

emerald

Advising: Sunny outdoor office brings biology prof more business

Tired of being "underwhelmed" with students needing advice, a biology academic adviser took one look at the weather and moved his office outside this week.

A University rule requiring students who have completed 90 credit hours to consult an academic adviser has largely been ignored, says Gordon Murphy, head adviser for the University biology department. So instead of waiting for students to come to him, Murphy decided to go to the students.

As of Wednesday, Murphy had spoken to more students in three days than he has all year. "150 people maybe? I don't know, I didn't keep track," said a satisfied Murphy on Wednesday afternoon in front of his jerry-built advising table.

Murphy said he got the idea for the table Monday after looking out the window.

"I thought, man, the weather is so neat. . . ." and he set up his table on 13th Avenue in front of Science II.

Students need to get accustomed to talking to academic advisers, Murphy said, especially in the event of computerized pre-registration. Advanced planning will become more important than ever, he said.

Murphy said he plans to keep his table outside today and Friday — if the weather holds.

"It's worth my time — gets me out of the office. I've gotten a great sunburn."



Photo by Bob Baker

Olum presents options for classified pay cuts

By Debbie Howlett
Of the Emerald

University Pres. Paul Olum presented several options in dealing with the projected three percent salary cut to the classified staff at a convocation Wednesday afternoon.

Olum told about 175 classified staff members that there are several ways to deal with the salary reduction — none of which would last for more than a year.

When asked if he could guarantee that, Olum told the crowd that he had recently told Gov. Vic Atiyeh that any more cuts at the University would not come through faculty and staff salaries. Olum also told the crowd, which was about 75 percent women, that "our purpose is to work out the best plan for everybody."

At the onset of the meeting, Olum said "whatever we do, we do with the full honor and respect of the collective bargaining agreement."

Suggestions and possible alternatives to the salary dilemma range from working one hour and 12 minutes less each week to closing the University on Friday's during the summer. Some of the choices in dealing with pay cuts include:

- Offering a temporary shortening of the work week by one hour and 12 minutes. After the meeting, Olum said shortening the work week by that amount is the most preferred by himself and the administration, but Olum added "we want one that is spread out over the year."

Olum also suggested dividing the University into "units" that would autonomously work out implementing the one hour and 12 minutes plan until that unit reduced the required 3 percent.

- A "temporary interruption of employment" — a layoff — which ranges from estimates of eight days to 15 days. There is also the possibility that the layoffs would include two periods of 15

days because of problems Olum voiced at the meeting that deal with vacation time and accrued leave.

"The problem with that possibility is that classified employees may, in fact, choose to take that time through vacation time or compensatory time," Olum said.

Olum is also concerned that a 15-day interruption will be difficult to handle not only from the University's stance but also from the classified staff's stance.

"It's easier when you have to pay for groceries if the time is spread out."

- The classified staff, following the lead of Portland State University which decided to remain open four days a week instead of five during the summer, suggested that the University close one day a week, too.

"I'm not sure closing one day a week is the way to do it," Olum responded.

One staff member pointed out that classes are conducted during classified staff holidays and that if no one was at the administrative offices to answer phones then the public might be more aware of the situation.

Gerry Moseley, associate provost for student affairs, noted that one day a week closures would be a 20 percent cut for the summer. "We were talking before about minimizing the impact of the cuts," Moseley said.

It was also suggested that a half-day off on Fridays might be more equitable.

- Suggestions were also made to deal with the cuts on an individual basis, rather than having the same format for all classified employees.

Olum told the meeting that if individuals wanted to do things differently or if the cuts were to be dealt with on an individual basis, the suggestion would have to come from classified staff members. Because of fair labor practice laws, Olum said he could not ask classified staff to take the cut one way or another, he could only present ideas.

Summer job projection appears shaky, unsure

By Brent Walth
Of the Emerald

"Bleak," "grim" and "just plain bad" describe the outlook for summer employment, according to a state labor economist and an employment coordinator.

"We might see some seasonal upturn in employment, but college students won't benefit," said Ken Rocco, Oregon State Labor Division economist. "Those people who have been laid off might be returning to work, but it won't help people looking for short-term employment."

Figures released last month by the State Employment Division showed unemployment rising in March, which is a period of seasonal upturn, to 11.4 percent.

"Locally we'll begin to see unemployment easing," Rocco noted, looking ahead to summer but adding that not enough rehiring will take place to benefit the summer job market.

Competition from older workers who have lost their "stable," full-time jobs will be a major detriment to students, according to Kyle Ritchey of the state division.

Despite the gloom Rocco interjected some optimism into the forecast, saying that tourism in Oregon is expected to rise this summer.

"The response from magazine ads for state tourism and interest from other states indicates that tourist trade might be the only good thing developing," Rocco said.

Services and retail sales in tourist-related areas will stand to benefit if the surge occurs. Rocco cautioned that such job areas are also low-paying and high-turnover positions.

Jobs created by federal funds — the summer work programs — have been

reduced or totally eliminated, Ritchey added.

The Youth Conservation Corps, which hired in the 16-21 age range, lost all federal funding and was dismantled. A similar, smaller program, reduced through cuts, has hired workers on split shifts solely to involve more people.

While the employment picture — or unemployment picture — looks poor, Rocco pointed out signs of improvement are showing.

"There are still plenty of 'ifs' involved," Rocco said, noting that layoff waiting lists will be dried up before any new hiring takes place.

To exemplify the depth of these lists, Rocco cited the new building permit rate in Lane County. In 1979 around 145 permits a month were issued. The current rate of permits is about 10.

Rocco sees retail trade benefiting slightly from the tax cuts.

"The cuts aren't going to be enough for a family to buy a new house, but they will increase retail," he said.

Wariness of employers of the recession's recovery period, Rocco believed, will dampen new hiring.

"The last recovery period was short," Rocco noted. "Employers may not begin new hiring until things stabilize."

Even if the numerous pieces of the employment puzzle — dipping interest rates and retail upswings — come together when projected, Rocco cannot foresee any ease on the summer job blight.

"It won't be until the start of the new (fiscal) quarter before any recovery will take place," he related.

A time, in other words, when college students would normally be leaving their summer jobs and returning to school.