

ASUO prepares to issue mail-out ballots

Voting couldn't be easier: just mark, seal and post

By BRENDA TABOR
Of the Emerald

There's only one thing easier than casting votes at a voting booth — and that's taking the ballot out of the mail box, gridding the appropriate boxes and dropping it in the corner mail box, says Kirby Garrett, ASUO vice-president.

According to Garrett, that's exactly what should happen under the new election mail-out system to be employed during this spring's ASUO elections.

An innovative approach to student elections, the process is

scheduled to get under way today. Ballots will be mailed this afternoon and students should begin receiving them by Saturday. Completed ballots must be returned to ASUO Suite 4 (EMU) by Saturday, April 30.

Students mailing their ballots should allow at least three days for postal service, explains Garrett. The vice-president says the deadline may be extended in case of postal delays. But, he adds, "If students haven't voted by the 27th, they should drop their ballots by Suite 4."

Garrett says he would like to encourage the voters to drop the ballots off rather than mailing

them anyway. Students can save the ASUO 18 cents per ballot, or about \$800 (based on a 5,000-6,000 voter turnout) by the drop-off process.

Projected cost for the mail-out ballots is \$6,500 to \$7,500, including printing, postage, computer time and labor.

Every completed ballot must be accompanied by the number one stub attached to the student's fee card. Ballots without a stub or those mailed with the number two stub (reserved for the general election) will be invalid. A voter's guide and explanation of the mail-out process will be mailed with the primary election ballots.

Class officers and Student University Affairs Board (SUAB) races will not be included on the mail-out ballots. These contests were excluded because only specific constituents may vote in these races.

Voting for the SUAB and class officers will take place Tuesday and Wednesday, April 27 and 28, at polling booths in front of 150 Science and Gilbert Hall.

Another booth will be located at the Law School to enable law students to vote in all the races. Law students are on a semester system and did not receive new fee cards with the attached stubs

necessary for the mail-out ballots.

The mail-out election relates directly to the philosophy that the ASUO has evolved into a student association to protect students' interests, Garrett explains. According to that philosophy, the best way to communicate those interests is to go directly to the students.

The establishment of a student contract is also a desirable goal, Garrett says. It would serve the best interests of students by covering rights and responsibilities dealing with educational protection and improvement, says Garrett.

Another contention of Garrett's is that "the greater the voter turnout, the more democratic and broad-based the representation will be." Increased voting is a desirable goal because it lends credibility to leadership. "Educational consumer protection has become the primary issue of the ASUO, and students should know where candidates stand on that issue."

The ballot is also a move to establish collective bargaining. Students could accept or reject an offer through the direct mail procedure.

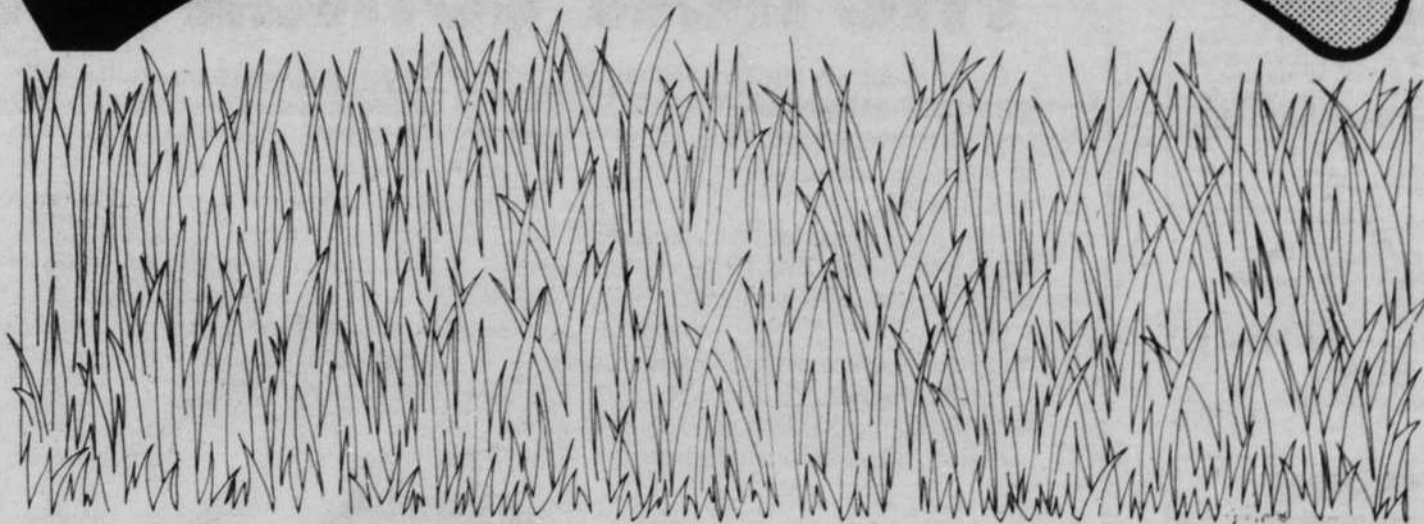
Garrett says he has "dismissed charges of fraud and corruption because of the procedure to enclose stubs with the ballots." Only persons who have paid their fees and registered are on the mailing list. "Most of what I've heard is shallow and hollow rhetoric. I'm waiting for specific charges," he says.

Voting for SUAB representatives follows another rationale which defines the SUAB as an academic board. With that in mind, the ASUO is trying to form academic student unions and, hopefully, have those unions assist with future elections. The student unions would become "locals," representing students.



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