

# Equivalency diplomas enable dropouts to enter college

By Martha Murdock

High school dropouts often must live with the stigma that they are unmotivated and less capable than graduates. However, thousands of Nebraskans have disproved this prejudice by obtaining high school equivalency diplomas.

According to the director of adult education for the Nebraska Department of Education, Dr. Leonard Hill, many of these people go on to be successful college students.

To obtain an equivalency diploma in Nebraska, students must pass the General Educational Development tests. The set of five tests covers science, social studies, math, reading and writing skills.

Hill's office issues the diplomas, funds programs to prepare students for the tests, establishes and directs testing centers across the state and maintains standards by approving tests and examiners.

There are 52 testing centers in Nebraska. The average cost to take the test is \$15, according to Hill. Southeast Community College offers preparatory classes and administers the tests.

## Special permission

Any 18-year-old high school graduate may take the test. Those who are 18 or younger and have not yet graduated must receive special permission from the Department of Education. A dropout must have been out of school for at least 60 days.

Gifted students who have taken all that their high school has to offer may take the tests to enter some form of higher education early, he said. They must have permission from their school district. The youngest persons to take the test are 16-year-olds.

Hill said 45 percent of GED students go on to some form of higher education. His office is doing a study in cooperation with other individuals to discover how these students fare in college.

"So far we have found a general trend of university students with equivalency diplomas having slightly higher grade point averages than regular high school graduates. However, when the study is all over, I anticipate that they will come out about average with other students," said Hill.

GED students often are older and more serious students with definite goals in mind, he noted.

John Mackiel, a guidance counselor at Omaha Northwest High, is working on a study of GED students for a UNL doctoral dissertation. His work is just beginning, but he has interviewed about ten GED college students.

## College success

"I'm just guessing now from what I've learned so far, but the people I've talked to feel that they've been very successful in college after taking the GED.

"The motivation and caliber of the individual play a big part. Once they make up their minds to take the GED, they make sure they're fully prepared. They have high goals and use the GED as a stepping stone," he said.

Dan Ammons, a 20-year-old first semester freshman at UNL, said, "I left school mostly because I was lazy and didn't want to do the work. But later I took the GED because I wanted a degree and an education."

Another UNL GED student is junior Mae Fisher, a broadcasting major.

"I left high school because I didn't think I was learning, but I still wanted to go to school," said Fisher.

Many GED students are older than their college classmates. However, the difference in age doesn't seem to bother them.

"I don't feel out of place. It's not that big a deal. If I were 30, it would be different, but I don't think 20 is too old for a freshman," said Ammons.

Former GED student Kathy Mason, who now is a science teacher in the High School Equivalency Program for children

of migrant and seasonal workers, said, "Being older than others in my classes, I probably had better relationships with my instructors."

Hill believes that the GED program prepares students well for higher education.

"The equivalency diploma does not measure many things you do in high school, like typing. But it takes a tenth grade reading level to pass the GED. Better readers make better college students. Regular high school students sometimes do not have as good reading skills. The GED guarantees a reading level," he explained.

Ammons said, "I believe a normal high school education would prepare you a lot better. You'd learn more little things. The GED tests are just general."

## Algebra and geometry

Fisher, who went to high school in Hayti, Mo., disagreed, "I think the GED tests prepared me a bit better for college. In high school, I was required only to take general math. To prepare for the GED, I had to study algebra and geometry."

On the average, 30 new GED students enter UNL each year, according to director of admissions Al Papik. The university requires that a student provide a high school diploma or the equivalent, a high school transcript and ACT or SAT scores to enroll.

"The problem we in admissions have, and that puts undue pressure on advisers, is

determining high school deficiencies for these students. They may have passed the GED math test, but we have to decide whether they have had enough work in geometry, algebra and other areas. This is especially true for engineering and business majors. But with ACT scores and transcripts we can usually tell," said Papik.

According to an Omaha World-Herald article, the number of Nebraskans who have obtained equivalency diplomas has tripled in the last five years.

Hill explained, "We put more emphasis on our program. There is adult education in 150 cities in Nebraska. More people are interested in higher education. More jobs that didn't require high school diplomas five years ago do now. Realtors need diplomas, for example."

Mackiel said, "State rule 20, passed last February by the Legislature, said that any individual of any age could take the test. Also, social factors have affected the increase. There's lots of pressure in the job market today and a high school diploma is extremely necessary."

The World-Herald article also reported that about 87 percent of the Nebraskans who take the tests pass each year. This percentage is topped by only one or two other states.

Hill said, "In our program, we don't encourage people to just walk in and take the tests. We have them take a pre-GED test so that they can study to improve their weaknesses."

## Students in GM contest

Business students at UNL are competing with 19 leading business schools across the country in a marketing research contest sponsored by General Motors. The object is to come up with the best way to market and advertise the 1979 Chevrolet Chevette.

"This is rather involved, but the kind of project faced in the business world," said Ira Dolich, chairwoman of the marketing department and head of the UNL team.

Three marketing classes and one journalism class will participate with Eldon Little, a marketing student working on his doctorate, acting coordinator.

Dolich said Assistant Professor of Marketing, Lawrence Crosby's class has "overall responsibility for the plan." They will pull together all research and pressure other students to provide information, she said.

A class taught by Sanford Grossbart, associate professor of marketing, will be developing position strategies in terms of market targets and general concepts, Dolich said. William Curtis, marketing class will also participate.

The journalism students of Donald Glover, assistant professor of journalism, will be responsible for the media plan's creative aspects and budget, Dolich said. A hypothetical national budget of \$4 million is allowed. GM has provided each school with \$600 to start the campaign.

First prize for the winning school is \$5,000. One \$2,000 and one \$3,000 prize will also be awarded. Honorable mention will be given for marketing research, advertising strategy and presentation.

An oral presentation will be judged by a five-member committee visiting UNL on behalf of GM.

The team's written submission will be judged in Detroit.

In May the top five teams will travel to Detroit to present their winning ideas to senior GM management and to accept team awards.

"There is a lot of coordination that has to go on," Dolich said. "Some people are overlapping in several courses. This offers a tremendous opportunity for students to get involved in real studies with a lot at stake."

### THE STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD of the COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

## INVITES YOU

to

# BWEEK LIVE

1979

Now in its fourth year, B-Week has proven highly successful in providing the opportunity for students to meet with representatives from business and industry across the nation. This student-sponsored and engineered activity represents a meeting of the minds . . . students learn from and about the business world and visiting businesses have an opportunity to interact with future business women and men.

#### Tuesday, January 30

12:30-1:30 Keynote address by John P. Pfann, Vice President of Finance and Treasurer of IT&T presented in the Union Ballroom; Topic: "The Ill-Effects of Inflation"  
1:30-5:00 Business Booths  
6:30-9:00 Business Booths

#### Wednesday, January 31

9:00-11:30 Business Booths  
11:30-12:30 Presentation in CBA Auditorium by Robert B. Daugherty, Chairman of the Board, Valmont Industries; Topic: "From College Grad to International Corporate Executive"

1:30-5:00 Business Booths  
5:30-8:00 Banquet for business representatives and faculty featuring an address by C. Barry Schaefer, Vice President-Law of Union Pacific Railroad on the topic "Development of the Human Resource: Private and Public Sectors Views" and entertainment by the Scarlet and Cream Singers  
8:00-9:30 Business Booths

A. C. Nielsen  
Alexander & Alexander  
Bankers Life Nebraska  
Brandeis Department Stores  
Commercial Federal Savings & Loan  
Commonwealth Electric  
Conklin Associates  
Coopers & Lybrand  
Dorsey Labs  
Exxon  
Farm Credit Banks of Omaha  
Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City  
First Federal Lincoln  
First National Lincoln  
Ford Motors  
General Motors  
John L. Hoppe Lumber  
George A. Hormel  
IBM  
Lincoln Mutual Life Insurance

Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph  
Metromail  
Midwest Life Nebraska  
Miller & Paine  
Mutual of Omaha  
Nebraska Department of Revenue  
Nebraska Society of Certified Public Accountants

Norden Laboratories  
Northern Natural Gas  
Northwestern Bell Telephone  
Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co.  
Pagler & Co.  
Selection Research  
St. Paul Fire & Marine Insurance  
State Federal Savings & Loan  
Union Pacific Railroad  
Valmont Industries  
Woodmen Accident & Life  
Xerox

## Where do you get a cocktail on Sunday?

# Lee's

Open Every Sunday  
12:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Serving food  
and cocktails

Call ahead and get your  
order to go. 474-4393

# Lee's

West Van Dorn  
Near Pioneer's Park

