

Higher ed cuts may prompt tuition increase

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of the Emerald

University students may pay \$50 more per term for tuition because of the \$204 million state deficit, says Bill Lemman, vice chancellor for the State System of Higher Education.

Lemman says he expects the State Board of Higher Education to approve a tuition increase of about \$50 for all state system students in its July 25 meeting in Portland. The tuition increase would help offset expected higher education budget cuts and probably would be a one-year-only surcharge, he adds.

Because of the state deficit, Gov. Vic Atiyeh asked all state agencies earlier this month to prepare recommendations for a 30-percent budget cut in six 5 percent installments.

State system reductions totaling \$58 million were approved by the State Board of Higher Education in a special meeting Sunday and delivered to Atiyeh Monday.

The total state system budget is about \$500 million with \$200 million of that coming from state funding, Lemman says.

Atiyeh will look over the state agencies' reduction recommendations then present his own budget cut recommendations to the special session of the Legislature, scheduled to meet in August.

The total state board recommendation includes a one-year closure of the Oregon College of Education and the Oregon

Institute of Technology, a phase-out of the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, elimination of the community service and public affairs school at the University and all physical education courses, a 10 percent reduction in faculty and a 33 percent cut in library acquisitions.

A 30-percent cut would be "utterly devastating" to higher education, says Acting University Pres. Paul Olum.

"Even a 5 percent or 10 percent cut would be terrible," Olum says, adding that although the University wasn't consulted about the reduction recommendations, "The state system people have done their best given the impossible situation they were faced with."

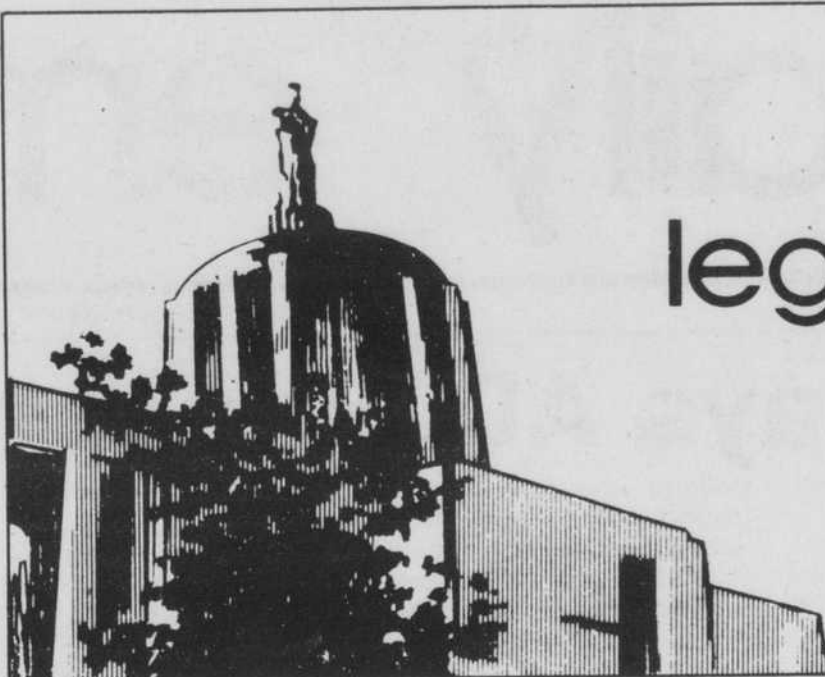
The state system is already \$3 million in the red because of inflation and unexpected cost increases for energy and library acquisitions, Lemman says.

The system could survive a one-time 5 or 10 percent cut without permanently affecting educational quality, but "every little bit hurts," Lemman says.

Despite a decline in state support for higher education during the past 10 years, Lemman says "We've managed to maintain quality in part by our wits, and in part by increasing productivity and technological gains."

But further budget reductions will erode the quality of education in the state system, he adds.

Finding places to cut "is more than a mathematical problem," state board members said in a



legislative issues

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letter to Atiyeh. "It involves — and affects — the dreams, the hopes, the careers, and indeed the livelihood of many, many dedicated people."

"Despite the best efforts of everyone involved, there will be heavy losses, some irreparable," the letter said.

If budget reductions exceed 10 percent, the state system will be forced to lay off some faculty and staff members because 83 percent of its budget is used for salaries, the letter said.

"You can't cut much before you start cutting into people,"

says Ralph Sunderland, University budget manager.

If faculty positions are cut, that could start a "domino" effect that would further cripple funding for the University, Sunderland says.

Because state funding for the University is calculated on the basis of credit hours, if classes are dropped, enrollment may decrease, thus reducing state funding, he adds.

"This gloomy discussion of the problems facing higher education is not intended to put us in the role of Hamlet or to

form a basis for opposing any reductions," the letter said.

"We are sensitive to the problems facing state government and recognize our responsibility to share in their solution."

The funding problem may not end with the special session budget cuts, Sunderland says.

"People are talking like the cut is only for this year. Maybe it will last longer than that."

But until the Legislature meets, talks of budget cuts are only predictions, Sunderland says. "We'll just have to wait and see what happens."

University begins presidential search

The search for a successor to former University Pres. William Boyd began in earnest when the presidential search committee

explained procedures at a public meeting last Wednesday.

The committee will screen candidates and whittle the estimated 200 to 300 applicants down to a list of 4 to 6 names that will be submitted to the state Board of Higher Education. The SBHE will appoint the new president.

No formal applications have

been received yet, but the committee has a number of "applications and inquiries," says Charles Duncan, the retired journalism professor who chairs the search committee.

Duncan says qualifications for the position include experience in education — "preferably at a university similar to ours" — and considerable experience in teaching, scholarship and administration.

The new president will be paid around \$60,000, which is "definitely at the low end of the scale for university presidents," Duncan says.

Deadline for candidate applications is Sept. 1, when the search committee will begin to "expeditiously but carefully" consider the applications.

"It's a refining process done with a finer and finer tooth comb," Duncan says. "The candidates take a hard look at us too."

The projected state budget deficit of \$204 million "certainly won't make our job any easier," Duncan says. "We can only hope it won't scare good candidates away."



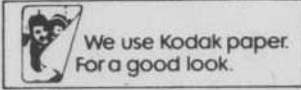
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