

Government considers education standards

By Tara Duncan
Staff Writer

A congressionally appointed education council recently recommended that the federal government create national testing standards in five basic subjects — mathematics, science, English, history and reading.

Members of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing recently proposed government-regulated testing standards that would gauge student performance in fundamental subjects.

"The purpose of (nationalized) standards is to help the country," said Emily Wurtz, senior education associate for NCEST. "Many feel that what kids get in high school isn't good enough. Let's find out what core ideas they need to learn."

NCEST members also recommended the formation of a permanent council to oversee the creation of national testing standards.

"There were 32 people representing all walks of life, but they all agreed that the standards were needed," Wurtz said.

"(Council members) asked experts what would be, in an ideal world, a good way to judge better progress. The experts said it would be if the nation made standards to test subjects."

The NCEST-recommended council will be appointed once federal funding is approved. Many of the nation's governors have pledged to support the program if federal lawmakers decide not to sponsor the permanent council.

"The new council's job is not to design the standards, but to look at what other councils, such as the National Council of Mathematics, have already done," Wurtz said. "They will find out what is being done, who is doing the best job and then certify them."

All standards that are passed by NCEST will then have to be certified by the National Education Goals panel, Wurtz said.

Wurtz said there were problems with testing standards that must be solved. If implemented, the guidelines must be clearly defined, the tests must be fair and accurate, and the standards must be administered in a way that protects the autonomy of local and state educators.

Gregory Anrig, president of the Educational Testing Service, said he thought national testing standards had more serious problems. ETS, based in Princeton, N.J., administers the Standardized Aptitude Test, Advanced Placement exams in a variety of subjects and the College Board Achievement Tests.

"It may seem strange that the head of the country's largest test development organization is opposed to a national test," Anrig said. "Any test, by its very nature, measures only a sample of knowledge and skills."

Anrig said if standardized tests existed for the major subjects, teachers would ignore the less mainstream subjects of education, like geography, foreign languages and fine arts.

Anthony Strickland, associate director of admissions at UNC, also was wary of nationalized standards.

"One would have to be careful in implementing such testing," he said. "Standardized tests are useful in context, but only in conjunction with other qualifications. National testing... would have to be studied to see if it affects performance."

Wurtz and other proponents of the new council are waiting to see if it will receive congressional legislation that would provide it with a budget and a staff. The Senate already has passed the proposal, but members of the House of Representatives have hearings scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday.

"The House is being very thoughtful, because it thinks it is a very serious issue," Wurtz said.

Wurtz said that despite the problems prevalent in any national testing program, the benefits would outweigh the disadvantages.

"The danger of not working on (national standards) was greater than the danger of closing our eyes," she said.

The idea of government-regulated testing standards stems from a 1989 educational summit held at the University of Virginia. At the summit, President Bush and the nation's governors agreed to set nationalized education goals.

The governors also decided they needed a way to determine each state's performance once the nationalized standards were in use.

New Hampshire gears up for presidential primary

From staff and wire reports

Democrat Paul Tsongas and Republican Pat Buchanan, who have struggled to be considered serious presidential prospects, are holding their own in the latest Gallup polling.

Today's New Hampshire primary marks the first real test in the race for the presidency.

Tsongas, a former Massachusetts senator, led Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton 2-1 among likely New Hampshire voters in weekend Gallup polling and by a 3-2 margin in several other tracking polls.

Buchanan still trailed President Bush by a nearly 2-1 margin.

Gallup's tracking poll for CNN and

USA Today over the weekend showed Bush ahead 60-31, including those "leaning" toward a candidate.

The recent Gallup poll placed Tsongas at 40 percent, Clinton at 20 percent, Sens. Tom Harkin and Bob Kerrey at 10 percent each and former California Gov. Jerry Brown at 7 percent.

The proportion of those who said they would write in the name of New York Gov. Mario Cuomo stood at 6 percent, with 7 percent either for other candidates or undecided.

The New Hampshire primary, the first major political test of 1992, traditionally has had a major impact on close presidential races.

STD

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bitterly. "Actually, I was kind of worried. He had a few girlfriends during that period, and I was kind of worried she might have it, too, and not know to do something about it. I don't even have his phone number."

Yuhasz has studied why people often don't use birth control. "It's not in our nature to believe bad things will happen to us," she said.

"I think the woman who feels very comfortable with her sexuality (uses birth control). It's the woman who feels frightened or guilt-ridden about being active, or if they are forced or pressured into sex — they're the women that aren't going to be prepared. Or if the woman thinks she shouldn't be prepared, she'd be a loose woman — it has to be like the fairy tale, sweeping her away."

Yuhasz explained that especially young people, since they are not used to sexual situations, practice denial. "I think they feel invulnerable to all the issues of pregnancy and STDs. They would rather not ask their partner, 'Have you ever had...?' Are you symptomatic? Let me look at you. They'd rather have the lights off, a little music, a glass of wine and fulfill their fantasy. Nobody wants to think the person they pick is going to bring them something they don't want."

"If you don't want to take the trouble to confront your partner, 'Do you have other partners?' then you have to know the risks. This is such a quiet subject."

Silence prevents many facts from coming to light, including oral sex's potential disease-carrying capacity.

"If you are a lesbian, you need to use dental dams until you are sure," Patricia said and her lover used a condom during oral sex until his tests came

back. "That's pretty weird. It's not that bad, it's just weird."

"Since the AIDS epidemic has come into the spotlight all the other STDs have been forgotten, which causes a lot of problems. They are serious."

Patricia also intends to be tested further. "I'm planning to go back to get an AIDS test, because if my ex could give me (chlamydia), he could give me anything," she said.

Yuhasz said many recovered STD patients became more health conscious.

"I think over the last two years, I've noticed more women totally abstaining, dating longer — an average of three months (before having sex). The average woman who's not had a scare may not be making these changes."

"What people say they're planning to do is they plan to be monogamous."

Patricia said, "Women are at the brunt of it, because they get all the symptoms. It's the woman's responsibility to make sure she takes care of health — the guy is not always going to do it, believe me, I know," she said wryly.

"Protect yourself, make sure your partner, or partners, is clean, or if you don't, use some kind of protection. And get regular pap smears."

"Once you insert a penis into your body, you are likely to get many sorts of diseases, cancers and fun things to have," she said bitterly.

Yuhasz agreed that people did not have to be promiscuous to catch venereal diseases.

"Most people are at risk during intercourse. My rule of thumb is three months' use of condoms with spermicide, particularly spermicide which kills STDs."

She said, "I think people want to believe 'It's just not going to happen to me.'"

Campus Calendar

TUESDAY
7:15 a.m. AED, the pre-medical fraternity, holds meetings every Tuesday in 224 Union.
NOON: Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center will pay tribute to Alex Haley with the viewing of "Roots" daily until 2 p.m. in the BCC.
Learning Skills Center will offer a workshop in notetaking and memory skills in 104 Phillips Annex.
3:30 p.m. Basics for developing a resume for internships will be held in 306 Hanes.
6 p.m. Kraft will give a presentation at the Carolina Inn. Sponsored by UCPS.
American Chemical Society Student Affiliates Club offers opportunities at the Chemistry Institute of Technology (in RTP) in 224 Venable.
Orientation: Area interest session for Ehringhaus in the Green Room.
6:30 p.m. Orientation: Area interest session for Whitehead/Carmichael in Carmichael Ballroom.
Orientation: Area interest session for Spencer Triad in Spencer Parlor.
7 p.m. Carolina Contact-Registration Committee meeting in 205 Union.

UNC Undergraduate History Association welcomes Joseph Suddell to speak on "Restraints in War: Their Effects in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf" in 569 Hamilton.
Carolina Hispanic Association will meet in Carmichael Ballroom.
7:30 p.m. Carolina Indian Circle will meet in the Campus Y Lounge.
Self-Knowledge Symposium welcomes Thomas Naylor of Duke University to speak on "The Search for Meaning on the College Campus" in the Toy Lounge in Dey.
8 p.m. a.p.p.e.s. Student Action Group will meet in 208 Union.
UNC Young Democrats welcome District Attorney Carl Fox to speak in 226 Union.

Corrections

In the Feb. 17 article, "Seniors launch fund-raising drive for class gift," Rebecca Smith, senior class gift committee co-chairwoman, was incorrectly identified. In addition, James Parrish's position was incorrect. He is director of the senior class gift program.
The DTH regrets the errors.

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