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Enrollment declines nearly 4 percent

Hard times, higher fees produce fewer students

By ANN PORTAL
Of the Emerald

University enrollment was down 3.8 percent after registration Friday, and the number of students late registering Monday also seemed less than usual, according to Registrar Wanda Johnson.

As of Friday evening, 14,916 students were registered — including law students and community education students — compared to 15,507 at the same time last year.

"We're not unhappy yet, but it sure is slow outside (at registration windows in Oregon Hall)," she says.

Registration staff members appreciated Monday's small, orderly lines, she says, but the slow flow might be an indication of fewer students.

"Our operation here for the first day of classes is rather smooth," Johnson says.

Although registration is down, the revenues from fees have increased by 4.4 percent, which may be partly due to the doubling of the late registration fine, she says.

Students who pay tuition after the Wednesday deadline will be charged \$10 for the first day past the deadline and \$2 for each additional class day, up to a \$50 maximum.

The nearly 4 percent enrollment drop "is not as critical a reduction as you would think," Johnson says.

"It's not good, but it's not unexpected," she says.

More important is the number of full-time-equivalent hours that students take, which the registrar's office has no figures on yet, she says. FTE's determine the amount of state funds given to the University, and a 3.8 percent decrease there really could hurt, Johnson says.

But Paul Civin, associate provost for planning, says he anticipates a 5-percent FTE reduction, although he says he is unsure how badly the reduction will hurt University funding.

"We have no way of knowing at the moment," he says.

The enrollment decline is unusual considering the poor economy, Johnson says. Students generally return to school to finish degrees and gain marketable skills during recessions, she says.

However, that pattern may be obsolete today, when reduced financial aid, increased tuition and rising inflation combine to make school unaffordable, Johnson says.

When registration figures are computed, particular attention will be given to the ratio of re-



Photo by Bob Baker

This year's registration crowds were thinner than last year. But fewer students mean less money for the University.

sident to non-resident students, she says. Non-residents pay substantially more for tuition, and the University doesn't want to lose these students because of tuition increases.

"What we're really concerned about is the mix of students," Johnson says, adding that less out-of-state tuition also could hurt the University budget.

Community education enrollment is down more than 17 percent and Johnson speculates "cheaper" tuition at Lane Community College may be part of the reason.

Students should remember they have five days — two more than they had last year — to drop and add courses without paying a fine and that the add/drop fee

has been increased to \$3 per class added or dropped, she says.

The fee can "really eat up the general deposit fast," Johnson says, and students should hurry to avoid it.

"Students have this week to settle their program — and I think that's reasonable."

Energy activist pushes for Citizens Party

By Phil Lemman
Of the Emerald

"The 80s are going to be much more exciting than the 60s, I can promise you that."

That was the prediction of Jim Benson, a co-founder of the Citizen's Party, who Monday night called for a rejuvenation of political involvement at the local level and an energy policy based on conservation and the use of renewable energy.

Computer demand exceeds supply

"I haven't heard one iota of hope to relieve the situation," says computer and information science department chairer Steve Hedetniemi — referring to the 150 to 200 potential computer science majors were shut out of CIS 201 last week.

The department, he explains, is simply not equipped to accommodate all the students who want to participate.

According to Hedetniemi there is little relief in sight for computer science and information students.

In addition to its lack of space, the computer science program also suffers from a lack of equipment and personnel.

The program needs a lot more money, Hedetniemi says.

Hedetniemi does have some advice for students.

"Shop around. OSU has a program, one hesitates to say it, but..."

Benson, who spent several years working in the federal energy bureaucracy, said he got "sick of studies," and now is devoting his time to developing a national constituency for the economic policies of the Citizen's Party. Benson says recent studies he participated in show that the current policy of increasing the use of nuclear power, domestic coal production and synthetic fuels are "economically impossible."

He went on to tell the group of people attending an alternative energy forum at the University that conservation and the use of renewable energy sources can create two to four times as many jobs as reliance on fossil and nuclear fuels.

Increased public exposure to these findings sets the stage for his proposal for a drastic change in the nation's energy policy, away from an emphasis on growth and materialism.

Benson said he plans to revive the populist spirit to develop his new political organization. He said hopes to use community energy studies as a way to band people together, and generate local political action by trying to implement the findings of these studies.

There is little time left to implement these policies, according to Benson. He said the government is keeping the people's minds off economic problems by focusing their attention on the alleged Soviet threat, wasting vast amounts of money on military build-up to validate its claims.

Benson criticized the recent decontrol of oil prices, reasoning that accelerated consumption of domestic oil would only increase dependence on foreign sources in the long run, since present alternate energy sources are economically out of reach. He also said government claims of increasing domestic production was a misnomer, saying "Oil companies don't produce oil. They pump it up and we burn it."

Benson called this a strategy of "Burn America First."

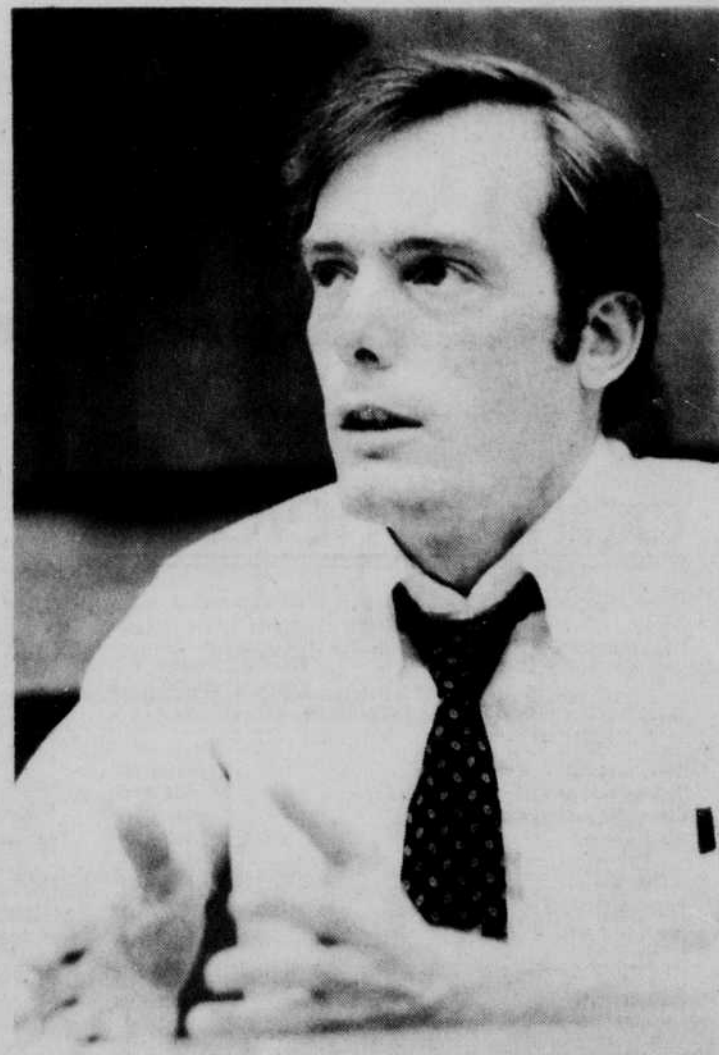


Photo by Bob Baker

Jim Benson