

Act still unsatisfied

Reactions mixed over housing audit

By MARY FORAN
Of the Emerald

The recently released state audit of the University Housing Department has met with a markedly mixed reception from the University administration, members of the Amazon Community Tenants (ACT) organization and Family Housing Policy Board members.

While Ray Hawk, vice president for administration and finance, said he was "really pleased with the report," ACT representatives greeted it with terse criticism.

"The administration is blithely ignorant of the palpable facts of the situation and apparently desires to remain in that condition," says Dave Mason, ACT spokesperson and policy board member.

The audit was requested by Gov. Bob Straub after he received a letter signed by 30 housing department employees, demanding an investigation of department

personnel procedures and management practices.

The audit comes on the heels of several months of often bitter controversy between the housing office and students living in Amazon Married Student housing units. Originally, the tenants took issue with a University decision to increase the rent rate by \$10. Finally, last spring the University commissioned a Portland accounting firm, Halkins and Sells, to audit the housing office. Their report recommended reorganization of the housing office management structure.

Though tenants agreed to pay the increased rent after a three-month-long rent strike, the controversy continued. Hawk believes that the secretary of state's audit has affirmed that the housing department has been conducting its management role according to the recommendations of Halkins and Sells.

"It is reassuring to have it verified," Hawk said. "As time moves on I expect morale in the department will continue to improve."

But Mason contends that the audit "smacks of a whitewash" and thinks the timing of the audit's release during summer term was "on the side of the housing office."

The audit concluded that departmental accounting procedures are deficient, that communication within the department needs to be improved to overcome its "morale problem" and that the Amazon building reserve is in danger of depletion. The audit recommended the University establish guidelines for the allocation of debt service charges between Amazon and Westmoreland residents.

At least part of the controversy arose over the "haphazard budgeting procedure" used by the housing office department, according to Sec. of State Norma Paulus. She says the department morale problem has

been "very serious" and that the department "has not strictly adhered to proper personnel practices and hasn't made them known."

The audit itself suggests that the controversy surrounding the housing department results primarily from a "lack of understanding of procedures and policies in force," due in part to poor communication between the involved parties. Some of the report's specific conclusions are the following.

The debt service. Under present Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) policies, the University has the authority to budget debt service cost incurred by the Westmoreland project to the Amazon project. However, the audit says that prior to 1977, the Amazon project had not generated "enough income to contribute to debt service since the early 1960s."

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Some award letters for students with financial aid are now ready at the financial aid office. The letters must be signed and returned to the financial aid office by 4:30 Friday for students to receive credit cards by July 5.

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Photo by Greg Gawlowski

Too hot to handle

Punk rock proved to be too much for the University community Monday.

The Hotz, a New Wave rock group, were scheduled to play an open air concert Monday afternoon, but after playing for a half hour they were cancelled.

They had been scheduled for the performance for weeks, but University officials didn't know what they were getting into.

They expected punk rock to be similar to the Willamette Valley Folk festival, and were surprised when they saw the difference.

"The folk festival has a decibel level of around 49," explains EMU business manager Bob Schutz. But the Hotz maintain a 99 decibel level.

Schutz had been receiving complaints all day about sound tests over the speaker system. Calls came in "by the dozen," he says not only from the University, but from the outlying hills. "We are the champions" played at about 70 decibels was a big hit.

When the Hotz came on at 3:30 p.m., more calls came in, Schutz and ASUO Pres. Ramon Herrera decided to turn down the noise level of the Hots. But punk rock without loud noise is like an avalanche without rocks. The Hotz demanded their noise. They were refused, and the concert expired.

Dual problem delays financial aid

BY KATHLEEN MONJE
Of the Emerald

Anxious and perplexed students who hoped to go to school this summer with the help of financial aid work-study and grants, but who hadn't received any word by registration time, can breathe a sigh of relief and relax.

Late registration fees for all summer students who met the extended May 1 filing deadline will be waived, according to University Financial Aid Director Ed Vignoul. "This has never happened before," he said.

Because of a foul-up in the processing of federal Basic Education Opportunity Grants (BEOG), earlier this spring Vignoul

moved the filing deadline for summer financial aid forward a month.

He said what the situation amounts to is that since "the BEOG Program was not getting its act together," his office moved the date up.

"I called Washington, D.C., in mid-March, because we weren't getting any BEOG applications back for students who had filed early," Vignoul said. "Finally, somebody in their office said they were having 'contractual' difficulties."

Unfortunately for the University's financial aid set-up, Vignoul's accommodation of students' BEOG problems meant that instead of his office having 700 or 800 files to

complete before the summer session, "we had 1,700 or 1,800 applications to complete — we're trying to do two months' work in one," Vignoul told the Emerald.

To complicate the problem, the University itself made a budget-administering change this year for the first time, putting the financial aid funds for summer into the next (1978-79) fiscal year instead of this one, Vignoul said.

"It's an administrative nightmare," he said. "I can't spend that money until July 1."

And because of the July Fourth holiday, Vignoul said "the first logical date to disperse the funds for summer is July 5."

Partly because everybody in his office

worked over the Father's Day week-end, he said, the Financial Aid Office is caught up on the back-log now.

"If they have trouble with the library, student health or the physical education office, they can come to us and we'll give them a note explaining the situation," Vignoul said.

Award letters telling students exactly how much money in which grants they've received are going out now, according to Vignoul, and all summer-session students should receive award letters by July 10.

Students who applied after May 1, for University financial aid for next fall, can expect to receive award letters sometime during or after the middle of July.