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Faculty committee explores possibility of grade inflation at Meredith

by Jessica Cook

Does grade inflation exist at Meredith? Are grading standards becoming lower as students do poorer work? Are some professors inflating grades in order to receive the high student evaluation forms needed for tenure? Why are there wide discrepancies in grades between departments and individual professors?

This year, Meredith faculty members have been wrestling with these troubling questions. Dr. Bernard Cochran, Head of the Religion Department, made a faculty motion on grade distribution last fall; he pro-

posed to the faculty that they should "devote the next faculty meeting to a discussion about issues relating to grade distribution." To further this discussion, he suggested "grade distribution records for the last several semesters by department and individual professor" be made available at the meeting. He also requested information relating to the Honors Program and the 3.2 Cum Laude distinction; this information would allow faculty to discuss whether to change or keep the designations.

In response to this proposal, the Instruction Committee tabulated the number of Meredith students who

graduated with honors in 1991; out of 391 students, 118 graduated with honors, or 30 percent. Part of the controversy lies in the high number of honors graduates. Do many students at Meredith graduate with honors because there are a number of excellent students at Meredith, or because honors designations are too low? Departmentally, 38.5 percent of students graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in 1991 had honors designations. Students graduating with a Bachelor of Music had 89 percent of honors graduates; students with a Bachelor of Science graduated 23 percent honors students. Why do

some departments, such as music, graduate most of their students with honors when departments such as sciences and math graduate so few with the honors distinctions?

One faculty member offered several explanations for the grade fluctuation. The number of the students in the Meredith Honors Program is significant; the higher grade point averages of these students would increase the numbers of honors grads and would raise overall grade averages. Also, Teaching Fellows and re-Entry students, who typi-

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Senate rejects SGA proposal to ban alcoholic containers

On Tuesday, March 31st, the Senate had its second reading of the Student Government Association's proposal to prohibit alcoholic beverage containers on campus. In a 10-2 decision, the Senate rejected SGA's proposal, which was to take effect beginning next school year. Prior to the vote, discussion was minimal. Afterwards, however, the Senators generated ideas regarding possible recommendations to SGA for future proposals. A consensus was not reached by the Senators, so a letter has been written to SGA concerning the outcome of the vote and the discussion thereafter.

Experience Meredith a hit with incoming freshmen

by Gilda Boyd and Amity Brown

On Saturday, March 28, high school seniors who have been accepted to Meredith for the 1992-93 academic year had the chance to examine college life during Experience Meredith. With a full day's schedule of seminars and activity fairs, these new students were able to ask questions and get involved with all of Meredith's programs.

About 180 students and 275 parents attended Experience Meredith, and many commented on how helpful the day's activities had been. Sponsored by the Admissions Office, Experience Meredith closely resembles what used to be Hospitality Weekend in the early 1980's. Sue Kearney, Director of Admissions, was "extremely pleased" with the turnout for the day.

The participants went to sessions focusing on Meredith, academics and college life. They also had lunch in the courtyard and browsed among tables promoting campus organizations. Later in the afternoon they attended a similar fair in Weatherspoon Gym which featured information on Meredith's academic departments. Kearney said these sessions were designed to "provide an opportunity for accepted students to get answers to questions they might have" about Meredith and its offerings.

A student evaluation given at the end of the day has early returns that these new students are "more excited" about coming to Meredith now than before the chance to spend the day here. One student said, "I'm glad I travelled from Virginia for this because now I know what Meredith is like. I won't be as nervous when school starts."

This was the first year of Experience Meredith, but one parent commented, "I hope Meredith continues having this. I have two more daughters who need to see what Meredith has to offer."

Kearney wishes to express much appreciation to those who helped out with the day and also to the entire student body for making the day such a wonderful success.