

Student lobby group acts on many issues

By Shannon Kelley
Of the Emerald

Few students know of the existence of the Oregon Student Lobby. Even fewer know what it does. But all students are aware of the drain tuition can put on their pocketbooks.

There is a connection. The OS� lobbied for a tuition freeze two years ago and got it. It's still frozen and OS� hopes to keep it that way. Still, students at the University pay the highest tuition of any of the colleges in the 13 Western states, according to OS� researcher Mynie Daut.

The tuition freeze is one of many issues the OS� will be working on during the 1984-85 school year, says ASUO Pres. Julie Davis. Davis was elected to serve as chair of the board of directors for OS� in June. Mike Witteman, a student at Oregon State University, was chosen as vice-chair, and Dave Cress of Portland State University will serve as treasurer.

"We will be working to ensure the future and funding of higher education in this state," Davis explains of the OS�'s main goal. "Funding has not been pleasant the past couple of years. It's a do or die year."

Strategies the OS� will employ include sending out questionnaires on higher education issues to legislators and political candidates and publishing the answers in a voter's pamphlet. The ASUO will hold a Political Fair Oct. 15-18 at the University, which will sponsor many debates between people seeking public offices in Oregon, according to Davis. Both the fair and the voter's pamphlet will help voters get a stronger idea of how the candidates stand on higher education issues, Davis says.

But the bottom line right now is to get students to vote, she says.

Davis wants to get 6,000

University students registered to vote before the November election. Other OS� members have set similar goals for their colleges. The organization will be contacting voters by telephone to remind them to vote and inform them of voting locations, she adds.

The OS� is also working to defeat Ballot Measure 2, which would "spell disaster for higher education in Oregon," Davis says. The measure calls for a limitation on property taxes throughout the state.

The Reagan administration is another entity OS� wants voters to observe, Daut says. The administration has cut financial aid support and has requested zero-funding for four of the student-aid programs. Last year alone, 6,500 students who were eligible for financial aid and applied didn't receive any because of the cuts, Daut says.

The administration did increase funding for work-study, but it is hard to work and go to school at the same time, she adds. "There is a giant unmet need out there that's undocumented."

The OS� is also observing a recent decision by Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer that concerns the participation of non-student members in incidental fee committee activities. The decision has disallowed non-student members to vote on the issues.

The University is the only school in the State System of Higher Education that is not affected by the ruling, as all of its seven members are students. The other six state colleges, however, allow administration and faculty a voice on the board. In addition, five of these schools allow the non-student members a voting privilege on the issues.

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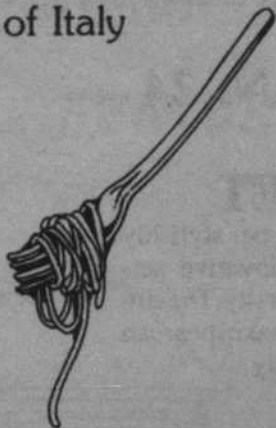
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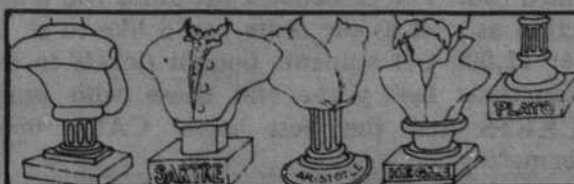
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