

Reports endorse Arts I success

By STAN PERSKY

Arts I: the experiment that succeeded—at least, so far. That's the finding of three evaluation reports released this week.

The most significant of these, from a committee chaired by academic planner Robert Clark, ought to quash widespread, but unfounded rumors that the program is going to be dumped.

In addition to the Clark committee evaluation, a second report reveals that Arts I students far outdid other froth in the grade scramble. And the third report, from the Arts I faculty, says the Tussman-styled college is healthy.

Now to sort out the welter of statistics, findings, impressions, and recommendations:

Arts I students scored about 6 per cent higher than other incoming arts freshmen on the university test battery; and they were generally seen as more involved in literary, musical, political and religious activities than other students. (The 200-plus students who applied last year were all accepted.)

Given this slight difference, the results of first-year academic standings are startling. Arts I students registered four times as many first-class marks, on the average, as regular first-year students. Even more important, 69 per cent of the Arts I students passed all their courses, compared to the arts faculty average of 46 per cent.

This is significant considering that one of the major financial drains at the university is the high first-year drop-out rate.

You may object: True, Arts I students got good grades in their 9-unit program, but how did they compare to other students when they took their two regular courses, like biology 101, french 110, fine arts 125, geography 101, etc.? Again, Arts I students scored high, with twice as many first-class grades on the average and a seven per cent lower failure and drop-out rate.

Although there is currently much criticism of statistical measurement, both the Clark report and the Curriculum Committee evaluation relied heavily on numbers for lack of other valid criteria.

Arts I staff members, now having favorable statistics to back up their program, point out however, that though statistical evaluation has been done, had the figures been critical, it would not have undercut their argument. They say evaluation of the program must ultimately be an intellectual judgment about the quality of the Arts I concept of education.

The Clark committee did administer an open-ended subjective questionnaire to Arts I students. They found that favorable comments about the program outnumbered unfavorable responses seven-to-one, and 94 per cent of the Arts I students said that if they had it to do all over again, they would.

A further survey conducted by the Clark group showed that 66 per cent didn't want to go into an Arts II program, but the reasons mostly related to structural requirements of the university and career objectives. An Arts II program was offered this year to about 20 students, and last week a group of about 25 incoming arts freshman on the university test battery; and they were generally seen as more involved in literary, musical, political and religious activities than other students. (The 200-plus students who applied last year were all accepted.)

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students in this year's Arts I program met to continue Arts II for 1969-70.

An interesting result of the Clark report has to do with how students decide whether they're learning anything. In the Clark survey regular arts students emphasized the instructor's classroom delivery, his course organization and preparation.

By contrast Arts I students placed more emphasis on teacher-student relations and the program structure itself.

The significance of this finding is that it tends to support the claim made by the head

Joseph Tussman, head of Berkeley's Experimental College, will speak Thursday noon in Hebb Theatre. He will also conduct a Thursday evening seminar for the Teach-In study groups in the Blue Room of the Arts I building at 8 p.m.

of Berkeley's Experimental College (the program on which Arts I is modelled), Joseph Tussman, about "colleagial teaching":

Tussman suggests that "the shift from the course to the program has a revolutionary effect on the teaching situation. A single professor can teach a course; he cannot teach a program. 'What should I do with my students?' gives way to 'What should we do with ours?' Unless structural reform entails the substitution of the latter question for the former, it will have only minor effects on the quality of education. We must move from individualistic to colleagial teaching. That is a drastic move, indeed; 'revolutionary' is not an exaggeration."

Apparently Arts I students agree.

The most controversial finding in the Clark report says Arts I costs too much. Arts dean John Young reports that the 9-unit Arts I program cost, in teaching salaries, \$336 per student, while the corresponding expense for a regular arts students was about \$130 (e.g. english 100 \$73, history 100 \$37, psychology 100 \$20).

Informed sources in the program offer a different interpretation. They say the figures don't show Arts I costs far more than regular courses as much as they show the imbalance of university spending in favor of upper division and grad students.

One Arts I professor said, "Academics have consistently given the short end of the

stick to those that need it most, first and second year students. In effect, lower division students subsidize upper division and grad students."

The Clark report praises the first year of the program highly: "We believe that in 1967-68 Arts I was most successful in arousing enthusiasm among many student for discussing ideas, in stimulating their sense of trusting each other to the point of talking and writing freely, in encouraging them to think for themselves and creatively about human problems." Further, "a large measure of success was achieved in creating a sense of community."

A major section of the Clark report tried to answer such questions as, "Did Arts I prove a worthwhile education experience in itself?" "Was it a valuable alternative to existing courses?" "Was it relevant to the life of students and faculty involved in it?"

While the evaluation answers all these questions affirmatively, the most fundamental finding ties to the non-disciplinary approach of Arts I and similar programs: "What we are trying is a different way of handling the first two years. Stated negatively, our problem is to provide an alternative to the system of sampling introductions to the academic disciplines as the organizing principle of the first two years. We are not disciplinary; nor are we interdisciplinary. We are non-disciplinary or subdisciplinary. Our position is that lower division education need not, should not, be conceived in terms of academic professions." (Tussman, *Experiment at Berkeley*). The Clark committee found "in the course of our enquiries we have come to see that a non-disciplinary approach to knowledge has a valid place in our university."

The report concludes with a go-ahead recommendation: "We are in full agreement as to the desirability of continuing the Arts I experiment." The report recommends that the size of the program for 1969-70 be maintained at this year's level of 18 faculty and 360 students, advising against expansion; money is more urgently needed to prevent overcrowding in first and second year arts courses.

The endorsement of an educational experiment by an evaluation group not noted for radicalism (consisting of professors Conway, Landauer, Shirran, Steinberg and Smiley, in addition to chairman Clark) will likely ensure that Arts I continues and expands.