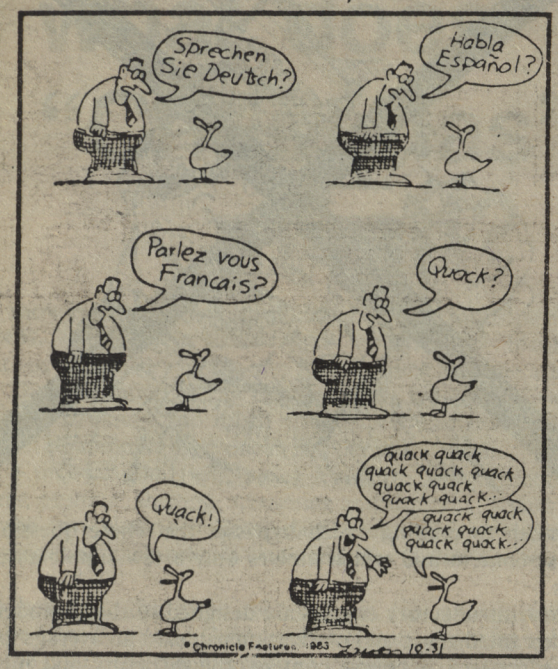
Continued from the previous page ...

THE FAR SIDE By GARY LARSON



grades at U.P.E.I. have the same meaning as grades elsewhere. This could not occur if there were inconsistencies in the relationships between student abilities and grades.

The expected grade distribution can be used in two ways to convert test scores to grades. If one assumes that both the expected grade distribution and the obtained test score distribution are approximately normal, "Z" transformations can be used to achieve the conversion. (Z transformations are explained in most introductory statistics books. Essentially they involve rescaling a group of numbers relative to their mean value in terms of their standard deviation.) Z transformations also provide an unbiased means of averaging the scores of tests that have different numbers of questions and differ in difficulty. Another way employs graphic techniques to partition a histogram of test scores to match the expected grade distribution. This method involves fewer assumptions about the shapes of the distributions and it is less rigorous.

Use of the average grade distribution at U.P.E.I. as a guide to assigning introductory course grades in all departments would help to ensure that a grade signifying good achievement in one department had the same meaning in other departments. The main requirement is that the course have at least 30 students so that the enrollment is likely to be representative of the abilities and motivations of the student body in general. The achievement of a consensus on grades in the introductory courses would facilitate consistent grading in more advanced courses.

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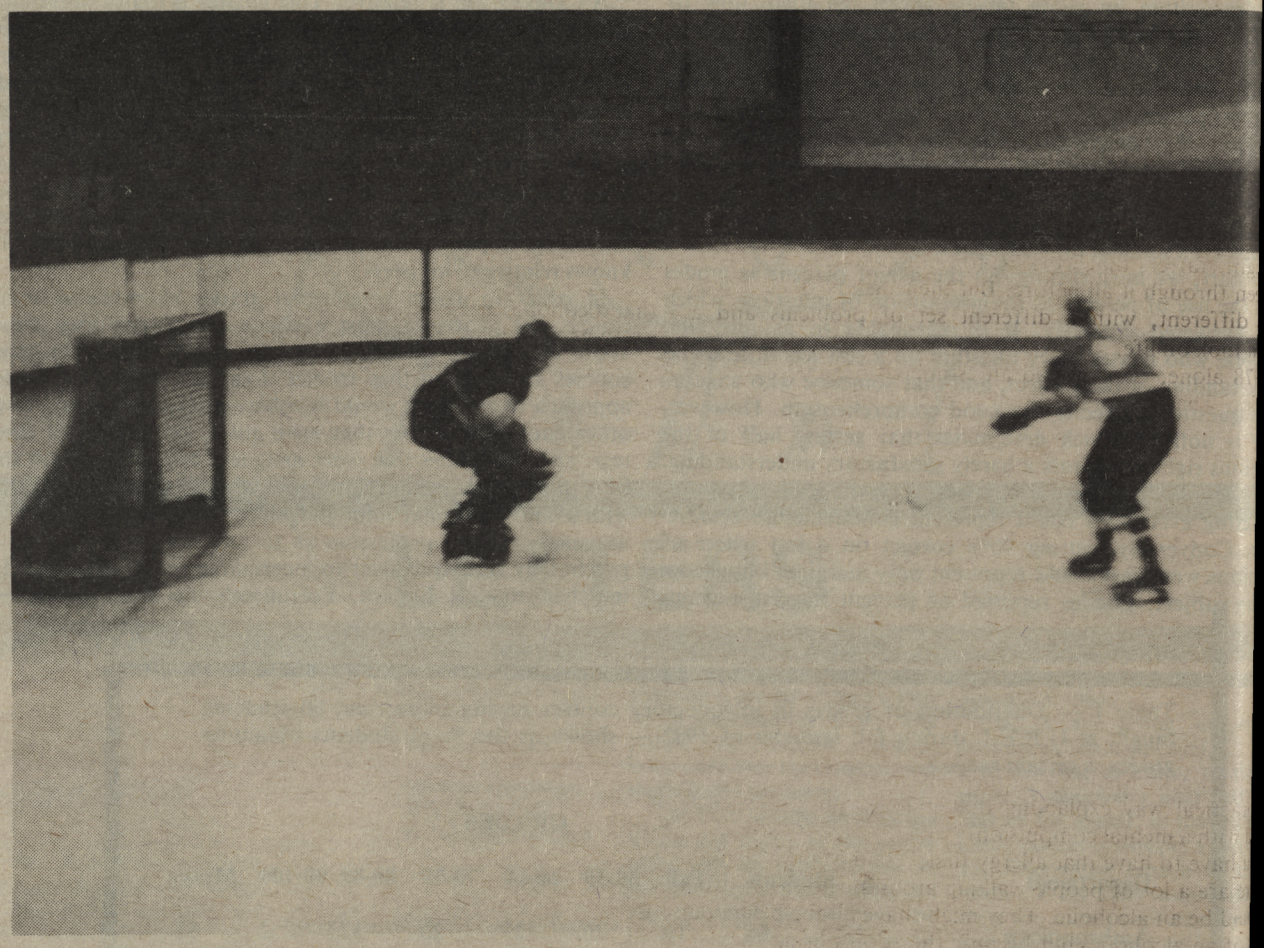

Ever feel that you and your professor are involved in a furious game of "one on one"? Taking pot shots at one anot he in order to drill some knowledge into your head, you in order to field it and shoot back for some marks? Well, cheer Just think — when you get out of university, it'll be the same situation. Only then it will be your boss and you'll be get paid for it!

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