

Aid applicants face delays, cuts

By ANN PORTAL
Of the Emerald

Don't expect to find a financial aid packet in the mailbox — at least for a while.

Although the financial aid office is ready to begin handing out aid, it can't start until Pres. Reagan's budget cuts have been approved. Financial aid director Ed Vignoul says he has no idea when that will be.

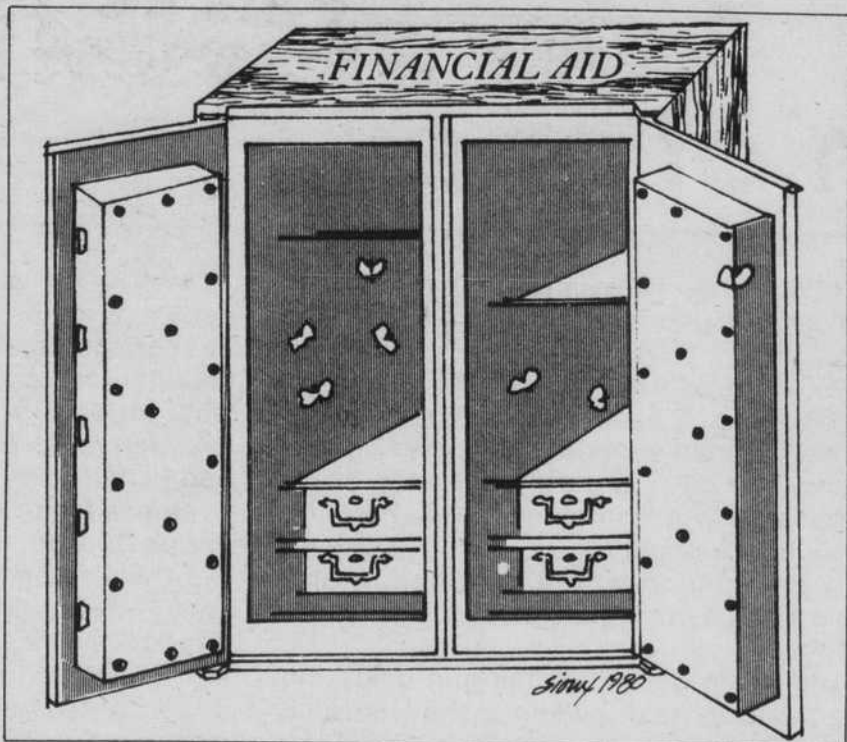
"We do not know what our level of funding will be, and we don't know when to expect a valid answer," Vignoul says.

The federal Department of Education announced Thursday that Congress reached a compromise on the extent of cuts in the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant program. About 60,000 students will be eliminated, 40,000 less than Reagan had recommended.

The compromise decision is expected to end a freeze on processing applications, but Vignoul says it could be weeks before the notification filters down to the University office.

By March 1 — the priority funding deadline — Vignoul's office had received nearly twice last year's number of requests. The financial aid office had received 2,000 more completed applications by last Friday.

Vignoul says it's too early to say if requests have really doubled, or if students are just filing their applications earlier. Students who haven't yet filed are probably out of luck, he says.



Graphic by Sioux Anderson

In March, the financial aid office committed itself to notifying students of their aid by May 1. Vignoul says he's now planning to send a letter in the next few weeks indicating only the office's assessment of the student's budget, need and eligibility for next year. But those letters won't be the aid offer.

The delay will be especially hard on students who applied for aid for summer session, Vignoul says.

"That's really unfortunate. One of our primary purposes is to let students know so they can

plan for their future."

Aid will go first to students with the greatest financial need, Vignoul says. Most of those students will receive BEOGs, and any amount cut from BEOGs by the administration will be made up from other forms of aid.

Another common form of aid, the National Direct Student Loan, has had its University allocation cut by about \$500,000, Vignoul says. Work study and supplementary grants are "up a little" or at last year's level.

The Guaranteed Student Loan program for next year is up

in the air, but the Oregon Scholarship Commission won't process applications for next year until July, says Vignoul. He says he doesn't expect any formal action to be taken on the program until Oct. 1, the beginning of the year for GSL.

Vignoul says University students who receive financial aid have a "very, very good" record of repayment. The default rate on student loans has decreased from 21 percent three years ago to 8 percent this year.

"God knows it's a high risk loan — and it's money well spent."

But when students don't repay, it's "taking bread out of somebody's mouth. I think it's a moral obligation."

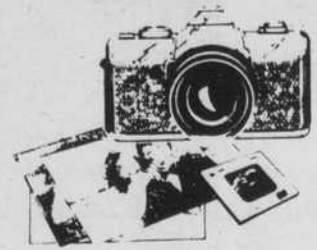
Honesty among applicants seems to be another problem, according to Vignoul. Students cheat on their financial aid applications "more than we'd like to see," he says.

But the office's computer system compares information with other campus computers, and disciplinary action can be taken when discrepancies are found, he says.

Such action can include asking that money be repaid, remanding a student to the University student disciplinary committee and canceling a student's remaining eligibility.

But "to a certain extent, our system is built on the integrity of the student," Vignoul says.

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Fraternity members left Corvallis Saturday morning, traveling various roads and highways, rolling the keg in relay fashion.

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