

emerald

ASUO court finds four officials guilty

By Dane Claussen
and Rich Burr
Of the Emerald

Three newly elected Incidental Fee Committee members and an EMU Board member may be removed from office if the ASUO constitution committee upholds election violation sanctions imposed by an ASUO elections court Wednesday.

The court upheld and took action on three complaints filed by former ASUO presidential candidate Jeffrey Houston against the Students for a Progressive Agenda. SPA is a coalition that campaigned for a number of candidates in the recent ASUO elections.

Karsten Rasmussen, who heads the constitution committee is postponing enforcement of the decision until Saturday when the committee will decide whether to hear an appeal.

If the committee agrees to hear an appeal and upholds the sanction of removing from office all SPA candidates elected in the April ASUO elections, IFC members Jeff Nudelman, Dianne Ritterband-Mason, and Mary Alice Holmes, and EMU Board member Mary Hotchkiss

may be forced to give up their new positions.

Holmes, a sophomore in psychology, was elected as summer chair of the IFC Tuesday, her first day in office.

Major questions facing the committee will be whether an elections court can remove students from an office once they have taken it, and if replacements would come from former candidates or be appointed by ASUO Pres. C.J. Balfe.

If the four are removed and replaced by non-SPA candidates receiving the next highest numbers of votes, the new IFC officials would be Devin Wate, a business sophomore; Gordon Mallon, a law student; Mark Spence, a junior in political science and international studies. The new EMU board member would be Steve Pesante, a law student.

Regardless of whether the IFC and EMU Board members can be removed from office, SPA presidential candidate Kevin Kouns and vice presidential candidate Ken Packman probably will face 25 hours of "community service."

Houston charged the SPA with poster rules violations, use of the ASUO-funded SEARCH office, and threats, harassment, and intimidation. His complaints

were only three of more than 20 filed by and against various candidates.

Although all but one of the complaints were withdrawn or dismissed before the court's second session, Houston's complaints were withdrawn too late.

Houston attempted to withdraw his complaints to save time, but he had already testified at the first elections court hearing, said court member Cathi Bulone.

Kouns said that both the allegations and the court's findings are "absurd" and that the "corrupt" actions by the court and Gus Palmitessa, ASUO elections director, have "discredited themselves" and the process.

"If there's any way I can file a civil suit for harassment, libel, and defamation of character, I will do so," he said.

"I'm not sure whether to be angry or laugh hysterically," Kouns said.

"It's an opinion that's completely off-base," Packman said of the court opinion, adding that the SPA will appeal.

Kouns' and Packman's sanctions were not strict enough, Houston said. Monetary fines should have been levied and they should be taken to the student conduct court, he said.

The former candidates had mixed reactions.

"The reason I ran for the IFC was because I thought I could do a good job," Nudelman said, adding that he accepted SPA support but did not take an active part in its campaign efforts.

Nudelman said that he isn't mad, and doesn't regret his association with SPA. "I really think I'm getting a bum deal," he said.

Hotchkiss also said the charges were "absurd."

"The only violation that had any pertinence to me was the financial statement," she said. "The rest of the allegations did not concern me at all."

"I guess I'm happy," Mallon said about possible IFC membership. Wate and Spence said they would not comment until after the constitution committee made its decision.

Holmes, Ritterband-Mason, Pesante, and Palmitessa were unavailable for comment Wednesday afternoon.

In other business, the Court ruled that Palmitessa was within his authority to place on the ballot a non-binding question about incidental fee support of the Emerald.

Students grill Olum during convocation



Photo by Bob Baker

Sharon Claeysens, a sociology GTF, asked University Pres. Paul Olum to reaffirm his commitment to hiring and retaining minorities at Wednesday's student convocation.

By Ann Portal
Of the Emerald

Computer science over-crowding, minority hiring policies and the University's image problem were the main concerns brought up Wednesday at University Pres. Paul Olum's spring convocation with students.

Less than 30 students attended the meeting, but discussions between Olum and students — occasionally punctuated by comments from other University administrators — lasted more than an hour.

Brian Devine, a junior majoring in computer science, questioned Olum at length on what is being done to handle the explosion of interest in computer science.

Of the 800 to 900 incoming freshmen who have indicated they want to be computer science majors, only 300 actually can be let in, Devine said, asking whether the University was turning away those potential computer science majors.

"It doesn't seem like an issue you can just put off and say 'O.K. — I know there's a problem,'" he said.

Devine was especially concerned about the recent resignations of three computer science faculty. He also criticized maintaining liberal arts and humanities departments at the cost of "ruining something students really want."

Olum responded that steps are being taken to aid computer science. A minor that will allow students to take 20 to 24 hours of computer science is being developed to relieve the pressure from incoming freshmen, the number of computer science majors will be increased from 320 to about 480 next year, new computer equipment is being added and the three faculty all are being replaced. A new position also is being added.

"We're paying as much as this University can afford to support computer science," said Provost Richard Hill. "You cannot ask us to destroy the rest of the University simply to solve the particular problem of about 1,000

students." The market for computer science faculty is among the most competitive academic market in the United States right now, he said.

Olum also spoke about the resignations of University faculty outside the computer science department. Business, economics and law school faculty also have resigned he said, but "not in very massive or even large" numbers.

Rumors are circulating that more graduate teaching fellows and fewer faculty are being used to teach classes, but actually the GTF-faculty ratio is down, Olum said.

Sharon Claeysens, a graduate teaching fellow in the sociology department, asked Olum to reaffirm his commitment to hiring and retaining minority faculty. She complained specifically about the history department's failure to appoint Barbara Green, a black woman who is currently a visiting professor in the history department, to a two-year assistant professor position that was filled this spring.

Tyrone Tillery, an assistant professor at Wayne State University, has accepted the position as a one-year visiting professor, with the option to stay.

Claeysens said there are only three black women faculty members on campus and she said she felt that was a detriment to her education.

A faculty committee already is investigating the procedure used to fill the history department position, Olum said, adding that "it's a rough argument" to debate whether a minority man or a minority woman should be hired for a job.

Another student asked about the University's image and what students could be doing to help.

Until recently, it seemed students were proud of the University, Olum said. But rumors and myths spread quickly, he said, adding "maybe we should get a big neon board in the middle of the University saying how good we are."

Curt Simic, University Relations director, said the University is making progress, but the image problem is a long-term one with no short or easy solutions.

EMU opens for night owls

The EMU will be open until 1 a.m. for the six days preceding finals week. EMU Director Adell MacMillan said Wednesday.

Citing a need for additional late night study areas June 1-6, ASUO officials arranged the extra time and free coffee with funding provided by Ray Hawk, University vice president for administration and finance.

The EMU is regularly open until 11:30 p.m.

"The credit for this one goes to

Adam Rittenberg." ASUO Pres. C.J. Balfe said about ASUO staff efforts on his behalf.

Balfe said that attempts were made to keep open various other buildings on campus, but that most administrators were opposed to the plan.

"It's surprising how much fear there is about vandalism" among deans, he said.

"Students should utilize it (the EMU) so that we can do it again in the future... every term," Balfe said.