

PSU may fire editors over CIA ads

The publications board at Portland State University (PSU) has delayed hearings on the matter of firing the editor and managing editor of the school's student-run newspaper.

The board will decide the future of the hearings when state Attorney General Lee Johnson forms an opinion on whether the two editors of the paper, the *Vanguard*, had the constitutional right to refuse advertising from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The opinion was requested by State Rep. Vera Katz (D-Portland).

Johnson's decision, which could bear on future governing policy for publications other than the *Vanguard*, could come as early as three weeks or as late as June, board Chair David Smeltzer said.

Earlier this year, Kathleen Hawkins, the paper's editor, and Ray Worden, its managing editor, decided not to accept further CIA advertising. Since then, they have been under fire from the publications board. That board recently decided to hold hearings on whether to fire the two.

Meanwhile, PSU speech professor Larry Steward announced the formation of an ad hoc Faculty Support Committee which will consider interpretation of the board's guidelines which state that the editor "is responsible for the quantity and quality of advertising for the *Vanguard*."

Editor Hawkins has charged that the CIA pressured the *Vanguard's* publications board to run the recruiting ads. The CIA's Portland office sent letters to

former *Vanguard* ad manager John Bennett, the publications board and PSU Pres. Joseph Blumel requesting clarification of the *Vanguard* ad policy and guidelines. "That's pressure," Hawkins said, "whether it's a polite letter or not."

Thomas Culhane, CIA special representative, denied the charge, saying, "We're not putting pressure on anybody." He said that the letters were an attempt to "get a statement of policy" and that refusal to run the ads with "no word" on the part of the *Vanguard* in return was "a peculiar way to run a business."

"The board ordered the *Vanguard* to carry all CIA and military advertising that was not factually incorrect board chairer Smeltzer said, also in response to Hawkins' charges. "This decision was made on the grounds of general principle that it was inappropriate for a university newspaper to engage in the kind of censorship that is involved in rejecting those particular ads."

He said, however, the board acted without regard to whom the advertiser was and that no outside pressure has influenced board decisions on the matter. He characterized Hawkins' statement as "a red herring."

Smeltzer did admit, however, that the federal government was threatening a suit to force placement of the ads.

Smeltzer said he feels that student news personnel must be accountable for their actions in addition to their normal legal responsibilities as members of the press.

"If they're not accountable to us, they aren't accountable to anybody," he said.

Smeltzer further said that advertising is "susceptible to publisher control" (in this case, the publications board), although news and editorial functions are not subject to the same control. He acknowledged that board guidelines state the editor is responsible for advertising, but said the board felt those rules are "inappropriate to the situation."

"Unlike the *Emerald*," Smeltzer continued, "the *Vanguard* is published by the State Board of Higher Education and is funded partially through incidental fees and partially from advertising revenues. Because of that fact, its actions become state actions."

(The *Emerald* is supported mostly by advertising revenues and bulk student subscriptions through a contract with the ASUO.)

Smeltzer did not feel that the board's actions constituted a violation of students' First Amendment rights.

"I want to emphasize and re-emphasize we are not trying to censor the *Vanguard's* expressions of opinions or the *Vanguard's* news stories. We are, from our point of view, simply saying they can't censor others," he said.

CIA representative Culhane described recruiting on college campuses as "one of the keystones of the recruiting process" for the CIA and said "a number of people" from PSU had been recruited by him for service in the agency in the last few years. He said anywhere from 20 to 40 prospects apply for duty each time an ad is run in the *Vanguard*. (Student editors of the *Vanguard* have, at different times, both refused and accepted CIA ads.)

Culhane called the CIA's efforts at Oregon colleges "an attempt to get access to minorities and women" and described the CIA as a "professional research organization."

Hawkins expects an adverse opinion from the attorney general. Should that happen, she said she

would seek legal action against the publications board either through private attorneys or the American Civil Liberties Union.

Stevie Remington, director of the Portland ACLU said her organization had "reached no decision" and was "trying to get the facts."

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