

## Campus chapter forms

# Nobel-winning group aids foreign prisoners

By MIKE RUST  
Of the Emerald

Amnesty International — the Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights organization — once again is working within the University community on behalf of prisoners of conscience around the world.

With more than 200,000 members in more than 125 countries, AI works for the release of political prisoners around the world and for the abolition of torture and the death penalty.

It has been estimated that during the past 20 years, AI publicity and letter-writing campaigns have contributed to the release of more than 18,000 prisoners of conscience and the improved treatment of many others.

AI represents political prisoners regardless of their nationality, political or religious beliefs — provided they have not used or advocated violence. AI opposes torture, the death penalty and imprisonment without trial in all cases.

A campus chapter recently has been

formed at the University that offers an outlet for students, faculty and other local residents who wish to take part in AI-sponsored activities. This term, the local chapter is focusing its efforts on two countries — Guatemala and East Germany — because the two countries are on different sides of the political spectrum and practice "different styles of oppression," says AI member Stephen Fuller.

In Guatemala "the human rights issue is political murder," Fuller says. Each year, thousands of people in the Central American nation who are suspected of disloyalty to the military government are seized and murdered.

A recent AI report documents the chain of command by which these murders are directed from the office of the president, Gen. Lucas Garcia.

In East Germany, however, the method of political repression is "completely open," with the government freely admitting the detention of thousands of political prisoners. While repression in Guatemala is conducted through anon-

ymous killings, the East German legal system is constructed to provide for the imprisonment of dissidents after short trials closed to the public.

"Somewhere between these two poles lie almost all instances of oppression," Fuller says.

The campus group is focusing its efforts on letter writing and human rights education, Fuller says. Meetings are held every other Monday, usually in the EMU. Letters are written on behalf of prisoners at each meeting, and speakers and films are often presented also.

The letter writing is usually in response to Urgent Action Appeals sent out by AI when the organization learns of individual cases that require immediate intervention. Members of the Urgent Action Network are asked to send telegrams and letters to the government in question.

Urgent Action cases mainly concern torture, prisoners who require immediate health attention and imminent executions.



Amnesty International logo

## Top prof departures hurt math program

In what math department head Theodore Palmer terms the "golden age of mathematics," the University's math department is "suffering."

The department's only teacher of probability theory is leaving the University to teach statistics at George Washington University. Prof. Robert Smythe will be the second of the department's top professors to leave since December, Palmer says.

Math Prof. Colin Sutherland left the University in December for personal reasons.

"Our best people are feeling they must consider other things," Palmer says.

Budget problems that plague much of higher education are the primary culprit.

Over the last two years, the department has had a 27-percent increase in student enrollment, but staff positions have increased by just one.

According to Palmer, salary was not the main reason Smythe and Sutherland left, but it was a consideration.

"Any decision to change universities signifies many problems," Palmer says.

The department currently is rated 20th in the nation, but that rating is in danger of slipping, he says.

"It takes decades to build a top-flight university. It's now being whittled away."

Palmer says the department searched for a probability theory teacher for five years before finding Smythe, partly because most universities are offering 50-percent higher salaries to mathematics professors. Palmer says he hopes to fill the vacancy with a visiting professor next year.

According to Palmer, the best professors are in demand, and they naturally are siphoned off first.

## Eaton cuts ACLU funds

Efforts to revive a University branch of the American Civil Liberties Union hit a rough spot Monday when ASUO Pres. Dave Eaton vetoed the \$375 the Incidental Fee Committee allocated to the group last Thursday.

Eaton said he vetoed the appropriation because the ACLU didn't submit a properly itemized budget and doesn't have an incidental fee "track record." Also, the ASUO doesn't support funding to establish new groups and the

campus ACLU may be duplicating services offered by the Lane County ACLU Chapter.

The campus ACLU already has scheduled two symposiums — one on racial harassment and one on abortion — later this month, ACLU organizer Steve Schneider says.

Five IFC votes will be needed to override the veto. IFC chairer Jon Neiderbach says he doubts the current committee will consider the veto before its term of office expires on May 25.

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