

OSPIRG tries comeback from cutback

Nader's visit may boost morale sagging from cutbacks, apathy

By Rich Burr
Of the Emerald

OSPIRG, the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group, is attempting a comeback after a year of disorganization. The disorganization was the result of a 1981 cutback of nearly 75 percent of their funding.

The student-run, nonpartisan group, was started by consumer advocate Ralph Nader. Nader's campus visit in 1970 began the University group which researches and lobbies issues of student interest.

The program may get a boost when Nader visits the campus Nov. 8. "If he mentions us (in his speech), that'll be great," Holonko says. "Just the fact that he'll be here will probably have a great enough impact on OSPIRG."

Starting with an optimistic attitude this year, OSPIRG is trying to recruit students into the organization, Holonko says. The group will start this effort Oct. 19 with a general interest meeting.

Traditionally, the group received about \$42,000 per year in incidental fees. In 1981, however, ASUO Pres. David Eaton slashed their funding by nearly 75 percent. Eaton cited a lack of student benefit from OSPIRG as reason for the cutback.

"OSPIRG was nothing but a jumble last year," says Gretchen Brevoort, University OSPIRG director. The group forgot about its student-run philosophy and direct student involvement decreased, says Tanya Holonko, a staff organizer.

While Holonko says PIRGs are growing nationwide, Gibson says the Oregon State PIRG system is dying.

"More and more schools are starting to drop OSPIRG," he says. "It's a big question mark as to whether it's going to survive or just have an OSPIRG in Eugene."

Four universities participate in the statewide OSPIRG organization. Oregon State University and Southern Oregon State College dropped out because of lack of funding and interest, Brevoort says.

OSPIRG has other reasons to worry about funding.

Examining a Rutgers University PIRG funding system this year, a circuit court said, "We have been presented with no convincing reason why PIRG should not obtain its financial support through purely voluntary contributions." The court took no action.

"That might be a thing for us to look at this year because it is a public research interest group," said David Gibson, ASUO vice president of finance and administration. "But if we do that, we might have to do it for Survival Center."

OSPIRG is content with its funding through mandatory incidental fees, Brevoort says.

One way OSPIRG tried to increase its student benefit last year was to survey a large number of students. Gauging the public interest is a difficult task, Brevoort says.

Students also indicate public interest by applying for a OSPIRG project.

Through a series of questions, the



Photo by Dave Kao

There are students who are interested and concerned, OSPIRG director Gretchen Brevoort says, but future funding is a problem.

group determines whether the project is workable.

"First, does it fit in with what the majority of students in Oregon want and is it a workable issue, given the times?" Brevoort says. "There's a whole procedure that's gone through, and

believe me, one student, just because of one interest, does not get his project OK'd."

Presently, the group is planning a November utility symposium and is helping with the ASUO voter registration drive to develop students' "citizenship skills," Holonko says.

SEARCH garners respect

Classes fill, doing well considering budget cuts

By Tom Gronke
Of the Emerald

The office is hard to find, the records of the last 10 years are being updated, and expansion is difficult because funds are tight, but the alternative education program called SEARCH is doing well for a program considered dead last fall.

"We're outgrowing our budget," says Mary Hope, director of SEARCH (Student Exploratory Action Regarding Curricular Heterodoxy). This year's budget of \$6,936 is 3.4 percent more than last year and enrollment may be one-third more than last year, according to Hope.

SEARCH is a student-run alternative education program founded in 1967. It allows students, faculty, and members of the community to organize and teach classes of their own design. Although unpaid, SEARCH teachers earn three credits for the experience.

Both credit-earning classes

and non-credit workshops are offered through SEARCH. Students sign up for credit-earning classes through the department sponsoring the class.

When Hope and Kevin Kouns took over as program co-directors last fall, they inherited several problems. The program had bad relations with many of the college departments, the records of the program were in a pile of boxes, and enrollment was the lowest ever.

At the time, SEARCH had 83 students in eight classes, according to Kouns, who is now an ASUO comptroller. Alan Contreras, also an ASUO comptroller, says the program was "on its last legs" several months before Hope and Kouns took over the program.

"We had a lot of volunteer helpers," Hope says, regarding the program's turn around. "It was really a cooperative effort. Everyone in the program had to work to build relations with the college departments."

"I can now talk to someone in every department and at least get some respect," she says. "I couldn't do that when I was first here."

SEARCH is offering 10 credit-earning classes and 10 non-credit workshops this term. SEARCH classes offered this term include Medical Terminology (BIO 200), War in the Nuclear Age (SOC 200), and Intermediate Arabic (ROM LANG 200).

Workshops offered include "The Politics of Hunger," "Psychology of Death," and "Paganism & Witchcraft."

But budgetary constraints overshadow the growth of the program. According to Kouns, "the IFC is going to have to decide whether or not to be dedicated to this program."

In 1970, SEARCH's budget was about \$10,000.

SEARCH classes are available in the SEARCH office located on the mezzanine floor, room 111 EMU.

Guide ranks colleges from black perspective

NEW YORK (AP) — An upcoming "Black Student's Guide to Colleges" rating the academic and social climate blacks can expect on 114 campuses includes some low marks for some of the nation's prestigious schools.

Black-white student relations at the University of Michigan, for instance, are described as "the pits." Harvard and Radcliffe Colleges are termed "impersonal."

Black students are "disenchanted and unhappy" at the University of Arizona, according to the guide.


The guide quotes a black student at UCLA as saying there is "an atmosphere of de facto segregation... on campus."

Also on the negative side, the book documents a scarcity of black faculty, even at an Ivy League school like Harvard, where 12 out of 730 faculty are black.

But it gives rave notices to the University of Iowa and to Oberlin College, saying the small Ohio liberal arts school "certainly has provided a welcome and comfortable environment for most of its black students." And tiny, selective Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., is called "tops" for black students.

The guide, to be published next spring by E.P. Dutton, was edited and compiled by Barry Beckham, head of the graduate writing program at Brown University. A copy of the final manuscript was obtained by The Associated Press.

The book focuses on prestigious, predominantly white schools, but also includes many state universities and about a dozen historically black institutions. According to government figures, about 1.1 million of the nation's 12 million college students are black.



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