



Hydraulic chair lifts disabled

By Frank Shaw
Of the Emerald

Students confined to wheelchairs who have always thought it would be impossible to take a lab class can get a lift from a new chair developed by the biology department.

A hydraulic lift, designed and built by the biology department, raises the chair to any height needed to reach lab equipment.

The new chair was developed originally for a handicapped student, Alberto Naranjo, who wanted to take an electron microscope course. He was able to maneuver through the lab with no problems but was stymied in his attempts to use an ultra-microtron, a device used to make thin slivers of materials for use with the microscope.

The machine is mounted on a special table which is higher than a normal table, and Naranjo was unable to look through the eyepiece and turn the controls at the same time.

Gordon Murphy, academic administrative assistant for the biology department, first suggested a ramp, but space problems made that idea impossible.

Naranjo had seen some wheelchairs equipped with hydraulic pumps allowing the seat to be raised and lowered and asked if it would be possible to build one.

"The idea was to get the thing ready for a spring course," Murphy says. "But we didn't make it."

The delay resulted from a lack of funds. Murphy, working with Bernie Wendring, technical supervisor in the science shop, estimated the chair would cost between \$250 and \$400 for parts and an additional 50 hours of labor.

Murphy requested the money and finally received about \$1,300 from the State Compliance Office, an office designed to ensure equal opportunities at the University for minorities and the handicapped.

Wendring drew up plans for the chair and started work, but funding ran out in mid-summer.

Murphy once again made the rounds of the state in search of more money and finally decided to "go back to the well one more time." He asked the compliance office for additional funds and received them.

When the chair is extended to its full height, it lifts 18 inches above a normal wheelchair.



Photo by Dave Kao

Through the efforts of Gordon Murphy, wheelchair-bound students can utilize the science building labs because of a special hydraulic-lift wheelchair.

Naranjo took the course in electron microscopes fall term and passed — something Murphy says he couldn't have done without the help of the chair.

The chair is in storage at the biology department and is available for any student who could use it for a science class.

The only problem Murphy can foresee with the chair is it has not received enough use to test its effectiveness.

"We haven't had enough use to find its limitations," Murphy says.

Higher ed plan heads calendar

By Sandy Johnstone
Of the Emerald

Discussion centering on the strategic plan for higher education and requests to set up two research institutes at the University head the docket of the State Board of Education's meeting today.

No action is expected to be taken to adopt or drop the strategic plan until the state board can finish holding statewide hearings. The Strategic Plan for Higher Education 1983-87 details the goals and ambitions of the State System of Higher Education and includes 69 recommendations for improvement.

The SBHE will also consider authorizing a Center for the Study of Work, Economy and Community and a Northwest Strategic Management Institute.

The Northwest Strategic Management Institute is designed as a "way to best serve economic development and business needs of the area," according to James Reinmuth, dean of the University business school and one of the leading proponents of the institute. He says strategic management is especially important to high-growth businesses — like the high-tech firms the state is trying to attract — so the institute would benefit the state's development.

The institute plans to operate on private funding and Reinmuth says they have already applied for a \$250,000 grant from a foundation in Portland to get the institute started. Besides expenditures for equipment and supplies, the institute will hire a full-time executive director, a part-time research director and other support personnel.

Reinmuth sees no problem in getting the institute approved. "The State Board has everything to gain and nothing to lose," he says.

The Center for the Study of Work, Economy and Community will work to facilitate collaboration among faculty and students across departmental lines and maximize opportunities for obtaining funding for research and research training.

Personnel for the center would mainly be drawn from the sociology department.

Other items the board will consider include a report discussing the lawsuit filed against Southern Oregon State College by a group of Ashland businessmen, and possible ramifications for the state system; and adoption by the board of rules governing summer session fees.

Universities spice up cluster courses

By Aleta Zak
Of the Emerald

Call them general education, group or distribution requirements, but it all boils down to the same issue — what kinds of classes students should take before they graduate.

At the University, the debate on what should go into a liberal education produced a more limited course selection for students in the last year with the introduction of clusters. Clusters which apply to incoming freshman in fall 1982, require students to take three-course sequences in arts and letters, science and social science.

Compared to other major Oregon colleges, the University's graduation requirements are more structured. But other schools are looking at tightening their requirements.

Portland State University requires arts and sciences students to take 18 hours in each of the arts and letters,



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science and social sciences divisions. Nine hours must be from the same department, but they don't have to be a sequence, according to PSU registrar Bob Tufts.

In December, a PSU faculty committee proposed expanding the three general subject groups into five with the goal of increasing students'

breadth of knowledge. If passed, students would take 12 hours in world culture and civilization, U.S. studies, fine arts and humanities, the individual and society and natural science.

"What we are trying to do is assure that students get a more focused education," explains David Smeltzer, head of the political science department at PSU. "Their choices should be more limited. Right now they can take anything in the catalogue."

Oregon State University requires all students to take 15 hours of science or math, 12 hours of humanities or arts and 12 hours of social science. Ralph Reiley, assistant registrar at OSU, says the university doesn't require sequences or clusters.

Reiley explains the requirements give OSU students a wider distribution in different fields. "Everyone's got their own ideas about general

education," he says. "But when you add up all the requirements and number of hours, I think students are getting basically the same education here as they are in Eugene."

Willamette University, a private college operating on the semester system, approved a new core curriculum and general graduation requirements in 1980. All students take a combination of 30 hours in humanities, fine arts, social sciences, literature and natural sciences. In addition, they must take 12 hours of interdisciplinary courses which combine two or more fields.

The faculty is enthusiastic about merging different subjects, says Jerry Berberet, dean of the Willamette arts and sciences college. A course called "Newspeak" combined communications and religious studies by approaching language as a basic

problem in the Western world. Another examined the concept of visual thinking through psychology and math.

Interdisciplinary courses, though offered at the University, aren't required for graduation. Instead, the system is based on giving students more depth in their education through the cluster requirements.

University advisors and faculty members agree the new system adds structure and coherence to the curriculum, although some students object to taking clusters because they think they're too restrictive.

Joseph Hynes, assistant dean of the arts and sciences college, says students will naturally complain about a new system more difficult than the previous one. "Any requirements will seem more restrictive than no requirements," he reasons.