

# Refunds planned for 1983 SEARCH class

By Alan Contreras  
Of the Emerald

Student services may suffer as a result of money improperly collected from students who enrolled in a SEARCH class held last year, according to ASUO and University officials.

University Vice Provost Paul Holbo, who has been involved in resolving several disputes involving SEARCH, says that SEARCH collected the fees after being told that such fees were impermissible under University regulations governing credit-granting classes.

Kevin Lewis, ASUO assistant finance coordinator, indicated that the refunds, for students who enrolled in Special Studies Arabic I during the fall term of 1983, would probably total no more than \$800, but said "we aren't yet certain where the money will come from." The ASUO Executive had no plans to ask the SEARCH program to refund the money from its 1984-85 budget, he added.

ASUO Vice Pres. Marc Spence said that the amount would be closer to \$1,400 and said that "the Incidental Fee Committee may be asked to allocate the money to be paid back to students."

A memorandum from University Registrar Herb Chereck to W.N. McLaughlin, director of the University of Business Affairs, indicates that the refund is expected to be \$50 per student enrolled in the class.

Holbo is supportive of the new SEARCH director, Dianna Fischer. He says the program is doing a lot better and speculates that Fischer's "good educational skills and public school teaching experience" will be an asset to the program, as will her experience in student government at Eastern Oregon State College.

Holbo and former SEARCH director Steve Myers exchanged numerous acerbic memos during the 1983-84 academic year, including several dealing with the fee issue. Holbo objected to "the political circus" of a public gathering at the EMU in defense of the program.

In a later memo, Myers termed the relationship between SEARCH and Holbo's office as one of "mutual distrust and presumed hostility."

Holbo was not the only University official upset by last year's SEARCH management.

In a memo to Myers, Celeste Ulrich, dean of the College of Human Development and Performance, expressed her sorrow at having to work "with individuals who have no integrity" especially "when the individuals are student leaders." She perceives last year's problems as perhaps arising from "intentional" failure to follow University procedures.

According to ASUO Finance Coordinator John Dreeszen, Associate Provost for Student Affairs Gerry Moseley is now involved in trying to resolve the issue of how much money is to be refunded and for which classes.

The University "originally said that moneys shouldn't have been paid for several classes, but has amended its position" after discussions both internally and with the ASUO Executive, Spence says. He noted that the University "has decided to write off as tuition some of the money for other classes, even though it wasn't."

He says SEARCH should "not be used as a vehicle for non-student community people to earn money," and admits that part of the problem last year was that processes weren't as clear as they should have been.

Holbo says that some of the problems with certain SEARCH classes have arisen due to "inadequate checking of instructor backgrounds by regular department faculty before they sign-off on the forms."

He also believes that credit-granting programs like SEARCH are rare in U.S. higher education, and he is more comfortable with non-credit workshops.

The SEARCH program has offered non-traditional credit-granting courses and non-credit workshops at the University since 1967. Course offerings have ranged from topics such as Finnish and other foreign languages to subjects of questionable merit such as "Paganism and Witchcraft" and "aerodynamics of the Frisbee."

The program has been somewhat cyclical, offering many courses some years and as few as ten during one term in 1981. ASUO and University officials are hopeful that this year the SEARCH program will be successful and back in its usual arena — academic, not bureaucratic, inquiry.

Representatives of SEARCH have been unavailable for comment.



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