

Ex-pres. alleges Bassett needs new image

By Mark Matassa
Of the Emerald

Bassett is suffering from an image problem, according to Herrera. He says Bassett is a good administrator but is lacking

After one month of Scott Bassett's presidency of the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, a huge gap exists between student government and students, says Ramon Herrera, last year's ASUO president, in public relations.



Photo by Tom Swanson
Scott Bassett

"How he comes across to students isn't good," Herrera says. "If he doesn't improve his image he will have problems all year."

The perfect administration finds a balance between good administration and good public relations, Herrera says, adding that Bassett's office still hasn't found that balance.

"What we've had in the past few years is some administrations that were strong in one area and weak in another," Herrera says.

"You might say my administration suffered from the Carter syndrome. We were bad administrators but good with people. This year it's just the opposite."

Herrera says Bassett got off to a bad start when he accepted a trip to Michigan State with the football team, and he must now work to turn his image around. Bassett was accused of risking his objectivity towards the Athletic Department by going on the free trip.

"There is no doubt the trip was a mistake," Herrera says. "I don't think the Athletic Department will offer another trip to an ASUO president. They got some bad publicity, too."

Herrera says he advised Bassett to admit the trip was a mistake, but so far Bassett hasn't taken the advice.

"I've talked to Scott three or four times and I've told him that image is a very important aspect of the administration. You can have goals and get things done, but if nobody knows about them it doesn't do any good."

He says Bassett now has to bail himself out, and that will be hard with everyone looking at him, watching for another mistake.

"Scott's intentions are good — he means well — but a couple of mistakes have obstructed the focus on what he wants to do."

In order to turn his image around, Bassett has to get out of Suite 4, says Herrera. He recommends that Bassett spend more time outside his office, perhaps holding a public forum in the EMU Fishbowl every two weeks.

"People don't come into Suite 4 because they don't feel at ease there. I don't even feel at ease there, and I was the ASUO

president," Herrera says. "That's why he has to get out more and ask students about his programs instead of just asking program people."

If a president gets out of the office, students see that he or she is one of them, Herrera says. It destroys the myth that ASUO presidents run for the sake of their resume, he adds.

"I had a comeback when people said I ran for my resume — I said I did it for the money."

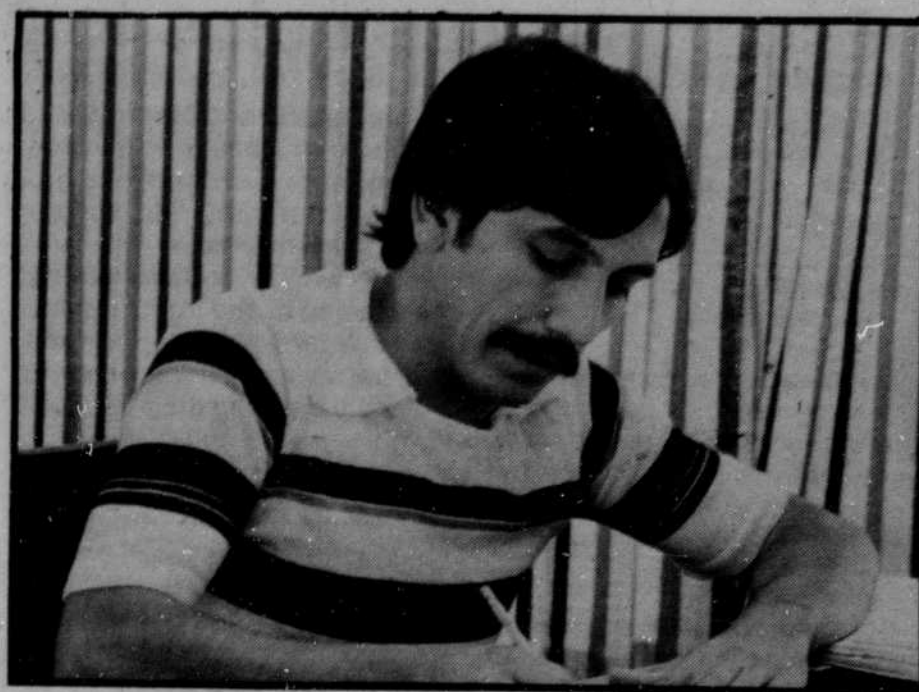
Politics has a big influence on the ASUO president, Herrera says. The president has a tremendous amount of responsibility, and everyone wants a decision at once, he adds.

"Sometimes you have to fight the administration and you don't want to be fighting students at the same time. That's where Bassett's going."

The recent discussion on how to save The Guide from running a \$4,300 deficit by the end of the school year may lead Bassett into fighting students and the Administration at the same time, Herrera says.

Bassett first said he wanted to raise the Incidental Fee Committee's spending limitation from 7 percent to 9 percent, then changed his mind. Meanwhile, Dennis Mohatt, his vice president for administration and finance, has said favors raising the ceiling.

Herrera says the spending



Ramon Herrera

Emerald photo

limitation should remain where it is, adding that programs may have to learn to live with less.

"Realistically the IFC should keep spending to 5 percent (over what it spent the year before). If more students enroll, there will be more money," he says.

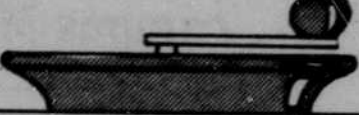
There are always surplus funds at the end of the year which could be used to bail out The Guide, says Herrera. "It's too early to worry about a deficit."

Herrera says there is still time for Bassett to improve his public image.

"Students know Bassett — that's good. But they know him

in the wrong way, and that's bad."

"There is still time for him to turn around. We'll see what happens."



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