

Student lobbyists trained

STUDENT LOBBYISTS should "lay low and wait-in-ambush" for Oregon legislators at the special legislative session, said John Moore, ASUO executive coordinator, at a student lobbyist training session Thursday.

Students will be used mainly to gather information from revenue committees and lobby individual legislators when they adopt budget and revenue positions, he said.

Moore and four other speakers addressed a gathering of nearly 20 people on the current situation of legislators and what responsibilities volunteer student lobbyists will face.

The goals of student lobbyists are to reduce the 10 percent cut to higher education proposed by Gov. Vic Atiyeh to five percent and to minimize the impact of any cut, said Bob Watrus, Oregon Student Lobby executive director.

The OSL has been "tinkering with cuts" in the Ways and Means Committee since the committees have been meeting the past two weeks in preparation for the special session, he said.

The special session will be a "guerrilla struggle," according to Moore, who said student lobbyists will be expected to lobby at least one day per week during the session, which is expected to last two to three weeks.

Most student lobbyists will be at the session only one day per week. This may create a "lack of

continuity of information," he said.

To counter this the lobbyists will meet with ASUO Legislative Coordinator David Berns, who will update them on the personalities and issues of the day, said Moore.

An effective persuasion device is personal horror stories because they have impact, especially in the form of bundles of letters, Watrus said.

"On the whole, if a mass of letters can be garnered, a good deal of attention has to be paid to that," he said.

But several students at the meeting said the lobbyists needed to be "armed" with facts, otherwise they feared their arguments could be dismantled by the legislators.

Moore assured students they don't need to be "armed" with facts to keep their cases from being dismantled by legislators since the special session will be a first-time experience for many.

"To learn a legislature, you need to sit down over coffee with dozens and hundreds of people over a decade," he said. "You're being exposed to the great roadshow in the state of Oregon."

Two other arguments suggested for the potential lobbyists were presented by Curt Simic, University vice-president for public services.

Student lobbyists should emphasize to legislators that students should not be priced out of an education, he said.

Another objective lobbyists should emphasize is to convince legislators to retain the excellence of the University as much as possible, he said.

The quality of higher education helps to draw high technology businesses into the state, helping a state to develop economic diversification, Simic said.

Outstanding individual professors must be retained if the University is to maintain a standard of excellence, he added.

By Rich Burr



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Governor 'gutless,' says representative

THERE IS AN easy option to saving education and human services from massive budget cuts, according to Rep. Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene.

The state budget problems could be reduced if Gov. Vic Atiyeh would cut into the property tax relief fund, he says.

So why hasn't Atiyeh cut into the fund?

"Because he hasn't got any guts," Kerans says. "He doesn't want to offend the taxpayers on an election year. He's going to do something very dangerous to the future of this state."

Denny Miles, Atiyeh's press secretary, disagrees.

"The governor stated a long time ago that it was wrong to cut the program so soon after the voters approved it," Miles says. "The governor says we should be doing this (balancing the budget) without any other tax

increases.

"Times are really rough," he adds. "It's the wrong time to be asking people for more money."

Kerans says he would support a raise in taxes rather than cuts in education.

"He (Atiyeh) astounds me," Kerans says. "These are areas of the budget he said would be morally wrong to cut a year ago."

"The only difference is that last year wasn't an election year, and this one is."

There is no option to cutting the budget, Miles says.

"If you were to cut all of the National Resource agencies, you would still come up with only 1.5 percent of the general fund," he says.

"The money has to come out of the main part of the fund, which is education," Miles says.

By Chris Courtner



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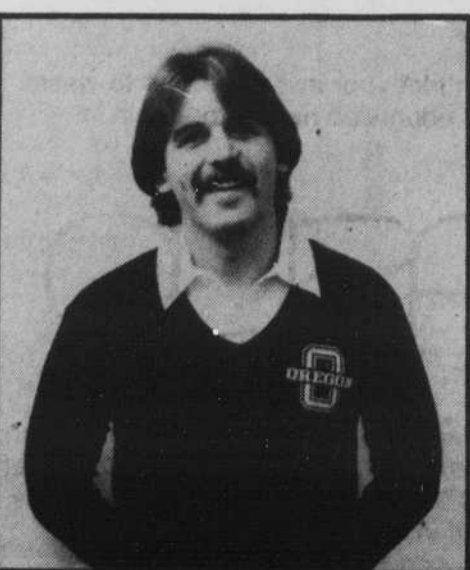
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