

Statewide bargaining scheme best, says OSEA executive secretary

By JOHN KNOWLTON
Of the Emerald

When collective bargaining for faculty members within the State System of Higher Education does come, the "most workable and most efficient" form of bargaining will be one that encompasses all institutions in the state system, a spokesman for the Oregon State Employees Association (OSEA) told faculty members Tuesday.

Speaking to about 50 faculty members at an informal noon hour luncheon in the EMU, OSEA Executive Secretary Tom Enright said, "if collective bargaining on any meaningful matters is to come about it should encompass all colleges in the state."

Enright said "nothing has really happened" at Southern Oregon College (SOC) where faculty members recently formed an independent bargaining unit. "This indicates the feeling that individual campuses can't effectively bargain when the employees bargain with the administration of their particular college. What they should be doing is bargaining with the State System of Higher Education as exemplified by the Chancellor's Office," said Enright.

The umbrella-like coverage being pushed by some OSEA members is in contrast to the American Association of University Professors' (AAUP) position on collective bargaining. AAUP feels a campus-by-campus bargaining process will ensure that faculty members will enjoy a sort of local autonomy at their own university.

Although Enright agreed that "a local faculty unit could get some things done" he maintained that to be effective, the more major issues involving collective bargaining such as establishing salary schedules have to be dealt with on a statewide level.

"It's just not in the cards," he said, referring to the possibility of establishing salary schedules at individual universities.

"Even if the state system went all the way and said 'yes' to the



Tom Enright

Photo by Trish Weisman

idea of separate salary schedules for each university," continued Enright, "the Legislature would say 'no.'"

Following his talk Enright answered questions from various faculty members. In response to a question about the likelihood of faculty members going on strike, Enright said, "Under the new legislation (HB 2263), the chances will be rather remote that any faculty will find it necessary to strike." He said HB 2263 establishes various criteria that must be met before any bargaining unit can go on strike.

"I expect that there will be an awful lot of binding arbitration though," he said.

"What would happen if OSEA bargained with the State Board for everyone in the state system, but after reaching an agreement,

the Legislature said no?" Enright was asked.

He replied, "In bargaining for the classified (non-academic) employees last year, we handed the Legislature a \$54 million package of salaries and benefits. Our experience has been that if the bargaining process is done in good faith and results in a reasonable package, the Legislature will fund it."

When asked why OSEA would be a better bargaining agent than any other faculty organization, Enright said, "I don't think it would. We could make claims, but so could other organizations. The important thing," he stressed, "is the numbers and resources. The only organization being talked about in these terms is OSEA."

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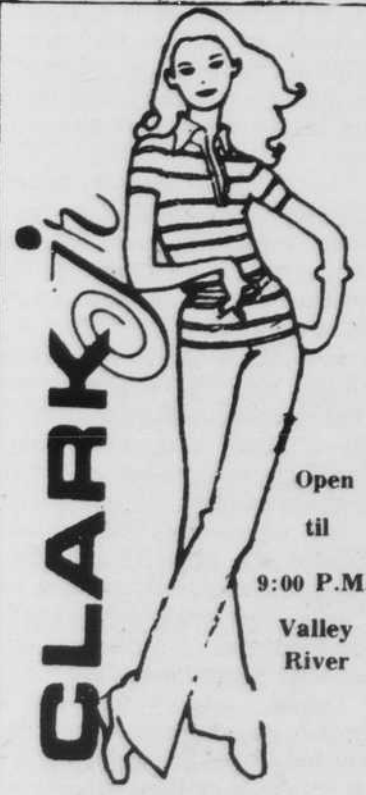


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