

College of Education Gives Most Top Grades At ECU

By Allison Query
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It is about that time during the fall semester when East Carolina students begin to think about which classes to register for in the spring.

Some students base their decisions on what classes to take according to another student's assessment of the class or on the professor's reputation. For instance, is the course known as an "easy A" or a course that tends to result in failing grades?

According to records from the ECU Registrar's Office listing all grades by department over the last five years (with the exception of one semester missing from the '04 records), classes in the College of Education continually topped the list with some of the highest grades, while classes from physical sciences and mathematics received the most failing grades.

Within the Elementary Education Department, nearly 79 percent of the students maintained A's while Special Education fell close behind with about 73 percent. However, Megan Fielding, a special education major, said that education classes are not necessarily "easy A's."

"I really think that so many students get A's and B's in special ed. classes because we really love what we do," Fielding said.

Amber Denton, a student who was previously enrolled in the Elementary Education Department, said her classes were very easy. "I don't want to say they were an easy way to make an A," Denton said. "I just turned in all of my assignments on time and ended up with a high grade."

Within the Educational Technology Department, where 80 percent of the students' grades are A's, Professor Carol Johnson thinks that the main reason students earn A's in the discipline is because they must get a C or better to continue in the education major. "We have to make sure everyone does well in this class," Johnson said. "We go way beyond (normal instructional efforts) to make sure our students at least earn a C."

Some of the other departments in which many students acquire A's include English Education with nearly 80 percent, Library Studies and Education with 87 percent, and Interdisciplinary Studies with 79 percent.

Moreover, some courses with total populations of 64 students or fewer over the last five years had 100 percent of their students earning A grades. These courses include leadership development, radiation oncology, Russian studies and Chinese.

On the other hand, computer science didn't produce many high grades. In fact, it had the most failing grades, with roughly 23 percent of students within the department failing. Apparently classes within the Computer Science Department take a lot of patience and hard work.

Rayna Weimer, an information and computer technology major, has enrolled in a few computer science courses. "Those classes are primarily based on trial and error," Weimer said. "It would take me like three hours to complete one small assignment. If I messed up one little thing, I would have to go back and start all over."

It didn't surprise Weimer that there were so many failing grades. However, she ended up with a B in her hardest computer science class.

Other departments that offer courses with the most failing grades include Driver's Education with 24 percent F's, Mathematics with nearly 21 percent F's, Chemistry with around 16 percent F's, and Medieval and Renaissance Studies with about 15 percent of the students failing.

So when it comes to spring registration, perhaps ECU students should consider that the cliché "easy A" might not be accurate. Maybe a student should just enjoy the courses in which he or she is enrolled. "I think as long as you genuinely have an interest in your major, you'll do just fine in the classes," Fielding concluded.