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Atiyeh asks SUAB to 'light a fire'

By Dane Claussen
Of the Emerald

Salem — Gov. Vic Atiyeh challenged students to make their views on higher education known and offer substantive suggestions in a private meeting Tuesday with the Student University Affairs Board.

"If I can't light a fire at my end, I'd like you to light a fire at your end," said Atiyeh, nervously puffing on a cigarette. He was talking about his confessed lack of ability to get certain views across to higher education officials and legislators.

More than 80-percent of the state's higher education budget will be saved, he emphasized, adding that the ingenuity with which the resource administrators have maintained service should serve as an example for belt-tightening college administrators.

The often-critical SUAB members were not convinced higher education will not be hurt badly, despite Atiyeh's assurances that he values "a high level of education."

Having been chairer of the Senate Education Committee, Atiyeh said he was not approaching the subject blindly.

"Although they (budget cuts) will not, by themselves, have a college declare exigency, they carry a great potential for exigency. I know that," he said, adding that institutions may spend the money they are allocated as they see fit.

"I've heard things like they may close the law school. I don't know where this comes from. That to me is purely and simply dumb," Atiyeh said. He said he feels the same way about rumors regarding possible closure of the music school.

"What are the alternatives?" quipped Lisa Davis-



Perry, director of SUAB's Information and Grievance Center.

"You have 90 percent of your budget left — why the trauma?" Atiyeh asked later.

He implied that cuts of 10 to 15-percent should not be difficult and emphasized that he does not believe any of the state's colleges need to be closed.

The current situation stems largely from the fact that higher education officials failed to act as he asked them to in mid-1980, he said. He told the Board, Chancellor Roy Lieuellan, and college presidents then the state was headed for hard economic times, Atiyeh said.

Yet Atiyeh said he doesn't want to lay blame. He wants to indicate he feels higher education could do a better job with less money. "I'd like a legacy of high quality of education," he emphasized.

Human resource program changes made starting in

1979 prevented that area from being an overwhelming concern of the Legislature now, as higher education is, Atiyeh said.

SUAB members were most concerned, however, about rising tuition rates, whether they will continue to go up, and by how much.

SUAB member Dave Bauer told Atiyeh "tuition is just going up incredibly" and that the money "isn't there" for as many students to afford to attend college.

"Diminishing returns" from higher tuition not making up for enrollment drops is becoming the current situation, Bauer said. More and more students will go out of state for their education, with California being a prime target, he said.

The University could end up as a school for the economic elite of Lane County and Oregon if tuition continues to climb, said Dan Allen.

Universities are not unique in that talented faculty members get hired away by private industry, Atiyeh said. Talented state government employees and officials are also hired away, and that isn't new, he said.

Atiyeh told SUAB that he appreciates their position, but says he must deal with the overall situation.

He is not supporting a progressive corporate income tax because the effects on job creation would outweigh the effects of the revenue raised or saved from other sources.

The ASUO is supporting a multi-faceted plan of a progressive corporate income tax, a revised property tax relief program and cutting duplication of programs in the higher education, said Dave Berns, an ASUO legislative assistant invited to the meeting by SUAB.

SUAB members also asked that Atiyeh make his support of higher education more obvious to the public and media.

Tuition could fall by \$12 next year

SALEM — A legislative budget committee Tuesday located an extra \$3 million that may allow state colleges and universities to reduce tuition by \$12 a term in the next school year.

The Joint Ways and Means subcommittee was told the money essentially amounts to overpayments to the state restoration fund, a self-insurance program.

The committee didn't vote on the idea, but several members said they would use part of the \$3 million to reduce tuition and decrease the need to cut college and university staffs.

The subcommittee has tentatively decided to cut the higher education budget by \$10.3 million to help balance the state budget.

William T. Lemman, higher education vice chancellor, said lowering tuition by \$12 per term would cost \$1.4 million.

The lawmakers continued a debate over what instructions the Legislature should give higher education officials about consolidating programs.

Rep. Vera Katz, D-Portland, said she wouldn't support taking money from the restoration fund without assurances that the state Board of Higher Education would develop a consolidation plan.

"I am very reluctant to delay it, to delay it until 1983-85," Katz said.

She said she was concerned that repeated state budget troubles would find the committee again considering salary cuts for professors because the higher education system had not rebuilt its program machinery.

Chancellor Roy E. Lieuellan repeated his objection to having a major policy change for higher education contained in a budget report. He said he would prefer broader discussion by the Legislature.

Gov. Vic Atiyeh has recommended that professors and other higher education employees take unpaid leaves of absence of up to three weeks, a proposal that has run into strong legislative opposition.

Sen. Frank Roberts, D-Portland, said that option should be a last resort.

Rep. Tony Van Vliet, R-Corvallis, an Oregon State University professor, said that even mentioning the possibility of pay cuts will lower morale and spur professors to find better-paying jobs. He said Oregon professors recently have quit to take jobs elsewhere paying 50 to 100 percent more.

Sen. Jim Gardner, D-Portland, subcommittee chairman, said the committee won't take final action on budget language until legislative revenue committees decide what money can be raised to avoid deeper budget cuts.



Photo by Duane Schrag

Different line of thought

Dorm residents Jean Chapin (left) and Frank Shaw (right) decided last week to make their voices heard on campus. Their medium is a "clothesline" strung from Chapin's room on the third floor of Carson hall to Shaw's room in DeCou hall, some 200 feet away. Messages

painted onto dissected bedsheets are hung on the line and put then out for public view.

Shaw and Chapin point out that this is only a prototype, and they plan a more sophisticated version with real pulleys and string that won't stretch.