

Senate passes employe pay increase bill

SALEM—After narrowly escaping an attempt to send it back to committee, the State Employee Pay Increase bill met with the approval of the senate late Thursday afternoon.

By MIKE DOLAN
Of the Emerald

An 18-12 vote ended the long debate that once saw Sen. Jack Ripper, D-North Bend, Ways and Means co-chairer, warn other members that voting against the bill and holding out for bigger pay increases might mean cutbacks in any number of

budgets including the higher education budget.

HB—5063, which appropriates \$91 million for state employe pay raises beginning retroactively this month and continuing until 1977, now goes to the Governor for his signature.

Gov. Bob Straub announced earlier he would not veto the bill.

Passage of the bill came two days after the Oregon State Employees Association (OSEA) announced it would let its members vote on the pay increase package offered to them by Straub.

The Straub offer provides \$10 million more than HB—5063 does but it has not been ratified by the Legislature.

However, the Legislature may provide as much as \$5 million more than is appropriated by HB—5063. Ripper said that Straub can use \$1.3 million in unspent payroll funds to provide the retroactive pay increases for May and June.

The Legislature has also approved an emergency fund of \$3 million earmarked for employe pay raises (and it has another \$12 million which will be used to meet all emergencies during the upcoming biennium.)

In addition, the Legislature has already approved about \$1 million in pay raises for some state employes.

Including the matching funds that will come from increased tuition, gasoline taxes

and other state fees, the total pay increase package will amount to \$188 million—\$20 million less than the Straub offer.

Both Ripper and his house counterpart Rep. Harvey Akeson, D-Portland, said HB—5063 can provide as much as a 26 per cent pay increase—on the average—over the next two years. That includes "fringe benefits".

The money will go into a special account and will be paid to state employes after Gov. Straub and the OSEA agree on an exact pay package for the nearly 24,000 employes affected by the bargaining.

HB—5063 includes about \$25 million aimed at pay raises for professors and staff in the state system of higher education.

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Fewer FTE's may mean less funding

By MARCIA HEALY
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Even before you pass Algebra 101, you can figure it out. If 186 hours are required to get your bachelors, then three terms a year for four years, you should take 15.5 hours per term. Or more likely, you'll take 16 hours fall and winter terms, and 14 or 15 during the spring to allow adding a few outside units of "Sun-bathing 101."

But in the past several years, students have been signing up for fewer hours per term, averaging somewhere between 13 and 14.

The trend towards lighter course loads doesn't just mean that students are taking longer to get through college. The fact that students are taking less hours per term will mean less state funding for the University.

The funds to cover the cost of educating one student per year come from two major sources, individual tuition and the state's general fund. The Oregon State Board of Higher Education (OSBHE) allocates money to the University on an average basis of \$1,845 per student per year. But the allocations carry a stipulation: students must be full time (15.5

hours per term) or in budget jargon, they must be FTE (full time equivalents).

According to Harry Alpert, vice-president of Academic Affairs, the University is bound by a ceiling enrollment figure of 15,250 students for the 1975-76 academic year. The actual head count will be well above that figure at an estimated 16,552, but state funds are allocated on the ceiling figure. If there are 15,250 students attending the University next year, each will be funded at the average \$1,845 rate. But should the number of FTE continue to dip as recent statistics show, then the

University stands to lose state funds.

Alpert explained that costs for next year have already been budgeted on the maximum FTE enrollment of 15,250 students, but if the ceiling is not attained next year, then the OSBHE would deduct the amount of unused funds from the following year's allocation. In other words, the student trend towards carrying fewer hours could prove costly to the University.

The trend, which Alpert said has been evident for almost five years but "more striking in the last two" moved administration officials to hire a research firm to poll students and find out why they are registering for fewer hours. Said Glenn Starlin of the Office of Academic Affairs about the poll, "Our concerns were academic. We were hoping for feedback that would enable us to do a better job of helping students to get the normal number of hours per term."

The survey was administered earlier in the spring to a cross section of undergraduates and the results showed that reasons for taking fewer hours are usually academic and not personal. Registration hassles and tight class sections at popular times were more frequently quoted by students as factors in limiting their course loads rather than time-absorbing jobs or the practice of "over-registration."

According to Starlin, the survey showed that "a fair proportion of students tend to drop an average of three hours a term. They don't add another three hours and the result is a net loss in student credit hours." Starlin suggested that some students "sample a class, decide to drop it for some reason, and when they go back to pick up another class, the section is closed so they don't add anything."

The assumption that students holding down part-time jobs limited their school hours wasn't

born out by the survey. The number of students who reported that their jobs cut into their school time almost equaled the number who said their work had no effect on the number of hours they carried. Said Starlin, "Apparently, outside jobs didn't have as much impact as we thought."

Most students in the survey also denied that they register for an over-load of classes with the intention of dropping a few later. According to Starlin, most students said, "No, I don't play that game." Most of them said they registered for the approximate number of hours they intended on taking and then dropped some of them because of some kind of difficulty.

From the survey, administrators drew two major conclusions about ways to reverse the fewer-hours trend: open up more class sections and provide more detailed information about classes before registration.

"We thought that limits on classrooms and teachers meant that students couldn't get into the sections they wanted, so next fall, we're going to try to expand the hours classes are offered," said Starlin. The survey showed that students are not adverse to taking classes in non "prime time" hours like late in the afternoons, evenings, Tuesday and Thursday mornings and even Saturdays.

The second conclusion drawn from the survey was that students need better class descriptions. "They want to know more about the requirements of a course before they enroll, more about the expectations of the teacher and the course load," Starlin commented. Course guides currently compiled by the Office of Academic Advising are intended primarily for entering freshmen, but Starlin noted that the guides may be expanded to be of greater service to the entire student body.

Alpert and Starlin will be holding

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Photo by Beth Van Deusen

No, it's not for drunk drivers

Attendant Dave Bennett (l.) tests John McCarthy (r.) on the Oregon Lung Association's Breathmobile. The machine checks performance of the lungs through several tests. It will be located behind the Health Center on Beech Street today from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The tests are free and open to the public. Smokers 18 and older are especially encouraged to be checked.