

A Plebiscite on Webassign

ALEX DADOK

Technology has been touted as a solution to society's problems for many years. In education especially, technology is said to be able to allow us all to learn to the utmost potential. Perhaps one of the greatest examples of the power of this new technology is the Webassign system.

Webassign allows a teacher to assign mass homework through the Internet that he or she has solved beforehand. When the student submits answers, the computer immediately checks to see if the student's answer matches the teacher's, and marks the answer correct or not.

Dr. Halpin, a chemistry teacher who uses Webassign, was interviewed on the benefits of Webassign. She says, "The very best part of Webassign is that students get immediate feedback." She also liked the fact that "Every student gets a different set of numbers, so I know people are more likely to do their own homework".

Some students appreciated these positive aspects of Webassign. Ashleigh Greene says, "I think Webassign is a good way to practice, but I don't think it should be grad-

ed". Halpin has an answer; she counts Webassign as less than 15% of students' quarter grade. She also appreciates electronic flaws in the system, and allows a student to get full credit if he or she scores above just 80% on a Webassign assignment.

Other students using Webassign have a different opinion altogether.

Everette McKoy says, "Webassign is outrageous, audacious, and discombobulating. It has no purpose in this school other than to terrify myself and my peers".

While not all share his uncontrollable fear of Webassign, many object that it does not offer enough reinforcement of the correct problem-solving methods. "If your answer is wrong, you don't get input to figure out what you've done wrong," says Marlon Sequeira, a hard-working junior. "Webassign does not force you to learn the process," said another student.

Many students object to Webassign's lack of depth and random due times. Sequeira says, "When I do Webassign, I find myself scrambling to just

get the answers". Webassign could be teaching students the exact opposite values that teachers would like them to learn. In the science departments, teachers desire their students to work the problems out and truly understand the process, as well as the answer. During a busy day, it might seem

easier to ignore the correct procedure and stumble toward some answers to just get it done. Senior Kyle Haber says "Webassign's random due times conflict with my [personal satisfaction]. It's not all about how fast you can do it, it's about [the method]".

In the end, although the teachers save time grading, and students get instant feedback, do they lose something more valuable? Does Webassign encourage students to discard learning good problem solving habits? Dr. Kolena, a physics teacher who teaches that the process is the most important part of science, does not use Webassign. Whatever the answer, it is clear that although using Webassign has its advantages, it also has serious limitations.

"Teachers sometimes assign Webassign to compensate for what should have been taught in the classroom," says Austin Chase.

Great Expectations: 2003

ALBERT REN

As the 2002 school year draws to a close, some juniors and seniors are already looking towards the future and forming expectations of being seniors and college freshmen next year, respectively.

For the most part, both seniors and juniors expect the same things next year. Many students expected more time

and increased class choice to pursue their interests.

Senior Phil Anderson remarked, "I expect a place where I can explore subjects that I want to learn." Jason Yellick thinks there should be "more time overall to focus on my personal interests and priorities."

And then there are the issues that concern juniors the most. One student expected to have better food from the student fee and more housekeeping supplies; most are looking forward to the new juniors. Luke Misenheimer said, "I expect the new juniors to do the phone answering, housekeeping, serving me food, you

know, that sort of thing." Lauren Wagner had different plans for the incoming juniors: "I will be able to step up and help those who need it and treat my juniors even better than my seniors treated me."

Academically, seniors forecast different things than the juniors. Pat Videau said, "It is going to be really fun but very stressful in applying for [colleges]. My schedule is

good but still very hard." Another senior believes it'll be another year of just trying to scrape by.

On the subject of free time, there are varying opinions. Senior Dan Piergallini said he expected things to be more of the same but with more freedoms, although those freedoms might become distractions instead. Some juniors and other seniors expect it to be easier overall and will have more free time to have an increased social life.

The 2003 year should be an interesting one overall, but only time will tell whether these predictions will be true.

Juniors Coping With Senioritis

BY EMILY CURRIN AND MEREDITH SCHWARZ

It was once said that it is better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all. But we ask whether it is nobler to adore or abhor our 'beloved' seniors. These are the same seniors who tormented us our first days but then became some of the best friends we ever had. Nevertheless, how can I forget those seniors that laughed at my tour group on Welcome Day and the ones that raved about their slack schedules and multiple sleep-ins throughout the entire first quarter? So then why am I already missing the seniors when they haven't even left yet?

Now that the year's coming to an end, it's almost our turn to undertake that difficult job of being a senior. Actually, it doesn't seem that hard. All you have to do is help the juniors out the first day, torment them a little regarding their class schedules and hectic orientation schedules and gain those special self-given "privileges" such as no housekeeping and

no in-room. But when the newness wears off, we'll all be right back to where seniors and juniors are every year, sometimes friends and sometimes fiends.

Seniors and juniors definitely have a tighter bond at this school than at a "normal high school". Sharing classes, halls and even rooms, all juniors eventually learn the secret hope that a senior roommate has at the beginning of the year—a "double-single". Often I've heard the

cry of the junior roommate to her senior roommate: "Stop trying to kill me! You're not getting a single!" But now it makes sense and seems logical, although malicious.

There is however, the one differentiating characteristic between juniors and seniors at this school—seniors are slack! From day one, seniors were the ones leaving campus, talking, laughing, and watching TV. We were jealous. While we were adjusting to being away from home and

a heavy workload, seniors were thrilled to be back, with seemingly less work and having more fun than ever.

What's that big black box that sits in the lounge that's always turned to the Sci-Fi channel? Oh right, it's that TV which we never get to watch because it's always being hogged by certain seniors for that pivotal "Star Trek" marathon or N*Sync concert. In the beginning, it seemed like reserving the TV was a good, democratic way

to decide what to watch, but we learned the hard way that a NC State basketball game does in fact override the Wednesday night WB lineup.

Next year is the year where we'll be able to be "in charge". We won't be associated with older siblings or the phrase "stupid juniors" (how cruel!). Is there some magical change that takes place over the summer before senior year—a practically instantaneous change in personality, a sense of cocky-dominance? But hey, it's not all bad; we'll be in that place next year. It's just bad while you're "on the bottom."

As much as I've ranted about the seniors, in my worst moments they were there for me. With helpful advice on teachers and projects, even they would reveal a heart at times. Seriously, I could have never figured out Graphical Analysis without help from the seniors. If I've learned one thing from you all this year, it was that "2-0-0-2" is really annoying. Putting my grudges aside, I hope that the seniors of 2-0-0-3 will be just as "bad" as the seniors of 2-0-0-2.



Anna Goldstein

"Help! It's Spielvogel, Spawn of Satan!"
Ryan Spielvogel (c/o 2002), in one of his more evil moments, is harassing Mario Piergallini (c/o 2003).