The Concourse program teaches students in a relaxed atmosphere.

Core alternatives offered

By Ralph Newman

What if you're a freshman who dislikes large lectures and continual problem sets, but hangs on for personal attention? What alternatives to the freshman core program do you have? There is no way out of the requirements, but two programs, the Experimental Studies Group (ESG) and Concourse, can give you the educational freedom plus personal attention that is perhaps missing from the core curriculum.

ESG has about 90 people, freshmen, sophomores, part-time tutors, and faculty. Its approach is self-study. According to Edna Torgerson, ESG administrative assistant, the student chooses his own program.

"We try to guide them in the physics, chemistry, math, and humanities requirements," she said, "and there are people around here who can help students decide how to meet these necessities."

Each student has a faculty adviser who monitors his program. ESG has six staff advisers as well. Students are graded by the teachers of the courses they take, and most courses follow a seminar format.

ESG veterans "seem to do just as well" as other students in time tutors and faculty, it's said, "and there are people a-humanities requirements," she said, "who can do.

Concourse is a smaller program that emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach to the institute requirements. This year there are 14 freshmen, plus faculty members from chemistry, metallurgy, mechanical engineering, and the humanities.

According to Marty Horowitz, a staff member, the Concourse program involves taking a course (this term it is "The Structure of the Cosmos" from "minute to galactic") that is used to unify the context of the freshmen science and humanities requirements.

"What we're trying to stress is the interrelationship between the sciences, engineering, and the social sciences and humanities," said Horowitz, adding, "I think they find this a more relevant or motivating way of going about it."

Woody Pidcock '75 is a Concourse wet and current tutor. "There's a direction," he said, "that showed a relationship between science and humanities, which the regular Institute programs don't. It was not self-paced," he added. "They gave us three times the amount of work we could do."

Pidcock described some Concourse advantages: it had "people who know what they were doing teaching it," and it had "a feeling of 'we're all together.' It was more personal . . . Your horizons opened up, he concluded.

"My grades are not as good as they could have been," said Pidcock, "because I wasn't taught..." He felt he was better prepared to choose courses cogent to his career.

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The Concourse program teaches students in a relaxed atmosphere.

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