Education

Harbor High teachers make time to teach special course

By GREG GARRY
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To better prepare their students for college, two Harbor High math instructors have been coming to school early, teaching through their lunch periods and staying after class to teach calculus.

While Harbor High School offers advanced courses in most disciplines, i.e. advanced writing, advance literature, Principal Marty Krovetz says "we don't offer calculus."

The math department at Harbor, according to Krovetz, believes it is important for the students to receive proper preparation for calculus.

"Many of the people here spend their breaks and lunch and prep periods working with students," says Krovetz. There is no time when I go down to the math department when there aren't students asking for help. Those teachers eat with a sandwich in one hand and a book in the other."

Of the seven math instructors at Harbor High, only three were math majors in college, says Krovetz. Dean Mammack and Dennis Burns, two math teachers at Harbor, have been instrumental in getting students ready to take the college placement test, which is given every May at the high school. The test determines what classes the students qualify for.

In addition to their regular math course work, the 25 or so students getting the special teaching complete outside work in calculus, according to Krovetz. He says Burns comes in before school on Monday and Thursday mornings. Mammack stays after school on those days to work with students.

Krovetz says the students must show up for at least two sessions a week. All 25 students involved are juniors and should be ready to take the math section of the placement test during their senior year, says Krovetz.

Mammack says the students involved in the program are self-motivated. "These students are not a problem," says Mammack. "They find the regular curriculum redundant, so they need less."

Since the students need less time on their regular math course work, says Mammack, "The number of hours they put in on their math should not change."

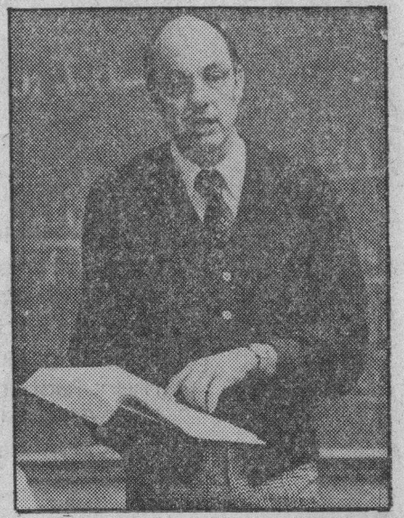
For their outside work in calculus, the students are using the same textbook used on the UCSC campus, says Mammack. "They are essentially going through two books at the same time," he says.

The students should be able to handle the load, according to Mammack. "I don't anticipate any probelms. What we are doing here is not that new because we have always had special students."

"Our math program is more demanding than when I was in high school, says Burns. "We are doing things here now that I didn't get to till I was in college, so that takes care of what you hear about the good old days."

According to Burns, the college prep program at Harbor is as follows: Algebra I, freshman; geometry, sophomore; algebra II, junior, and analysis, senior. Analysis is a precalculus course, says Burns. "This program is probably pretty much the same as our sister schools in the district."

Both Burns and Mammack say that of the 1,130 students enrolled at Harbor High, 926 are enrolled in some kind of math course.



Math teacher Dennis Burns