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Photo by Bob Baker

Crowds overload computer

By Debbie Howlett
Of the Emerald

The crowd of students waiting for available computer terminals more resembled a mob this weekend. An estimated 100 people waited three hours or more for computer time at the University computing center.

The computer center has been severely taxed this year due to a lack of terminals and a computer that is too small to keep up with the huge demand for computer time.

Problems began earlier this year when a record number of students enrolled in computer science programs.

Thursday, students complained that two upper division classes in computer science had major assignments due on the same day and that computer time was nearly impossible to get. Those students offered suggestions such as staggering "due dates" for assignments for the 120 or so students.

Andre Proskurowski, an associate professor, and Grant Cheston, a visiting professor, both of them instructors in CIS 315, offered some reasons for not staggering assignments and also talked about other solutions.

"We're trying to pace the two classes together, perhaps we could stagger them a couple of days, but we don't want the classes too far apart," Cheston said.

Proskurowski reinforced that sentiment. "Consider that the same assignments intersect," he said. "There is a certain amount of 'cooperation' you would like to avoid."

Staggering assignments is "not probable," Proskurowski said.

"The worst bottlenecks occur the night before an assignment is due," Cheston said. "You can't expect to just walk up to an open terminal."

Both of the professors say there is a need to increase the computer center's capacity. Through more terminals or a bigger central computer, both agree that the problem could be alleviated.

However, given the financial situation of the University, additions of that magnitude may not be possible. Proskurowski's solution is to limit class enrollments.

Problems with adding more terminals go beyond finances, Cheston said. The computer will not accomplish as much as quickly if the computer is overloaded.

Cheston, from the University of Saskatchewan, said that the same type of problems occur at the Canadian school too.

"People work at terminals for up to six hours and some of that time might not be too productive. Up there (Saskatchewan), there are time limits set. That might help to some extent here."

Frohnmayer scores House over inquiry

SALEM (AP) — Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer scored a legislative committee Monday for its inquiry about his handling of a sex discrimination lawsuit against the state's eight colleges and universities.

"The inquiry you are undertaking this morning is unprecedented in my own memory of legislative service and my own knowledge of Oregon history," Frohnmayer said.

The House Interim Education and Labor Committee convened about concerns over the hiring of a Philadelphia law firm to consult on the state's defense of the state Board of Higher Education, said Rep. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene.

The federal class action suit was filed last year on behalf of women faculty members at the state colleges and universities.

Frohnmayer said he is concerned about violating legal ethics in discussing a case that has not been settled. And he said the inquiry challenges the separation of the legislative and executive branches.

Frohnmayer heads the Department of Justice, which is part of the executive branch.

The committee was warned by chairer Rick Bauman, D-Portland, to refrain from asking specific questions about the lawsuit and the contract with the consulting firm. The committee took no action after Frohnmayer detailed his office's reasons for hiring the firm.

Several members of the House questioned the hiring of a firm outside Oregon on the case, Hendriksen said. They were also concerned about the provisions of the contract in hiring the firm, she added.

But Frohnmayer said the inquiry is based on "distortions in the media" indicating that the state is turning over the case to an outside firm.

The attorney general said the state is only seeking advice on its strategy on the case from a firm that has been recognized as the best in a specialized area of the law. No firm in the Pacific Northwest has the expertise in such esoteric matters, he said.

The contract says no more than \$50,000 be spent in fees to the firm.

The committee probably shouldn't have asked any questions at all, said Rep. Fred Parkinson, R-Silverton.

"After listening to the attorney general's speech, I think we're treading on dangerous ground, possibly on unconstitutional grounds," he said.

Rental art adds panache for a pittance

By Brenda Thornton
Of the Emerald

The University Art Museum has an "original" alternative to that yellowing ski poster tacked on the wall. The Rental-Sales Gallery rents paintings, sculptures, weavings, photographs and carvings for a reasonable price.

For over ten years, the Museum's rental-sales gallery has exhibited a wide variety of works catering to art lovers who can't afford originals. For a period of three months, the borrower can display a piece from the gallery in his or her office, home, apartment, or even dormitory room.

The rental fee ranges from \$16 to \$45. After three months, the borrower may opt to return the work, renew it at the same price, or apply the rental cost toward its purchase.

The gallery displays a diverse selection of about 200 works from Oregon artists that widely range in technique and style. Every fall, a jury reviews the collection and adds works that merit attention.

In an attempt to avoid a bias toward any particular artistic method, a different jury reviews the works each year, says Norine Arens, the museum's administrative assistant.

"The rental-sales gallery has gained an outstanding popularity," Arens says. "Approximately 150 to 200 loans are made per month. And about 50 percent of those loans result in sales."

Arens says the program benefits the museum as well as the community.

"The rental-sales gallery is a means of support for the Museum," she says.

And the strangled museum budget needs extra revenue to survive, Arens says. Due to funding cuts, the museum will close during August and September.

The closure affects the rental-sales gallery as well, forcing it to shut down in mid-April so that all the works can be returned by July, she says.

"I don't know how we are going to fare," Arens says about the museum closure. "It's bound to hurt our popularity."

Although it maintains a wide-spread clientele, the gallery's damage policy seems to discourage would-be thieves and vandals, she says. Each borrower signs a contract placing liability for damage or theft in the borrower's hands.

"We've had a few students pack up at the end of a term and mistakenly take a piece home with them," Arens says. "But in every case, it's always been discovered and returned with no problems."



Graphic by Max DeRungs and Pablo Picasso