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International Women's Day



Drawing by Martha Lawson

Today marks International Women's Day, set aside as a worldwide feminist holiday in 1911. The celebration grew out of womens garment worker's militant demands in New York 70 years ago. Eugene women have an afternoon of activities planned at the Atrium building downtown including singing, dancing and speeches. Gertrude's restaurant will hold a special dinner tonight from 6 to 9 p.m.

Pregnancy ASUO insurance violates HEW rule

By CAROLYN BEAVER
Of the Emerald

ASUO-sponsored student health insurance is not in compliance with federal Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, according to Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) regulations.

More than a year ago the ASUO asked HEW if its insurance violated Title IX because it did not offer pregnancy benefits. HEW did not respond, so Don Chalmers, office of student advocacy director, again contacted HEW for its opinion.

The HEW Regional Office in Seattle concluded that under two regulations, the insurance plan must include the benefits. The Student Health Insurance Committee met Tuesday to discuss the issue and came up with three options.

Dropping the insurance plan entirely would be the most drastic of the alternatives, and was not favored by the committee.

The other two suggestions would implement the pregnancy benefits, but in different manners. If the benefits were concluded in every insurance plan, they would raise the rates across the board and not discriminate in price between males and females.

The last option would include the benefits in the plan, but would allow the student to decide if he or she wanted the benefits. If the student did not opt for the pregnancy benefits, there would be a significant drop in the rate paid.

Committee members seemed to favor the last alternative. Lance Bloom, the University representative with Metzker Associates of Eugene, ASUO's insurance company said, "It isn't bad. I get students in my office that want that kind of benefit" and are willing to pay for it.

"I'm not saying that's the solution...but clearly it does what the technical language of the regulation says," said Chalmers, who also attended the meeting.

Bloom will be checking into the economics of the alternatives so we can make a logical decision," said Keli Osborn, ASUO vice-president.

Osborn asked Chalmers since "we couldn't come up with a workable plan until fall term," what kind of opposition they could offer if someone were to sue. She also asked if the ASUO's "good faith" efforts would have any bearing on the case. Chalmers was not sure what the outcome of such a case would be.

A complaint was filed at an Oregon institution that also does not provide pregnancy benefits. The school's name will not be released until the HEW submits its official opinion and the school has a chance to respond to it, Osborn said.

Chalmers said "to avoid an inevitable complaint from a properly aggrieved student," the ASUO should move "quickly and effectively toward compliance with this important federal statute."

Is stock divestment being stalled?

By RICHARD SEVEN
Of the Emerald

PSAF, SALSC charge delay

Four and a half months ago the State Board of Higher Education voted to instruct its investment managers to sell higher education stock in those corporations doing direct business in South Africa.

Four months ago Chancellor Roy Lieualen announced that all divestment procedures were being put on hold because of an "informal" opinion issued by the attorney general regarding the legality of the board's action.

Tuesday, Ed Branchfield, chief counsel for higher education, sent the second draft of the attorney general's formal opinion on who has control over higher education stocks — the board or the Oregon Investment Council (OIC), to Atty. Gen. Jim Redden's office in Salem.

Branchfield says the draft will be reviewed by the attorney general and other

lawyers for review of style and pertinent data.

"My initial phase is now completed," says Branchfield. However, he admits it's very likely he may have to revise the opinion again.

So what's the hold-up?

"The major problem is the daily emergencies the people on the draft must deal with," says Mark Nelson, an assistant to the attorney general. "Ed (Branchfield) must wade through his daily duties and be precise in writing the draft too."

Representatives from People for South African Freedom (PSAF) and South African Liberation Support Committee (SALSC), the two groups most directly involved with the board's November decision to divest, claim the decision-makers are stalling.

SALSC spokespersons claim the state

board never planned to divest the stock. They also question the board's decision to halt the divestment procedure without the attorney general's "formal" opinion, which would be legally binding.

Members of the state board say they cannot continue the divestment procedure until they have been assured the action would be legal under Oregon statutes.

Walt Sheasby, spokesman for PSAF, says his group feels "the delay in Redden's opinion represents some political differences of interpretations because we believe the law is pretty straight forward."

Sheasby also feels the state board has not been particularly enthusiastic about encouraging quick action on its decision to sell higher education stocks.

Sheasby says he believes there is a conflict of interest with Branchfield, working on

the formal opinion, since he is a legal counsel for the state board and an assistant to the attorney general.

"There is definitely a conflict of having a man, who as a lawyer should be vigorously defending the state board's policies and on the other must develop a neutral decision," says Sheasby.

There has also been disagreement over whether the OIC will or can order its investment managers to sell the stock if the attorney general rules in its favor.

Roger Meier, chairer of the OIC, has said it would be illegal for the OIC to order its manager to sell the stock because of Oregon Statute 293.729. The statute was designed to prevent state employees from benefiting from manipulating state stock holders.

However, Kennedy Advisors Inc., one of the state's two investment managers says it would sell the stock if advised to do so, but

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