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Montana State University summer session

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The simmering days of July and August are a time when students are supposed to be anywhere except in a classroom. But a cursory inspection of the Montana State University campus would indicate that students and teachers are going at classroom chores at a hammer-and-tongs rate that makes the regular academic year look a little static.

Increasing interest in the MSU Summer Session reflects a nationwide trend in education. Throughout the country colleges and universities are planning the summer session to provide maximum utilization of the campus, skills and resources during the entire year.

The MSU Summer Session, which was originally designed for public school teachers, is rapidly becoming a fourth important term for many regular graduate and undergraduate students, according to Dr. I. W. Evans, assistant to the director of the MSU Summer Session.

Besides programs specifically offered to public school teachers there is a regular core of courses offered in most departments at MSU. The courses include introductory courses and a growing number of advanced seminars for graduate students. The curriculum provides a general program for beginning freshmen and specialized study for graduate students, Dr. Evans said.

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An interesting phenomenon of the summer session is the proportion of graduate students to the total student body. There are 719 students enrolled in the MSU Graduate School this summer, according to Mrs. Gean Woods, secretary of the Graduate School. This figure represents more than one-third of all students enrolled at MSU this summer. During the regular session graduate students make up less than one-quarter of the total University enrollment.

The high proportion of graduate students at MSU during the summer represents other national trends.

In many states teachers' salary schedules are based on summer school progress, income tax schedules make professional advancement deductible, graduate students continue their studies uninterrupted until they receive advanced degrees and research programs on the campus continue through the entire year.

A growing emphasis on education beyond the baccalaureate degree is drawing more graduate students, many of whom are attending summer sessions across the country. Rapid scientific and technical advancement leading to automation and growing international relations have increased the need for advanced education. More than 150 applications for master's degrees have been made at MSU this summer, Mrs. Woods said.

The MSU Summer Session is made up of many individual sessions. A student can enroll in short specialized workshops, intensive five-week institutes with emphasis on one topic, five- or ten-week sessions of regular courses or combinations of these. Graduate credit is offered in most of the special Summer Session programs. Many of the summer classes are taught by nationally known lecturers in various fields.

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Although many summer students are attracted by the short workshops, 60 per cent stay for the full summer term. More than 2,000 students enrolled at MSU during this summer, according to Leo Smith, registrar.

Instructors have told Dr. Evans that class attendance seems better in the summer than during other quarters. Dr. Evans suggested this is because summer students often are more dedicated to their studies. Summer work also is so concentrated in short sessions that students must attend classes to keep up with their work.

The Summer Session offers faculty and regular students more time for independent study and research which is not possible the rest of the year. More undergraduate students are staying for at least one summer session or studying at another school for a summer term. Their reasons include gaining the experience or picking up extra credits.

The trend, which is definitely toward a summer session as an integral part of the school year, is rapidly growing at MSU. In many states spring high school graduates are being encouraged to enter a college or university summer session immediately after graduation. Although this is not being done yet in Montana, many spring high school graduates are taking advantage of the opportunity to get a head start on their educations.

As a result of the various reasons for the increasing summer session attendance colleges and universities are stabilizing their enrollments, thus operating more economically, Dr. Evans said.