

emerald

'Quiet' weekend brings new cuts

Higher education share jumps; up 50 percent to \$15.7 million

By Ann Portal
Of the Emerald

The amount the Legislature proposes to cut from higher education's general budget has quietly increased over the weekend to a total of \$15.7 million.

A legislative subcommittee assigned higher education an additional \$5 million cut to absorb part of the new shortfall in the state's revenue estimates. The Ways and Means education subcommittee had already targeted the higher education budget for a \$10.3 million cut. An additional \$450,000 cut is possible if reductions included in a package rejected by the Legislature are not rescinded by the committee.

Other action taken by the subcommittee "tentatively" cancelled the need for colleges and universities to submit lists of program cuts that would be necessary if the tuition surcharge is revoked next year.

These "hit lists" required by Chancellor Roy Lieuallen at a meeting of institution presidents earlier this month have been the focus of a great deal of concern at the University.

The list of University programs to be considered for reduction or elimination included the law school, the marine biology institute, the community services and public affairs school and seven other programs.

University Pres. Paul Olum confirmed Tuesday the University is "no longer required to give a list of programs for closure." He said further program planning probably will be delayed until the Legislature finishes its work.

Olum said he is not sure how the University would handle the additional budget cut.

However, the subcommittee's revised budget notes resurrect the possibility of a faculty and staff furlough as a short-term response to part of the deficit.

Olum repeated his belief that it is not fair for the administration to ask faculty to accept salary cuts, although it might appear the best solution. Faculty and staff should be involved in any discussion of that type, he said.

The State System of Higher Education also recently learned of an additional \$2 million cut in its total budget, which includes statewide services such as the extension service and the University Hospital.

The portion of that proposed \$2 million cut that would come directly out of the education budget is \$454,891.

That cut apparently was adopted within the last two weeks by the full Ways and Means Committee, without action by the education subcommittee, according to Bill Lemman, the state system's vice chancellor for administration.

The cut was contained in a package that the Legislature did not adopt, but the \$2 million has not yet been rescinded, he said.

Budget plan falters

SALEM (AP) —The Legislature on Tuesday began to unstitch a quilt of programs endorsed by the House to erase the state's massive budget deficit and search for a budget-balancing patch that would please a majority of lawmakers.

The House narrowly passed its patchwork package Monday that would fall about \$10 million short of balancing the budget and leave no reserve fund. Gov. Vic Atiyeh has estimated a \$337 million deficit, which includes a \$26 million reserve fund.

One of the elements of the House-approved plan, a 3-cent boost in cigarette tax to 19 cents a pack, was given little hope of success Tuesday in the Senate Revenue Committee.

The Senate two weeks ago easily approved an income tax hike of about 5 percent that hit higher income groups heavier than wage earners with lower incomes. But the House rejected that proposal.

The Legislature's fiscal panel, the Joint Ways and Means Committee, has balked at making any more cuts than those endorsed by late last week. Its proposed state agency cuts that total about \$87 million, compared with \$120 million suggested by Atiyeh.

The House and Senate have agreed on other revenue-raising measures, with the largest a speed-up in employer withholding tax payments to yield about \$68 million.



Photo by Bob Baker

Watching for eagles

A few of the 26 eagle-watchers who braved the early morning cold stand waiting to catch a glimpse of their prey. They were rewarded by seeing more than 50 bald eagles searching for a morning meal in the Klamath Lake Basin area. See page 8.

Forest service 'backs away' after law students file appeal

By Debbie Howlett
Of the Emerald

Four law students from the University's Pacific Northwest Resource Center have forced the Idaho forest service to withdraw three timber sale contracts near the South Fork of the Salmon River.

The PNRC filed an appeal over a ruling that allowed the sale, and the forest service withdrew the contracts before the appeal made it to court.

"We're talking about the forest service — the U.S. government — and they're backing off three sales," says John Bonine, an associate professor and advisor to the PNRC.

"It's not like winning a law suit," Bonine says, "but it's the first time I remember the forest service withdrawing."

The third-year law students forced the forest service into reassessing and reconsidering the implications of the contract, he says.

Micheal Brennan, Jim Melamed, John Penfield and Peter Schannauer filed the appeal in December claiming the forest service had not adequately assessed the effect logging would have on the South Fork area.

The Salmon River cuts through the middle of Idaho and branches into several forks. Salmon swim the river to the South Fork and its tributaries, where they spawn and raise their young. The main objection in the appeal was that the forest service "ignored" dangers to the wildlife and the area, some of which were documented by studies.

The major concern involving the river is that if logging roads were built, the ensuing erosion would bury food sources sustaining young salmon.

The appeal also notes that an endangered species of wolf, the Rocky Mountain Gray Wolf, has frequently been seen in that area. Until 1978,

no sightings of the wolf had been recorded.

The Idaho Wildlife Federation came to the University's Environmental Law Clinic (of which the PNRC is a branch) to find the legal help it was not able to afford in the private sector. The subsequent suit and investigation afforded the law students an opportunity to "practice" law.

While the forest service agreed to reassess its studies and deny the timber sales contracts, the appeal was never tried. But according to Bonine, that aspect doesn't diminish the accomplishments of the students involved in the case.

"The law students who have been working on the South Fork Salmon River over the past two years have gained the forest service's respect by beating them in administrative appeals and in court," Bonine says.

The Idaho forest service has requested that the group of four act as advisors for the forest service when the environmental impact studies are re-defined.

"They asked that (the law students) make criticisms in an advisory capacity," Bonine says.

A side issue that evolved from the timber sales appeal is a case involving the Freedom of Information Act, something the law students are still battling.

The students requested federal documents to monitor the managing job of the forest service. They also requested a fee waiver for the documents, noting that the Idaho Wildlife Federation is a non-profit organization benefitting the public.

The government charged the Idaho Wildlife Federation 10 cents a copy for 2,000 pages and \$500 for what it called "search time."

"We call it guard time," Bonine says.

The students are now in the process of appealing an Ogden, Utah regional office ruling that requires the group to pay the costs.