

Analysis

Feldman termed 'reactive'

Ed. Note: This is the first in a four-part series of articles evaluating the ASUO president, issues, Incidental Fee Committee and EMU Board.

By CAROLYN BEAVER
Of the Emerald

Opinion is varied among people in the ASUO about whether Pres. Gary Feldman has been effective this year, but the general consensus seems to be that Feldman has been a reacting rather than an initiating president.

"Gary is different than the ASUO presidents of the last three years," says Keli Osborn, ASUO vice-president for University, state and local affairs. "He would rather react to things than initiate new issues."

Osborn, however, says "you can argue both sides" as to whether Feldman's reactionary role has been positive or negative.

Ted Walker, Incidental Fee Committee (IFC) member, thinks Feldman's role has been one of

"baby-sitter. Gary doesn't take a positive leadership role in many areas," says Walker.

Feldman admits he has reacted to, rather than initiated issues, but does not see it in a negative light.

"It appears as if a president can do a lot of things . . . but the power just doesn't lie within the student body organization," he says.

"Almost everything we do is a recommendatory action," he continues, citing as examples the budgetary process, his statement against the State Board of Higher Education's investment in Southern African stock and his support of minimum wage for all students.

"I wanted to set up a mechanism so the student body president would be able to respond to issues immediately," Feldman says. "I don't view a role of initiation as entirely possible. To say that we're going to elect one person out of 16,000 to initiate new issues is ridiculous."

Feldman believes student government isn't totally powerless.

"Programs do an incredible



Photo by Adrienne Salinger

ASUO Pres. Gary Feldman's administration has been characterized by strong programs and a weak executive branch, say his co-workers. But while Feldman's office was criticized for being less creative than it might have been, colleagues said his staff was "well taught" and helped the administration run smoothly.

hasn't done anything really creative."

Michael Connelly, administrative aide for ASUO programs, worked last year in Oliver's administration, and many of his feelings about Feldman's year are comparisons.

"There was a collective, communal atmosphere last year. We had ASUO projects and used each other as expertise," says Connelly. "Gary has been effective in the things he has done, but many of the issues are the president's issues and he won't consult his staff. Often there are closed lines of communication. He sometimes does not make effective use of all the energies in the office."

Connelly, though, thinks the ASUO has been as strong this year as it was during Oliver's administration, but for different reasons. He says the programs have been stronger and more outspoken, while the executive branch has not been as strong.

Among the "negative constraints," like student apathy and not having enough time to get everything done, Feldman thinks his year in office has been productive, and lists "saving students money through the incidental fee process, receiving interest on student monies for the first time and changing the budgetary process" as examples.

His administration's biggest drawback, says Feldman, is "not getting enough done." He says it's a result of several factors including "internal transiency — there's a big burn-out factor, and external factors, too." A possible improvement he cites would be to expand the term of office, to more than one year and increasing the salary.

Feldman's recommendations for next year's president are to "get a damn good staff and realize you're not going to get anywhere near what you wanted to done."

amount of work," he says. "The services they provide are phenomenal. However, the power to initiate action is higher than seeing that action through."

IFC Member Janet Eggleston calls this a "holding year, one to substantiate the gains from last year," and feels Feldman made an appropriate choice in being a reactionary rather than an initiating president.

IFC Chairer Doug Benson believes this has been an apathetic year, saying, "There haven't been any glaring issues. Feldman hasn't been a detriment, but he

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