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Sociology affirms 'conservative' win

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Of the Emerald

New head shifts department priorities

A sociology department battle that erupted last spring over the hiring of Marxists apparently has ended this fall with declarations of victory from one side and statements of indignation and discouragement from the other.

"We're the winners," says Associate Prof. Dan Gordon, a member of the conservative faculty bloc, which last spring opposed the hiring of Marxists, and later moved to hire a conservative as the department's new head.

Gordon says he claims "victory" for a number of reasons. The "conservatives" last spring limited the department to hiring one Marxist on a temporary basis and then succeeded in gaining the appointment of one of their members, Prof. Ben Johnson, as department head. Johnson has since reduced the decision-making power of the sociology graduate students, who had monolithically opposed the conservatives last year.

The change in department heads represents a shift in departmental priorities. Donald van Houten, a member of the "liberal" faction that favored hiring Marxists, resigned as department head after the hiring dispute.

Van Houten says Johnson had the right to make changes in the department's governance system, but he says the new head has

violated the essence of a commitment made by the faculty as a whole last year not to make governance changes.

"We wanted at that time to settle the issue (of student participation) once and for all," he says.

Since his appointment by Dean Baldwin on the recommendation of the sociology faculty vote last summer, Johnson has upset sociology students and some faculty members with changes in the degree of decision-making power wielded by students. Among those are:

- eliminating some graduate student positions from committees that affect hiring and graduate curriculum.

- selecting graduate students for committee positions through approval of volunteers instead of graduate student elections.

- abolishing the executive committee, which was designed to channel grievances to the department head. The committee had three graduate and two faculty members.

"I abolished the executive committee because I'd rather take a more informal approach to hearing grievances within the department," Johnson says.

Since 1969, sociology graduate students have participated, with full voting rights, in department-

committee and general department meetings.

"I exercised my prerogative and altered the methods of selection and reduced the numbers of graduate student committee members because some of us had been convinced that graduate student power had to be counterbalanced by the faculty," Johnson says.

"The concern on the faculty that graduate students were exerting too great an influence was more widespread than many people thought," he adds.

"The students have no legal right of election, only of suggestion."

Johnson says he has changed the method of selection to one that parallels the method used to choose faculty committee members. Forms are sent out asking students to volunteer for committee service, and Johnson then chooses from among the volunteers.

This year, the graduate students had already held their elections when they received the forms.

But graduate students protested Johnson's intentions, says Jane Reisman, a general department meeting representative for The Forum, the sociology graduate student organization.

Many of the student-elected

representatives then volunteered for committee service in the spots for which they had already been elected, says Reisman.

In addition to abolishing the executive committee Johnson has made other department changes, including:

- reducing from two to one the number of graduate students on the Staff Development Committee. Currently there are three faculty members on the committee, which evaluates applicants for faculty positions and recommends candidates for departmental consideration. It also recommends which graduate students should teach courses in the department.

- reducing from three to two the number of graduate students on the Graduate Curriculum Committee. There are also three faculty members on this committee, whose prime function is to recommend course additions and deletions and change, when necessary, graduate degree requirements.

- creating the Ad-Hoc Committee on Promotion, Tenure and Constant Review to come up with new promotion, tenure and renewal practices for faculty on fixed term contracts.

The creation of the Ad-Hoc Committee was not a bone of contention in the battle over graduate

student power. Its projected composition points up Johnson's efforts to re-involve undergraduates in the department. Johnson plans to appoint one undergraduate to the ad-hoc committee, to serve along with the graduate student already appointed.

The undergraduate student appointment is contingent upon the revival of the moribund sociology undergraduate union, says Johnson. Nominations then can be accepted for the ad-hoc committee, he says, as well as for the Staff Development Committee, the Affirmative Action Committee and the Undergraduate Affairs Committee.

Johnson says he plans to place one graduate student on the undergraduate affairs committee.

"I approve of the cutbacks," says Associate Prof. Dick Gale, a member of the conservative side. "There were too many graduate students on those committees, and they had too much weight. We spend too much time haggling over the graduate program, to the neglect of the undergraduates."

"I approve of the cutbacks on the Graduate Curriculum Committee because I don't believe students should set their own graduation requirements," Gale adds. "I don't think the cutbacks on the Staff Development Committee were vindictive."

Students just don't know

(Continued on Page 3)



Photo by Ed Warren

Lines were long for Monday's voter registration and are expected to be even longer today. Most of the 158,715 registered voters are expected to show up at the polls between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Recall may prod heavy poll turnout

Nearly 71 percent of Lane County's registered voters will go to the polls today in what might be a large turnout for an off-year general election, says Don Penfold, county elections officer.

Penfold says most of the 158,715 registered voters will vote today. The percentage prediction for state-wide voters is somewhat less, he says.

Penfold predicts that more than 110,000 county residents will vote, a slight increase over the 1976 election. That increase could be caused by the ballot measure to recall County Commissioner Archie Weinstein, he says.

"The recall measure is worth a few percentage points or so," he explains.

That measure may also cost the county an additional \$3,000 because it will be on the general election ballot, Penfold says.

Penfold says nearly 3,500 absentee ballots have been issued, and he expects several more before the polls close tonight.

An election night party is also planned by the Lane County Democratic Central Committee, in the Eugene Hotel Forum. Drinks and peanuts will be served beginning at 8 p.m. Television will also be available to broadcast the election results.

today

A new terrorist group, the "Meteorite Cleaning Service," is claiming responsibility for a recent meteor-napping. University Pres. William Boyd found the object this morning in his driveway. Details on Page 3.

Students head to the polls again, this time to determine final IFC and SUAB members in the ASUC runoff election. Booths will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Page 6.

The report criticizing the University's lack of affirmative action in hiring is stalled until Nov. 29. No implementation is possible without the Faculty Senate's approval. See Page 12 for the story.