

# Politicians' picks more accurate

By David Steinmetz  
Of the Emerald

Who knows better how the voters will vote — politicians or voters?

A recent University study found politicians were the better predictors of statewide voting on two ballot measures in the November election.

James Lemert, a University journalism professor, says the study was "central to my decision-making theory that decision-makers are under pressure to be accurate."

Inaccuracy on their part could get them voted out of office or embarrassed by the media, Lemert says, but sophistication and practice also could be important factors.

Lemert and his Journalism and Public Opinion class surveyed 283 voters as they left the polls in 29 precincts throughout Eugene and Springfield, asking them how they thought Ballot Measures 3 and 6 would fare statewide.

For comparison, Lemert sent out questionnaires to politicians and campaign managers. He received 58 before election day predicting whether or not measures 3 and 6 would pass and what percent of the vote would

be "yes."

Politicians proved to be more accurate on both measures.

They predicted 48.1 percent of the voters would support Measure 3, the property-tax limitation measure, while the actual "yes" vote was 49.5 percent.

Voters guessed the support would be 45.8 percent.

Success of Measure 6, which would have eliminated the Land Conservation and Development

In another conclusion, Lemert noted that voters had a strong tendency to apply their own vote on the measures to their predictions on whether or not the measures would pass. Politicians were less likely to make this assumption.

Seventy percent of the people voting for Measure 3 correspondingly thought it would pass, while just as many of the "no" voters estimated it would not pass. This tendency was even stronger on Measure 6.

Lemert says this trend illustrates an inclination for people who are less pressured to project their "own values and attitudes onto everybody else, assuming that anybody who has any sense must agree."

Lemert, who has written a book addressed to public opinion researchers titled "Does Mass Communication Change Public Opinion After All?" says this study is one of many not yet conducted in the field, but "needs to be done."

The poll was sponsored by the University Communication Research Division.

## Voters project attitudes onto everybody else

Commission, was predicted even more accurately by politicians: 45.2 percent as compared to the actual 44.9 percent.

Voters estimated Measure 6 would receive 46.7 percent support.

Most politicians cited personal contacts with citizens as their main method of estimation, with published polls also contributing.

## Political party gets early jump on ASUO race

By Richard Burr  
Of the Emerald

A student political party is gearing up early for the ASUO elections to avoid last year's mistakes and to support student programs during Incidental Fee Committee budget hearings.

Students for a Progressive Agenda will send representatives to the IFC hearings to provide moral support for program directors and to show the committee that programs support one another, says Kevin Kouns, an SPA founder.

"We're not trying to be aggressive or threatening to the committee and its decision-making process," says Kouns, who lost the ASUO presidency last year to C.J. Balfe by 143 votes.

"I don't think it will have an adverse effect on the committee members whatsoever," adds Mary Alice Holmes, IFC and SPA member.

Many program directors, who are also SPA members, will give advice on how to approach the hearings, Kouns says. SPA members will provide emotional support because budget hearings can "stress out" program directors, he says.

In addition, SPA is starting earlier than last year on the ASUO elections. The group has had two meetings, and the next is scheduled for Jan. 12.

The SPA had mixed results from starting late in last year's elections. Four SPA-endorsed candidates were elected — three to the IFC and one to the EMU Board.

"I think we proved both how good an idea SPA is and how in touch we were with student interests," Kouns says.

But the group was too secretive in its election preparations and did not reach its potential, he says.

"We tried to surprise every-

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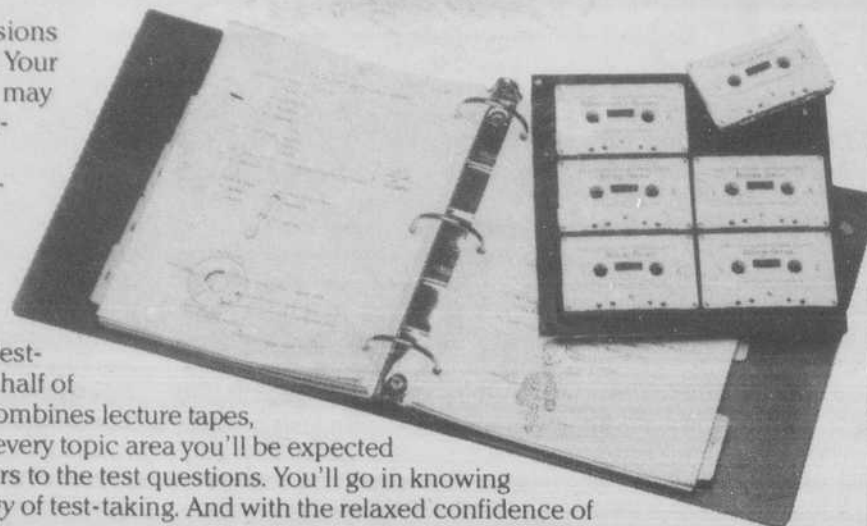
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