

Meet your ASUO advocates:

They're real — like the needs they're meeting



President
Jan
Oliver

ASUO President Jan Oliver—She's your advocate, working with her staff and you to trouble shoot conflicts students face as individuals and can resolve as a student collective, the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO).

Gary—Our man on campus

Q: What does University Affairs involve besides publishing the Consumer's Guide to Courses?

Gary: Generally speaking, we advocate in the interest of students on a number of issues, ones important to students, like promotion and tenure of professors, the release of student evaluations of faculty members, grading policies, financial aid and child care.

Q: Do you think students' interests have changed?

Gary: Obviously students' interest have changed, and so have their demands. They've begun to view themselves as consumers in education. As consumers, they not only put in money, they put in time and energy. What they're asking for in return is an opportunity to receive a quality education.

Q: Many students have the feeling there's no way to get past barriers in the institutional system. How do you feel about this?

Gary: Too many times it seems to be a problem of inaccurate information or lack of proper advocacy. Students don't know what their options are.

Q: But aren't there any potential channels where students can get things done?

Gary: We're trying to get information out to students in as clear a way as possible. One of the things we've done is to create the Office of Student Advocacy. Another way is by publishing the Consumer's Guide to Courses, including the Student Rights section, and of course we're trying to increase the visibility of our office so students will call us when they've got a problem. Besides, Jan's around the campus and is always willing to talk to anyone who's interested in talking to her.

Q: What kind of potential do you see for the ASUO?

Gary: We've been working on this idea of students forming some kind of collective that would have the legal power to establish certain kinds of guidelines, contracts between us and the University as far as minimums for the housing policies, the quality of teaching, etc. That, I think, has a lot of promise.

Jamie—No stranger to Athletics

Q: How has your concept of the ASUO changed since you've become involved in it?

Jamie: I don't think my concept has changed; the ASUO has changed from the focus of budgeting to co-governance and actually addressing educational issues.

Q: How do you fit into it now as vice-president of administration and finance?

Jamie: Myrna (Harding) and I are there to keep things going. We help to guarantee that students get what they pay for in services and programs like Action Now, ESCAPE, etc., through administering their contracts, making the budget recommendation, and supervising fiscal policies.

Q: But you work with more than just figures and numbers on paper?

Jamie: Yes. There's a lot of evaluation that has to go on about how good a service is or whether students want that service.

We also deal with the EMU and Athletic Department about things like, are there going to be two doors open at the basketball games. That isn't a huge issue, but it's important and we take care of it.

Q: How can students get the most for their incidental fee money?

Jamie: They should find out about the programs. You can come down to the ground floor of the EMU and wander through the suites and ask whoever's there, "Hey, what's your program about?" How many students who are building something know that Action Now has tools, or that through the Food Op you can get food for lots cheaper.

But that's not all. To get the most out of the ASUO, people have to ensure that the ASUO is representing them, and that means VOTE.

VOTE:

Elections are a means of changing or endorsing what's going on in your world. An ASUO primary election on Oct. 20 and 21 will determine who is to run for positions on the Incidental Fee Committee (IFC), the Student University Affairs Board (SUAB), the EMU Board, and Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG), groups with a lot of capital letters. Their real capital importance, however, is that they decide on such things as programs budgets, university policy, and student research projects. VOTE, because it counts.



Jamie Burns —
administration and finance

Gary Kim —
university affairs



Mark Cogan —
legislative affairs



Tamanika Ivie —
programs and
community affairs

Mark—Persuasiveness personified

Q: How is the Legislative Affairs sector important to students?

Mark: The Oregon Legislature meets every two years, and so the ASUO has had a chance to prepare for the coming session with issues that we break down into two different categories. The first kind include those which interest and affect students as citizens, such as the environment and consumer affairs, and tax issues. For these issues we'll act as a coordinator in providing students with information on the status of special bills in the Legislature and providing transportation to Salem for committee meetings.

Q: And the second?

Mark: There's another kind of issue the ASUO pursues because we're students, and those relate to tuition, financial aid, etc. As an activist in this category, we spend a great deal of time researching and defining proposals, and developing a case to convince the Legislature, and then actually spending time in Salem lobbying for those bills to be passed in student's interest.

Q: The funds for this program come from student fees, but doesn't its success mostly depend on student involvement?

Mark: It depends entirely on it. Big business and labor lobbyists have money, a great deal of influence and experience, and that's their strength. Our strength is our large membership and if students use the program we've developed to maximize those talents, then we'll be very effective. They can come by the office in EMU Suite 4 and by filling out a small form, we can set them up to receive information on bills in the legislature and to lobby by writing letters, making phone calls and trips to Salem to do some on-the-spot lobbying.

Tamanika—Happily 'programmed'

Q: How did you first become interested in the ASUO?

Tamanika: I just decided to be involved in what was happening here, because so many things happened to me as a student that were really frustrating. I got involved in the Incidental Fee Committee, and that experience let me know that things can change because I was a part of making them happen. That encouraged me to work more, and it encouraged Jan, too.

Q: As vice-president of Programs and Community Affairs, what are your important links to students?

Tamanika: I think the ASUO communicates with students through the programs. In my position, I get a chance to try to make students aware of the programs that are here, which include such things as building information and tools in Action Now, to the Drug Information Center, alternative education programs, and housing services.

Q: How do you plan to involve more students, and why is it important to try to do this?

Tamanika: So we want to create a balance between what's happening in the office and entertainment, to encourage students to come and participate in the ASUO and to enjoy being around each other. The important thing to realize is that we do have an organization we can relate to because all of it is done by us, the students. We decide what the programs are going to be, how they're going to be run and at what level of funding.

Q: And this is unique?

Tamanika: I think it is. I went to a very large university before. If you wanted some services, you had to deal with outside sources or the administration. But here, students can participate in changing their educational experience, instead of just sitting around being upset.

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