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Student access to evaluation info still up in the air

By MARY FORAN
Of the Emerald

The fate of student access to course evaluation information is still undecided, after a lengthy debate in the University Senate Wednesday.

A special session of the Senate is scheduled for Friday at 3:30 p.m. in Room 229 of the Law School for continued discussion and voting on two motions that would amend current faculty legislation on course evaluations.

At Wednesday's session, German Prof. Helmut Plant presented the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Evaluation of Courses.

The committee's most controversial recommendation was that statistical information contained in course evaluations be released to students and student groups with the consent of the instructor.

An amendment proposed by history Prof. Paul Holbo and English Prof. Stanley Greenfield deletes this reference to student access to course evaluation information and reduces the number of times student evaluations are solicited.

Plant asked the Senate if the committee had overstepped its charge in dealing with the issue of evaluation information release, since the committee had concentrated on questionnaire format.

The question of release was a separate matter, said Greenfield, and had no place in the discussion of faculty evaluation forms.

Harold McLean, Student University Affairs Board representative, said that the issue of whether or not the information would be available to students was primary to a discussion of the form and content of the evaluations, and moved that the senate consider that section of the Greenfield-Holbo amendment first.

The motion passed 11-9 after McLean said that he "might be willing to read 500 pages a week" if

he could first read some of the comments students had made about the professor who required the reading. McLean was reminded that the committee's recommendations do not include the release of students' "opened comments."

Holbo said he objected to the substance of the committee's recommendation because he "couldn't see how students could use the information" to determine which classes or professors to take. He advised SUAB representatives to "recognize the shortcomings" of the "bits and pieces of information" gathered through student evaluation forms.

One senate member commented that the phrase "with the instructor's consent" takes the issue of open access back to "individual preference" and "makes a mockery of the sense" of the recommendation.

A student representative also objected to that phrase on the grounds that she had many instructors "who wouldn't want it made available" because they are poor teachers.

Another SUAB representative said that as a student his prime concern is "quality education" and that he feels that open access to student faculty evaluations "would serve me to get the best education."

Members of the SUAB had not received copies of the committee report or the Greenfield-Holbo motion before the Senate meeting said Catherine Jones, Senate chair on Friday. The Senate must first vote on the section of the Greenfield-Holbo amendment deleting reference to student access to evaluation information from the committee's recommendations.

Then the Senate will consider each item of the committee's recommendations separately, taking its final amendment "package" to the University Assembly next Wednesday at 3:30 in 150 Geology.



Photo by Patrick Sullivan

As the sun burns off the morning fog, a lone jogger takes a meditative trot through the quiet paths of Pre's Trail. With sunny weather expected to continue through the weekend, it's a good time to seize the moment and take advantage of a dry path.

today

Brad Harris's jet boat tour on the Willamette River between Valley River Center and Harrisburg drew both negative and positive comments from citizens testifying at a hearing held Wednesday night. See the details on Page 3.

Fair maidens and handsome knights still roam the land taking part in jousting matches and other remnants of times gone by, under the auspices of the Society for Creative Anachronism. See Page 4 of the Entertainment Section.

Enrollment drops from Fall '77

Total University enrollment this fall dropped 1.5 percent from last year, according to figures released after the fourth week of classes.

Although the fourth-week figures are not the final enrollment counts, they are used by the Legislature in figuring the University's budget, according to Guy Lutz, chief analyst for the State System of Higher Education.

Last year's enrollment totaled 16,701, 232 students more than this year's total of 16,469.

In comparison, Oregon State University in Corvallis raised its enrollment by 151

students, bringing its total student count up to 16,653 — a gain of about 1 percent.

The figures surprised Lutz, who estimates enrollments at state system schools. His projection last year of 1.2 percent decrease in University enrollment came close to the actual 1.4 percent drop.

Lutz's projections for Oregon State University were right on target, with an 0.9 percent rise in enrollment.

Other state system schools generally showed healthy increases in enrollments. Portland State University enrollment rose 0.8 percent, while Southern Oregon State College enrollment increased 4 percent.

Eastern Oregon State College in La-Grande jumped 12.9 percent in enrollment, and the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls increased its student body by 1.9 percent.

The only state school other than this University to show an enrollment decrease was Oregon College of Education in Monmouth, which dropped 7.7 percent.

Total state system enrollments, including the University Health Sciences Center in Portland, reached 62,154 students this year.

Total state enrollment is up 0.1 percent from last year.