Retirement of newly enrolled students has been of great concern to university officials for many years, but it hasn’t been until recently that the university has had something on which to pin its hopes. In fall 1992 CSUSB initiated University Studies 100, "The Freshman Seminar." This two-unit course is designed to be the keystone in the university’s efforts to increase retention rates and to improve the undergraduate educational experience.

A planning committee of faculty developed this course after consulting widely and extensively reviewing current research and literature in higher education. Members of the principal faculty committee include Jacques Benzakein (Foreign Languages), Frances Berdan (Anthropology), Rafael Cortes (Foreign Languages), Kathryn Ervin (Theatre Arts), James Mehegan (Liberal Studies & Geology), John Scribner (Accounting & Finance) and Mo Vaziri (Accounting & Finance).

The faculty committee insisted that the new course be a universitywide initiative to address new student retention with goals that were clear, precise, academically sound and intellectually defensible. It insisted that the course enrich university life while also helping students integrate their academic, personal, and professional development, and the committee mandated that faculty with a reputation for outstanding teaching and scholarship teach the course.

The committee supported five basic objectives:

1) to promote student academic achievement and success at CSUSB;

2) to help students assess their strengths and weaknesses;

3) to help students integrate their academic, personal, and professional life at CSUSB;

4) to help students take responsibility for their own success through planning and use of opportunities, resources, and services at the university; and

5) to enrich university life at CSUSB.

Offered for entering freshmen only, the course attracted 216 (28% of the 1992 freshman class of 767 students). Five faculty each taught two sections of the class. They were: Diane Halpem (Psychology), Mary Smith (Marketing), Javier Tomer (Physics), Dolores Tanno (Communication) and Terry Rizzo (Physical Education).

Assignments, exercises, workshops, and guest speakers in the course cover the following topics: High school vs. university, educational goals and opportunities, quarter system and time management, goal setting, selecting a faculty mentor; student/faculty relationships; note taking; writing skills; math skills; library research; computer skills/word processing; test taking; stress management; university rules and regulations; university services; developing support groups; mental wellness; physical wellness; student organizations.

From the beginning, "The Freshman Seminar" has been a campuswide collaboration. Several faculty stepped forward to teach the course. The Admissions Office, Outreach Services, STEP (Summer Bridge), EOP and Academic Services all helped to channel new freshmen into this course. The Career Center, Health Center, Student Life, Financial Aid and the Counseling Center supported the course by offering workshops within the classes and working with instructors to develop the curriculum. Librarians from the Pitzer Library developed a special library introduction and orientation, which had the fresh student conducting sexual "on-line" computer searches for literature and periodical articles. The Computer Center and Learning Center organized computer and study skills workshops for the students.

Hundreds of faculty were interviewed by curious freshmen, who had to report on their interviews as part of their introduction to the university.

The results? The fall freshman class of 1992 had the highest return rate in the following fall of any freshman class in the history of Cal State. The 1992 return rate (74.7 percent) was 8.9 percent (6.1 points) higher than the previous year. While the rate had never exceeded 71 percent in the 19 years for which data have been collected, the 1992 rate was almost 75 percent. Students who actually completed the course returned in fall 1993 at a rate of 81.48 percent. Their continuation rate was instrumental in bringing the overall return rate to its highest level yet.

The faculty committee that developed "The Freshman Seminar" now is asking the Faculty Senate and its committees to approve permanency for the course.
To go on for a Ph.D.

Antong 16 students benefitting from the CSV Graduate Equity Fellows program, which Coachella Valley Center, is enrolled in the M.B.A. program here. All of them have aspirations to attend graduate school.

Human Resources/Physical Planning and Development
Physical Plant
Support Services/Budget
University Relations
Division of Information Resources & Technology (Library/Computer Center/ Audio-Visual)
Academic Affairs:
School of Humanities
School of Bus. & Pub. Admin.
School of Education
School of Natural Sciences
School of Social & Behavioral Sciences
Undergraduate Studies
Academic Services
Counseling & Testing
Educational Support Services EOP Learning Center
Extended Education
Academic Affairs (others) Academic Personnel Academic Programs Academic Resources Graduate Programs Sponsored Programs Student Services
President's Office

ACCOUNTING OFFICE ANNOUNCES DECEMBER PAYCHECK DISTRIBUTION

Although the university will be closed between Christmas and New Year's, December paychecks will be available on Friday, Dec. 31 from 9:30 to 11 a.m., says Don Sapronetti, Accounting.

Area administrators, Sapronetti adds, are responsible for notifying their employees as to who will distribute paychecks. Checks not disbursed on Friday, Dec. 31, will be picked up at the Bursar's window at 11 a.m., Monday, Jan. 3, 1994 by the regular designees from the schools and departments.

To assist faculty and staff, the designee's name, location and extension are listed below:

Accounting/Payroll
Student Aid Accounting
Administrative Services
Parking/Public Safety
Human Resources/Physical Planning and Development
Physical Plant
Support Services/Budget
University Relations
Division of Information Resources & Technology
Public
Safety Dispatch

Patricia Quinteros
Jim 5153
Ellen Misto
Jim 5912
Jenny Casillas
Jim 5138
Phil Haines
Jim 5151
Sandra Collins
Jim 5007
Rachel Hugunin
Jim 3078
Barbara McDonald
Jim 5700
Fred Roybal
Jim 5300
Kim Laschober
Jim 5975
Lil Haskell
Jim 5002

President's Office

Sh-110
PP-100
AD-121
PL-16

Sh-104


BRAILLE... CONTINUED or two to generate one braille picture. Lovvik can produce one in 10-30 minutes. That ability is a big advantage for blind computer users who can now generate their own pictures every time they run the program, because they don't have to lose a mouse. Up until now, only sighted users could "draw" braille pictures.

The initial inspiration and idea for the program came from Lovvik's fiancé, Susan Dains, who is legally blind, and Dan Kish, a childhood friend of hers who is also blind. Both are Cal State students. Lovvik and Dains met through the university's Students With Disabilities Office, where he served as her math tutor until they began dating. The program, says Dains, who plans to go into special education after the graduates this month, has plenty of potential as a teaching tool. "Everybody's always thought of the idea," he says, "but nobody's actually sat down and figured out how to do it."

In contrast to the programs used mostly to draw graphs and maps, Lovvik is toying with the idea of rigging it with the ability to scan a print, for example, of the Mona Lisa, and converting it into braille. Another advantage of the program is that it can be used by anyone, says Lovvik, even those who don't know braille. One of the biggest projects Lovvik has tackled with the program is to draw a map of the Cal State campus, which gives blind students a clear idea of where a building is located in relation to others.

Despite his hope to be accepted at the prestigious but expensive Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lovvik plans to sell his braille graphics program as Shareware for only $15 per copy. The point is to make it accessible for blind users, many of whom must keep very tight budgets and cannot afford high-priced braille printers.

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"Of course, I could charge $4,015 and sell a few butcher prints with each order. But I don't think that would help matters."