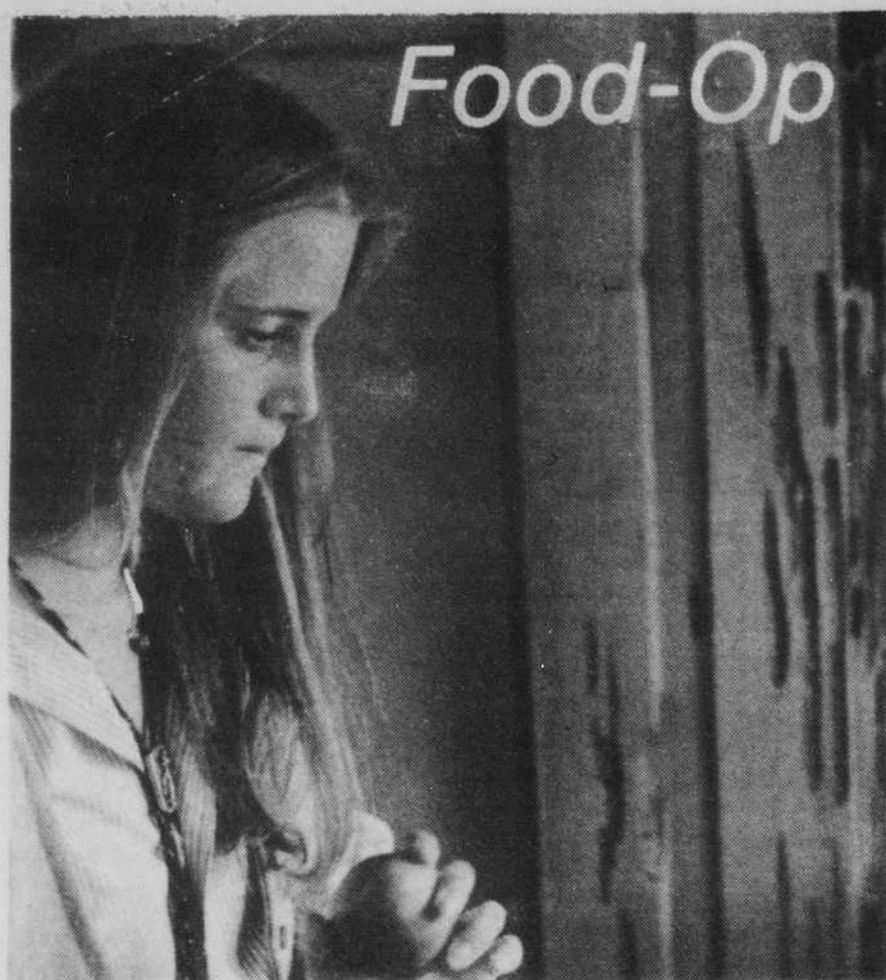




Food-Op

expands despite cutbacks

By JIM ALLEN
Of the Emerald

The University Food-Op has been in and out of more trouble this year than Dan Klein cares to think about.

Klein, the store manager for the University's only student-operated cooperative food store, hopes the troubles are over, thanks to a cutback in the store's operations.

As recently as the 1977-78 school year, the Food-Op made deliveries to most of the 26 fraternities and sororities on campus and also sold directly to students through its store located on 1535 E. Agate St. in Eugene.

Founded in 1975, the Food-Op grossed over \$120,000 last year, while the store's only delivery truck was kept busy making calls all over campus.

However, the Food-Op also ran up a debt of over \$7,000 by May 1978, when then-ASUO Pres. Gary Feldman decided to put an end to the store's operation.

In one of his last acts as president, Feldman vetoed the Inciden-

tal Fee Committee's (IFC) funding for the Food-Op, and the IFC was unable to override the veto. The IFC did appropriate \$7,000 to wipe out the organization's debts, but in the process also ended the ASUO's association with the Food-Op.

Klein and several other people then moved to restructure the store's operation, eliminating the unprofitable deliveries to fraternities and sororities, and switching over to a cash-only basis with other customers.

"The truck deliveries were time-wasting and money-wasting," says Klein. "Sometimes we had to make up to four or five runs to each place to get all the goods delivered."

So, the Food-Op improved its profit-sales ratio, but still found itself operating on a shaky foundation. Since its funding had been cut off, the Food-Op faced the loss of its free office space in the EMU.

But once again the IFC intervened, allocating a token sum of one dollar to the store for the 1978-79 school year. Since student funding of any kind allows an

organization to hold office space, Food-Op was in the clear.

Or, almost in the clear. Final approval for the office space allocation was still in the hands of the EMU Board, which debated for some time last Tuesday before casting a 7-4 vote in favor of the Food-Op. ASUO Pres. Ramon Herrera cautioned EMU Board members before the vote, saying that "just because a program gets IFC funding doesn't mean they deserve office space."

However, Herrera is happy with the present situation.

"I think the situation will improve, now that they've cut back their services," he says. "Lots of problems resulted when they overextended themselves."

"But I do feel the ASUO should separate ourselves from them (the Food-Op). I think they should go it on their own. There's always the question of who is liable when they run up another big deficit or if they face a lawsuit."

IFC chairer Doug Benson shares many of Herrera's feelings about the Food-Op.

"The IFC has divorced itself from the Food-Op," says Benson. "If they start running up a large deficit again, I don't know what will happen. I hope they'll continue, but if the Food-Op dies, it will be because of lack of student participation."

Meanwhile, Klein and the others at the Food-Op have worked hard to make the system work. "We've been grossing over \$330 a day and business keeps growing," Klein said. "We're trying to make the store pay for itself."

Just a little country store in a quonset hut on 15th Avenue and Agate Street, the University Food-Op is making the best of a low-budget situation. All students and faculty are automatically members of the operation.

Photo by Doug Williams

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