

Student lobbyists gird up for higher education fight

By MIKE ANDERSON
Of the Emerald

Student lobbyists have their work cut out for them this year, as state-mandated budget cuts threaten the quality of higher education in Oregon.

The willingness of some state legislators to reduce the size of higher education and the federal government's eagerness to trim financial aid will keep student lobbyists busy in upcoming months, ASUO officials say.

This year, the ASUO will work closely with the professional Oregon Student Lobby, says Dave Burns, the ASUO's legislative coordinator.

While the ASUO will channel much of its lobbying through the OSL, it also will coordinate student support that is critical for an effective campaign, Burns says.

In preparation for the special session of the state Legislature Jan. 11, the ASUO has published an information packet encouraging students and their parents to write letters in support of higher education. The packets will be distributed in the EMU and University dorms.

Information reflecting the problem's urgency, sample letters, and the names of influential persons in the state to whom students can write all will be in the packet, according to Burns.

"Right now is the time for students to help," Burns says. "Anything less than a thousand or two thousand letters will be a failure."

"It's important for parents to write from their districts for continued support of higher education," says John Stewart, ASUO vice president for state and public affairs.

"A few well-placed letters, from eastern Oregon for example, will have a tremendous impact," Stewart says.

Letters from influential people are effective, agrees John Moore, ASUO executive coordinator and former OSL lobbyist. Moore has been helping Burns target key members of the community who will be urged to write letters.

"We will try to identify students who live in key districts and train those students so they can contact important persons and upstanding citizens in their communities.

"We want them to serve as intermediaries

who can get these people to write letters," Moore says.

ASUO Pres. Rich Wilkins, who also serves as OSL chairer, says he will take care of coordinating ASUO lobbying with OSL efforts.

"We have to voice our concern on what could happen if these budget cuts were passed, and suggest other alternatives," Wilkins says.

There are other ways the state could relieve its financial situation that would be less devastating than a 20-percent cut to the state's higher education budget, he says.

Advocates of the budget cuts say tuition hikes can compensate for the lack of state funding, but this is not the solution, Wilkins says.

"Legislators must realize that the University can't always go back to the students and raise their tuition," he says. "We can't allow tuition to go up so high that students will be denied access through pricing."

Because the problem is so serious, ASUO officials say it is important for students to find the time to write letters despite the conflicts dead week, finals, and registration present.

"It's a matter of devoting 10 minutes to write a letter to save a whole year of education," Burns says.

After lobbying for less-destructive budget cuts in Oregon, efforts will turn to Washington, D.C. and federal financial aid, Stewart says.

Direct lobbying is difficult for financial aid cuts because they are a federal — not state — issue, according to Stewart. Letter writing will be essential, he says.

"Letters are effective. We need letters to be written to congressmen, especially Mark Hatfield." Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., is chairer of the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Hatfield "is a key player in Senate deliberations and in the future of financial aid," he says.

Stewart says he has been working with Hatfield's staff to remain informed on developments in Washington, and with Ed Vignoul, University financial aid director, to determine the effects of financial aid cuts at the University.

The problem is more serious than most people realize, Stewart says.

"A lot of people aren't going to be able to come back to school."

Veterans organization to fold

The University Veterans Association (UVA) has announced this year will be its last on campus.

Although director Dave Isenberg submitted goals for 1982-83 to the Incidental Fee Committee, a Monday memo addressed by Isenberg to IFC member David Gibson and ASUO Executive member Dean Larsen reiterated his conclusion that the organization is no longer desired on campus.

Other agencies are available to help Vietnam veterans, there

is "a new breed of post-Vietnam vets on campus" and campus concern about future foreign wars has decreased, stated Isenberg's memo, in explanation of UVA's dissolution.

"For the most part they are content to rely on the new veterans clerk and assume that Uncle Sam will provide, and prefer not to do anything on their own to ensure they get what is owed them in terms of benefits," Isenberg wrote of the "new breed" of veterans.

In a recent interview, Isen-

berg stated flatly, "I'm not going to babysit them."

The UVA is a one-man operation and few efforts are made to recruit new members, Isenberg says.

Efforts to find veterans to continue the group's operations made between the time he wrote the goals and Monday were fruitless, he says.

"It's not going to hurt the general student body" directly or immediately, he says. It will only hurt campus veterans in a year or two when, he predicts, the federal government will weaken veteran benefits programs.

"The things it (UVA) could do won't be available when they (veterans on campus) need it," Isenberg says of the discontinuance of the group.

Those veterans who have the energy to continue pro-peace and other such movements will find other outlets, he says.

In place of the UVA, the "ASUO and IFC (should) establish some sort of military information center which can provide information on the draft, troop deployments, military strategies," the memo reads.

Isenberg says he will maintain UVA books for the rest of the year and he recommends that Students for a Nuclear Free Future be allocated UVA's current office next year.

"The group did what it was supposed to do" but is at the end of its usefulness, he says.

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Sexual abuse suspect held on bail by police

A 37-year-old Mexican transient arraigned Monday on a "menacing" charge is a "very strong suspect" in a number of sexual abuse cases that occurred on campus this fall, according to a Eugene COP team spokesperson.

Joseph Ballard, arraigned in the Lane County District Court, was charged with "verbally sexually harassing" a 42-year-old white woman the evening of Nov. 26 near 14th Avenue and Ferry Street, says COP team member Skip Stokes.

Ballard, booked on the menacing charge Dec. 4, also is a suspect in the Dec. 2 sexual abuse of three University students, according to Sgt. Rick Allison of the Eugene Police Department.

The three women, all either 17 or 18 and residents of Willcox Dormitory, were mailing letters in the early afternoon at 15th Avenue and Moss Street when a man approached them, grabbed at their breasts and chased them, Allison says.

Eugene police currently are investigating several other recent incidents of sexual abuse on campus, and Ballard is a suspect in those cases, Stokes says.

Ballard is being held at the Lane County Jail. Bail is set at \$2,500.