entered 101 after passing 120 has increased over the past five years, there seems to be a higher success rate for students who have taken 101 after successfully completing ESL 151. While 60 percent of students who have passed English 120 subsequently pass English 101, 63 percent of students who have passed ESL 151 succeed at English 101. (These are averages over five years; for fall of 2002, the last numbers available through Institutional Research are 60 percent for English, 68 percent for ESL.)

While it should be noted that students enter English 101 in several ways, through test placement and high school grades, as well as taking ESL 151 or English 120, one upward trend since 1999 is the increased average of grades in English. While grades in English hovered over the

essay form or to respond to written English.

The same student in English 104 who had “succeeded” so well in preparatory classes also suffered from serious reading deficiencies. Midway into the semester she pleaded that she was having difficulty with the reader assigned in the class. She struggled to understand the essays, both old and new, that deal with the social and intellectual issues of the ages. One of the readings was Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun’s opinion in *Roe v. Wade*.

In class discussion it became clear that the student had not grasped that Blackmun’s subject is abortion, yet the justice’s prose is a model for directness and precision. Blackmun is often remembered for his elegant lament in his minority opinion on the death penalty: “From this day

Franklin.

Yet, here was a Freshman Composition student who was baffled by such language as “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” He could glean no particular meaning from these words.

In other words, these are students taking the transfer-level English classes who cannot comprehend writings that form the foundation of our democracy and that establish women’s right to choose.

“Numbers do not lie,” the dictum goes, and the numbers at Glendale College indicate that overall, and for more than a dozen years in which records exist, we do not appear to be guilty of wide-spread

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# Milestones

Congratulations to Tracey Jones, who will receive a Master's Degree with an emphasis in linguistics this May. Tracey is the daughter of **Diane Landisi**, Administrative Assistant in GCC's Technology Division. Tracey teaches Spanish at Concord High School in northern California.

**Valerie Rhaney** has been awarded a Doctor of Education degree (in Administration and Leadership) from La Sierra University in Riverside, California. On behalf of the office of Graduate, International and Sponsored Programs at California State University, Chico, and the U. S.

## Do you have any milestones to share?

Send them to the Chaparral! [dkilkear@glendale.edu](mailto:dkilkear@glendale.edu)

Department of Education, she was selected as a Fulbright-Hays Scholar and will participate in an intensive educational study tour of South Africa from June 18 to July 25, 2004.

**Mike Wheeler's** son-in-law, Kenyon Harbison, has had his first short story accepted for publication in the Berkshire Review.

**Linda Winters** has received her doctorate (Ed.D) in Educational Technology from Pepperdine University. Her dissertation title is *California Community College Libraries in the 21st Century*.

**Hoover Zariani** will graduate on June 11 with a Master's of Science in Public Administration from Cal State LA.

Congratulations to **Vivian Darakjian's** son, Daniel, who will receive his Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

## In Memoriam

*Chaparral* has learned that Jim Smith, professor of anthropology and sociology emeritus and winner of the Distinguished Faculty Award in 1988, passed away on May 12.


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GRADE INFLATION

grade inflation. Clearly, the steady 6 to 7 percent of students who earn grades averaging 3.5 or better is far lower than the staggering percentages at the elite schools. And those 7 percent likely go on to further

success at the colleges and universities to which they transfer.

But that shouldn't make us too self-assured. We need to continue to guard against advancing students to classes beyond their skills, and we need to do all we can to encourage all students to become better readers

and better writers, and better citizens.


*Thanks to Cathy C. Durham and Edward Karpp of Research and Planning for their invaluable help in researching this article.* 

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CA MASTER PLAN

paying sectors such as information services and gained jobs in low-wage sectors such as retail trade and

hospitality. Without an adequately trained workforce, these trends will only continue.

The Master Plan was designed to keep us the golden state, the epitome

of the land of opportunity. Unless Californians reject the current belt-tightening of higher education, the future looks less promising for those seeking the California Dream. 

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PROGRAM REVIEW

experience of Math, divisions might not only welcome such follow-ups, they might want them more often.

To move program review toward this new mode of operation would not only be good for program review, it would achieve other benefits as well. The Master Plan, for instance, asks that we reinforce division life in order to "increase faculty

and staff excellence in all aspects of college operations." What better way to do that than through such retreats? In fact, this would be a perfect time for divisions to really look at what they can do to implement other goals of the plan, such as improving core competencies, providing learning opportunities, and making the college more student friendly. By and large our approach to these goals is very haphazard and

we could do so much better.

If we decided to do program review that way, we would not need the \$60,000 for stipends, and we could use it to pay for these retreats. We would also spare ourselves these endless committees. Instead, and most importantly, we would ask faculty to spend their time working together on our educational program, which is after all what we are here for. 