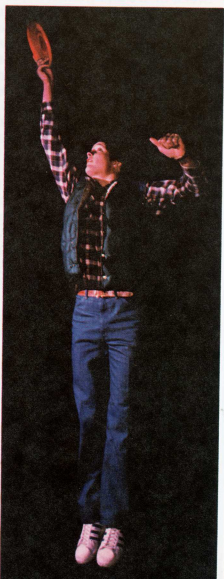


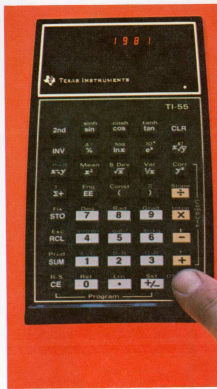


# PREPPING FOR THE FUTURE

By Karen Worley Photos by Larry Boehm

Today's students pursue fun as if it were a vocation. Bucks, beer, a car, companionship, entertainment and exercise are the "necessities" of life. But ● ● ●





● ● ● beneath the exterior of this fun-seeking, self-indulgent college generation are students who are pragmatic about careers and material success. A "me-ism" permeates their attitudes on everything from their studies, politics, clothes and social lives. They would rather work within the system than demonstrate, are more concerned with clothes than politics, are more likely to drink beer than use drugs, and are casual, but not promiscuous, about sex.

"On the first day of class, freshmen are in here worried about their major and a career," says Career Planning and Placement Center coordinator Thom Rakes. Today, higher education is viewed as a stepping stone to a monetarily, personally satisfying career — "a means to an end," says Norman Moore, vice chancellor for student services.

Today's student picks his major carefully, being anxious to avoid pitfalls encountered by liberal arts-educated friends who are unemployed or under-

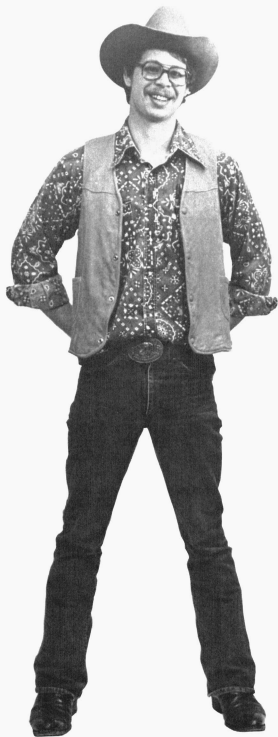
employed. In the past five years, the new vocationalism has sparked a "definite increase in enrollment in engineering, business and the science areas of Arts and Science where job opportunities are the greatest," says Gary Smith, director of admissions and registrar.

Simply put, students are going where the bucks are. Starting salaries for engineering graduates, for example, hover around \$24,000. If students have math and science ability, says Jack Morgan, director of placement for the College of Engineering, they can earn twice as much money as other new graduates.

In these days of razor-sharp competition, Bryan Burrough is "packaging" himself for a successful career. "You cause your own breaks," he says. In addition to working on the *maneater*, he's trying to maintain a 3.5 GPA in pre-journalism courses.

Burrough, like many other students, thinks of grades as a hedge against competition in the job market. Calculating students treat grades like a

Ride 'em cowboy! Tim Bernt takes  
to Western duds like urban cowboys to mechanical bulls.  
Eric McCarthy craves the classic  
preppy look.



commodity. "How many points do I have?" and "How many more do I need?" are the questions Jo Sapp, an English teaching assistant, hears most often. Counselor Rakes agrees: "It's not so much what I can learn in this class, but what I have to do to get an A."

**TODAY, A "GENTLEMEN'S C"** is viewed as failing by many students. Despite no appreciable increase in the mean GPA (in 1970 it was 2.6; in 1980, it was 2.63), "The pressures to make better marks are there," says Associate Provost Larry Clark.

In their competitive pursuit of good grades, some students resort to cheating, often spending more time devising a cheating scheme than would've been needed to study. More prevalent than cheating, however, are methods to beat the grading system that students seemingly pick up by osmosis. To artificially inflate their GPAs, students enroll in "pud" or "gut" courses recommended by fellow students because of a particularly easy-grading teacher. Another way to boost the grade point average is by taking a course pass/fail (no letter grade is computed into the GPA). Brown-nosing the teaching assistant, a time-honored practice, is seen as another way to bring a grade up a letter.

**DESPITE THE GLOOMY** unemployment picture, today's students are optimistic about their own futures. "I'm going to be a millionaire by the time I'm 40," says J. William Kingston, a December business graduate. "That may sound cocky, but that's a realistic goal to me." Paul May, a business-turned-psychology major, echoes Kingston's feeling: "Even though the future is foggy [jobwise], I can do anything in this world that I want to." Jerome Ewing, president of the Legion of Black Collegians, agrees: "The sky's the limit."

In contrast with students' optimistic views of their own futures is their pessimism about the country's future. Today's more conservative students express frustration in terms of unemployment, inflation, energy and taxes. For the most part, they've given up on causes because they don't think they can get anywhere with them.

Today's college generation, the first television generation and last of the post-World War II baby boom, takes a dim view of how sixties' students demonstrated to prove a political point. Rather, they work within the system. "It's a rare case you get

something done outside the system," Burrough says matter-of-factly.

**NOT AS POLITICALLY APATHETIC** as they are often portrayed, today's student has switched from ideological politics to interest-group advocacy, promoting the rights of blacks, gays or women in increasing numbers and strength.

Complacency on the part of most students, however, bothers their leaders. "All they want to do is party, study, eat and sleep," complains Sarah Luthens, president of the Association for Women Students. The "Me Decaders" are too busy worrying about getting into Med School, Law School or Graduate School, or just making it through the semester. "I don't feel a part of the real world," says Kurt Gribble, a freshman engineering major. "I'm so caught up in my studies, it's tough to know what's going on."

While today's college students may reject the political protest style of their sixties' counterpart, they're just as much into "uniforms" as the hippies ever were, says Bill Riley, director of Student Development.

In direct contrast with the unkempt look students achieved a decade ago is the neat and clean preppy look, in vogue at Mizzou as well as across the country. The preppy look includes such classics as Lacoste shirts (in pink, lime green, blue and yellow) button-down Brooks Brothers oxford cloth shirts, khaki or corduroy slacks, argyle or cable knit socks, and Top-Siders, wing tips or bucks. Part of the fad is the prestige of wearing the designer's signature, be it the Polo player, Lacoste alligator (it's really a crocodile) or Brooks Brothers golden fleece. Fashion jeans also have built-in prestige, although with \$50 price tags, some students feel they've lost their luster.

**THOSE WHO DRESS PREPPY** see it as a craving for classics. But Sapp, who has graded numerous English essays on the subject, says it all really comes down to carbon-copy conformity. Preppies also express anti-polyester leanings. When near a person in polyester, the joke goes, don't strike a lighter.

Unlike each generation who thinks it discovered sex, the preppies realize they didn't invent oxford cloth. But, "Ivy Leaguers don't look like we look," says Interfraternity Council president Shaun Hayes.

**Steve Berendzen, the outdoors type, enjoys hunting, trapping and fishing while jock Helen Wilson feels good about daily exercise.**



Kingston, a true Ivy Leaguer who's been wearing Top-Siders since age 3, says, "I don't like being part of a fad, preppies are invading my space." So he retaliates by wearing contacts instead of horn-rimmed glasses and cutting the alligator off a cotton Izod sweater. He'll be glad when the preppy fad dies so he can go back to wearing his blue corduroys with geese.

Several other modes of dress are apparent on Campus.

The jock look, part and parcel of the fitness craze, isn't limited to lettermen. Others jock up, too—often in snazzy, expensive jogging suits and \$50 running shoes—and clog indoor tracks and racquetball courts, especially at study break time, to exercise and "scope" members of the opposite sex.

The outdoors type, mountain men 1980s style, wears jeans, flannel shirt, down vest, mountain parka and hiking boots.

Mechanical bulls and the movie, "Urban Cowboy," have spurred Western wear, although for some Missouri students, the cowboy hat, boots, jeans, yoked shirt and denim vest are the real McCoy.

The most distinctive trend, however, is part fashion, part music. New Wave music has spawned a variety of looks, including one called neo-mod which corresponds with early sixties' music and is characterized by bright-colored, striped miniskirts and dresses, spike heels or go-go boots, fishnet stockings and wrap-around sunglasses. "I get mostly stares," says Anne Monica Raso, one of the handful of students into neo-mod. "People come to me for Halloween costumes."

Clothes students wear and games they play often are linked to the booze they drink, which is most often beer. A new dance, called the Pogo (because dancers resemble pogo sticks) works best when they're "feeling no pain," says Luthens. Still another new step is called the Gag, and it's connection with alcohol is obvious.

"Let's tank," "tie one on," "get wasted," "get ripped," "put a wild one on," all express the same concept: party. And "every party you go to is based around a kegger," Gribble says. Nine out of 10 students drink, Riley estimates. Whereas 10 years ago, the pressure to smoke marijuana was on, today's student has a choice whether or not to smoke pot, but "the same is not true with alcohol.

"Students feel they need to drink in order to get

along. They use it as a crutch for things (like communications and dating skills) they haven't developed yet," he adds.

**STUDENTS HAVE BACKED OFF** hard drugs in favor of alcohol, says Joe Johnston, chief of the Career Planning and Placement Center. Students don't even think of alcohol as a drug, but student alcoholism is "a far more serious problem than drugs ever were," says Clyde Crego, chief of counseling at Counseling Services. Two-thirds of conduct problems on Campus are related to alcohol consumption in some way, Riley says.

When it comes to their favorite sports, students view football and sex as interrelated. Football, says junior Al Keeler, is "the attraction getting people together." Riley agrees: "This Campus is so diverse, there's not an awful lot of things students have in common other . . . than a sporting event." With all the football media hype, "You almost feel obligated to go to games and talk about it," Luthens adds.

When it comes to sex, in 1981, "The vogue is to be experienced," says Dr. Wayne Anderson, a psychology professor who teaches such courses as Human Sexuality. The sexual freedoms wrought by the sixties mean "freedom to do or not to do," he continued, "but the pressure is there to do it." Whereas, in 1968, only 15 percent of entering freshmen women had had sex, by 1972 that figure had jumped to 50 percent, Anderson says.

**BUT THE SO-CALLED "FREE" SEX** doesn't mean today's student is promiscuous. It's "not fair to jump beds," Burrough says. People who sleep around are "insecure, irresponsible and immature," says Tere Baker, a graduate student. "They're trying to reinforce their self-identity vicariously through other people," says senior Rob Gannon.

Most college students think mutual affection is prerequisite for premarital sex. "Students still go through stages of dating, courting and physical intimacy with one person over a period of time," Anderson says. Intercourse, although a big step, is viewed as a natural extension of a relationship. "The stigma of sex before marriage has faded away," Gannon says.

Of course, not all students have sex. "A lot of people would like companionship—somebody to hug 'em sometimes," says Sally Hall, Panhellenic president.

Inspired by New Wave  
music, Anne Monica Raso wears  
early sixties clothes--mini-dresses  
and spiked boots



In these days of sexual freedom, some women not content to sit and wait for the phone to ring, take action into their own hands. However, they don't impress male students. "It's kinda a turn-off," Burrough says. "Two years ago, I didn't think I'd say that, but it's not all it's cracked up to be." Aggressive women, May says, "threaten men's masculinity in terms of who is in control of the relationship."

Most men, "can't handle it graciously," Anderson says. "Guys become impotent in the face of sexually assertive women. They haven't developed techniques for dealing with that." A few find it challenging. "You have to think on your feet," Gannon says. "You can't treat all women alike. It forces you to be more perceptive about what she's thinking or feeling."

Instead of finding it a challenge, like Gannon does, some resolve themselves to become confirmed bachelors. Some of my friends feel it's "not worth the effort," he adds.

**ANOTHER QUESTION MARK** in students' lives is marriage. Most do plan to marry and start a family, eventually, but divorced parents or friend's with divorced parents are slowing the race to the altar.

While confident about his career, marriage "scares the hell out of me," Burrough says frankly. Fearing that marriage and kids would breed contentment, "you can't lose your ambition," he adds. Some, about a fourth, opt to live together during college, but junior Shaun Hayes, gun-shy about cohabitation, says, "I don't want a Lee Marvin lawsuit."

After graduating, most students plan to get settled in a career before letting the wedding bells chime. Students like Hayes have big expectations for that time. In addition to buying a 450 SL Mercedes and condominium, he wants to "have a good time for a few years."

Practical female students take post-college plans a step further. "I can see being married and working full-time outside the home," says senior Katy Tracy, "but I'm confused about kids — that's a full-time job." And while some male students assume their wives will stay home with the children, women students do not. Considering the economy, "Both of us will have to work," Tracy realizes. "Increasingly it will be a luxury for one person to stay home with the kids."

In the meantime, students need enough bucks to buy good times. □