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Gerontology close to degree approval

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of the Emerald

A degree program in gerontology, the study of aging, may be offered as early as fall term 1979, the director of the University's Center for Gerontology says.

"It's certainly possible for it to be approved in time for us to begin offering the major next fall," says Fran Scott. "Now whether it can all move that fast we can't tell."

The degree program has taken 18 months to travel through faculty committees to the State Board of Higher Education where it now waits approval.

The board will not vote on the program until late this spring says Miles Romney, vice chancellor of the state system of Higher Education. The program plan is currently being circulated around the state to other universities and colleges for comment and opinion.

Approval of the program may also depend on the mood of the Legislature toward new programs in higher education, Scott says.

"Here in Lane County we tend to get the idea that the Legislature is favorable to higher education," she says, "because most of our legislators are. But they're not the whole legislature."

The gerontology center was among the first training centers of its kind when it opened ten years ago. Funding for the center was legislated in the Older Americans Act of 1965. It is currently a part of the College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

The University Gerontology Association, began its operation as a student organization six years ago, trying to bring together students interested in gerontology.

Throughout the year students hold meetings to discuss ideas and interest in gerontology, says Susan Lanstery, the director of the association.

Growing interest in gerontology is one of the reasons a degree program is planned, Scott says.

"We really feel, as a faculty, that gerontology has become mature enough that it needs to be designated as something in its

own right and not an appendage to other disciplines."

"It's a growing field of study, research and human services," she adds. "There are lots and lots of jobs now for people with training in gerontology."

Scott predicts the boom in jobs will last for another 20-30 years.

Jobs in the field of gerontology may include research, nutrition, or direct service. Most jobs are in the service areas.

Increasing federal programs have also contributed to the growing interest in gerontology, Scott says.

"But behind the federal programs, there is the social recognition that our elderly citizens do need some services that aren't being offered by the regular agencies," she says.

During the late 1930's, gerontology attracted a lot of interest and study, she adds. "We were beginning to realize that we were aging as a population. There was a lot of interest in aging in the universities and in Washington."

Then came World War II. The need for workers increased dramatically thus bringing many elderly citizens back out of retirement, according to Scott. After the war, the economy continued to expand and retirement wasn't as common.

Later came the baby boom and the nation's concern turned to children.

"The problems of the elderly kind of got lost," says Scott. "In America they weren't as important as the youngsters."

Interest in senior citizens started to grow again in the early 1960's resulting in the passage of the Older Americans Act in 1965.

In the last few years, the number of degree programs in Gerontology has skyrocketed, says Scott. When the center began drafting the degree program in 1977, there were 10 to 12 programs in the nation. Scott says that total is now between 50 and 100.

Student interest in a degree program has been "extraordinary" Scott says. "We have several students who have put themselves in a 'holding pattern' — against faculty advice — hoping that the degree program will come through for next fall."

"I personally feel gerontology is impor-

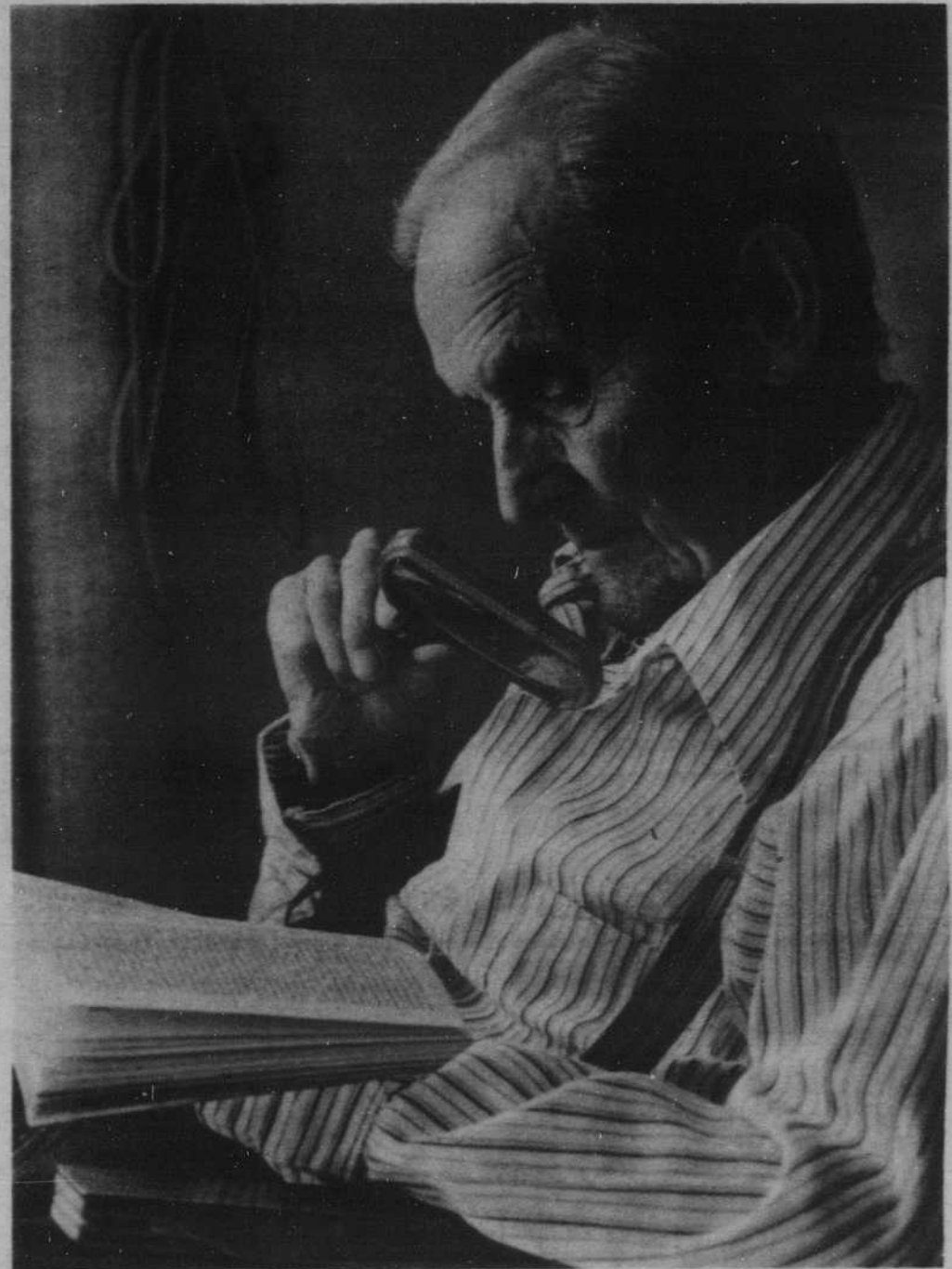


Photo by Patrick Sullivan

The University's Gerontology center opens doors between students and people like Eric Erickson, a resident of the Broadway Home for the Aged in Eugene. The proposed degree program in gerontology springs from increasing interest in the problems of aging, says center director Fran Scott.

tant because society focuses a lot of attention on kids and somewhat ignores older people," Lanstery says. "After all, adults

are the people who run the world. Gerontology is really the study of adulthood. Everyone ages."

today

University Pres. William Boyd told the Rubicon Society that relative funding for higher education has declined in the past decade, while expenses have soared. "...We have been getting a kind of double whammy," Boyd said. See Page 3.

The University's YMCA Big Brother/Big Sister program is recruiting help for its program this week. Seventy-five children need adult friends. "Growing up needs help" is the program's slogan. See Page 6.

The Ducks men's gymnastics team set a school record of 220.6 points, crushing Cal-State Fullerton in a dual meet Thursday night. See Page 8.

Statewide faculty group joins forces, moves toward hiring full-time lobbyist

By KELI OSBORNE
Of the Emerald

Faculty efforts to hire full-time, professional lobbyist to represent their concerns are meeting with measured success.

The Lobby Activating Committee, a group formed almost two months ago to launch a fund-raising drive aimed at financing faculty lobbying activities, has raised more than \$20,000 — enough to woo a qualified lobbyist, members.

Of the more than 6,800 academic faculty at the eight State System of Higher Education colleges and universities, 498 full-and-part-time faculty had pledged dues to the new Association of Oregon faculties by early this week.

Sally Malueg, a French professor at Oregon State University and speaker for the faculty group, says candidates for the lobbyist position will be interviewed this weekend in Portland.

The group is entering its second phase of the membership drive, and Malueg says the hiring of a lobbyist should attract additional members and money.

University economics Prof. James Tattersall says the drive on this campus has "gone a little slow," but adds that it had a late start. By Tuesday, 61 University faculty had pledged dues of about \$2,500, Tattersall says.

More than 200 OSU faculty — including university Pres. Robert MacVicar — have pledged membership in the new organization, Malueg says. Nearly 25 percent of the faculty at Southern Oregon State College have joined, according to a representative there, and 12 percent of Oregon College of Education faculty also have pledged.

Members of the Lobby Activating Committee say that recent developments such as the so-called tax revolt and faculty dismissals make a faculty lobbyist "urgent if higher education is not to be severely dam-

aged in the immediate future."

The lobbyist will present faculty concerns to the Legislature, the press and opinion leaders statewide. But the group has yet to set priorities and specify faculty concerns, Malueg says.

"Because we're new, we want the membership to set priorities," she says.

The faculties of the various state system schools are diverse, she admits, and differences of opinion may sometimes raise problems.

"The way we see it is, if there can't be a unified front, then we won't touch the issue," Malueg explains.

Representatives of the Lobby Activating Committee list salaries, research support, library resources, fringe benefits and retirement policies among their common concerns.

The Oregon Student Lobby and ASUO have adopted student access to faculty

(Continued on Page 3)