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Olum says more than enrollment improving

By Michael Doko
Of the Emerald

University Pres. Paul Olum delivered a speech of cautious optimism Wednesday, saying the University is in the best shape he has seen since taking over the campus reins four years ago.

"I feel good, very good, about the University. After talking with faculty and students I can sense a general upbeat feeling despite budget cuts," Olum told the large crowd at the first University Assembly meeting of this academic year.

The occasion was Olum's State of the University address.

Olum cited a larger than expected enrollment, an impressive faculty and an improved athletic program as areas where the University excels.

"But speaking from my own background, saying such good things is highly risky," Olum said, adding that he almost felt the urge to "knock wood to sway away the evil eye."

"The situation we are in now cannot continue," Olum said in reference to budget cuts by the State Board of Higher Education. "We can't go into the future with this kind of funding."

Enrollment, which was at 15,478 last year, is expected to rise to 15,700 or more this year, he said.

All community colleges and most state institutions are down in enrollment this year, he said.

All class levels, from freshman to graduate, in the University are up in enrollment and the dormitories are filled, Olum said.

A high quality University and a

boosted campaign in television and radio advertising for the school are two factors responsible for the increase, he said.

"Though I'm not making a statement in favor of 'Quack Attacks'," he joked.

"We got the message out about the quality and types of programs," at the University, he said.

"The faculty here is extremely strong. Their commitment and involvement is somewhat rare in institutions across the country," Olum said.

And the University's image has been enhanced by an athletic program which claims an NCAA championship for the men's track and field team in the spring, an unbeaten football team and a women's volleyball team that is currently ranked 13th in the nation.

But this sunny picture could give way to dark clouds on the horizon, Olum said.

The biggest threat to the University's health is passage of Ballot Measure 2, a measure that could mean "disaster for higher education in the state," Olum said on a personal note.

"There would be an enormous reduction of funds for local agencies and secondary schools if the measure passes. State funds intended for higher education could be transferred to these areas (local government and secondary schools)," he said.

Passage of the ballot measure could also mean an enormous reduction in admissions to the University, Olum said.

"Property taxes have become too high

in many areas — especially for the elderly. I understand the frustration with no tax reform. But if the measure passes there will be an enormous reduction in education funds," he said.

Another dark cloud is the uncertainty of the 1985-86 State System Higher Education budget.

The budget still needs legislative approval.

"It is a budget we strongly support," Olum said. He lauded the efforts of Chancellor Bud Davis in submitting the budget to the governor and meeting with legislators across the state for higher education support.

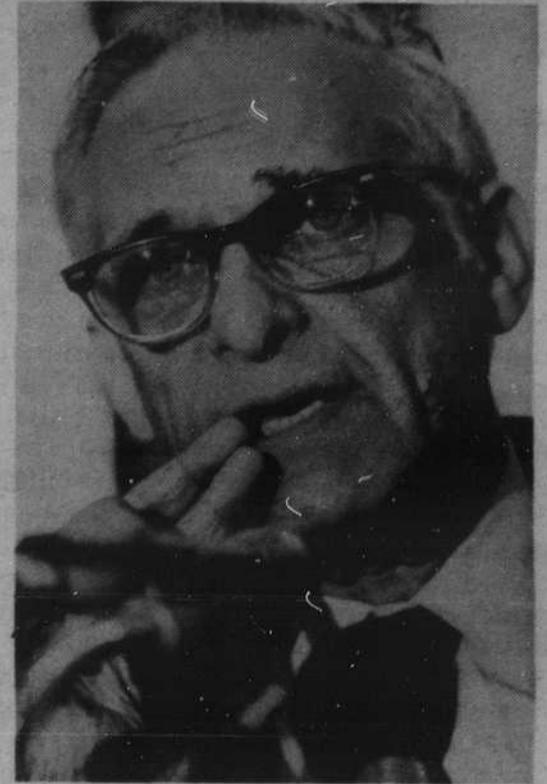
The University would see improvements in faculty salaries, facility maintenance, high-technology development, instructional equipment and library acquisition under the budget, he said. And students may even get a tuition freeze, Olum said.

"The biggest problem with the budget is that every dollar in it is restricted money. There is no money at all for restoration of base budget cuts. The funds will only go into certain priority areas," Olum said.

"Strengthening the entire University is the only way this University can be all that it ought to be," he said.

"Concerning the future of the University, well, we are at a crossroads," Olum said. "We can't continue forever to go on this way."

"Our funding remains the lowest in the country for an institution at our level of quality. We are more poorly funded than other institutions in the state



Paul Olum

system. Except for Southern Oregon State College, we are the most poorly per-student funded institution in the state," Olum said.

"We have an excellent institution with a quality faculty and this is getting known. Eugene is a very good place to be a scholar and teacher. Students are getting a first-rate education," Olum said.

If funding for the University would increase to an average level for institutions with the same comparable quality, Olum said, the University could "explode in quality."



Taking time out from a busy day

Louise Helleck, a junior high school newspaper adviser, took time out from the 58th Annual High School Press Conference Wednesday to reminisce about when she was a student at the University.

Helleck received a master's degree in counseling psychology here in 1968 and now advises the Pioneer Post, the school

newspaper of Joseph Lane Junior High School in Roseburg.

The statewide press conference offered secondary-school journalism students a variety of lectures, tours, workshops and contests throughout the day.

Photo by Michael Clapp

Cuts anger students

By Julie Shippen
Of the Emerald

Students at Oregon's colleges are angry and frustrated with the ways state budget cuts have affected their education, according to the results of an Oregon Student Lobby survey to be released this week.

Sherry Oeser, OSU director and coordinator of the project, said the survey was a response to repeated discussions about budget cuts among higher education officials.

"The more we heard, the more we thought, 'If this is really happening, what is the effect on students?'" Oeser said. "What we found was that almost every aspect of student life on campus had been affected in one way or another."

"One of the things this report shows is that students are aware of how they are being affected by budget cuts," she continued. "Forty percent said they had been adversely affected. That to me shows that the budget cuts have had an impact on people."

More than 1,370 surveys were distributed on seven state system campuses during spring and summer sessions. Oeser said students answered 489 of the surveys, representing about a 35.5-percent return rate.

"We were trying to find out from a consumer's point of view

how students have been affected by the budget cuts," she said. "They (legislators) tend to look at tuition as a revenue source, which it is, but I think tuition has to be looked at like any other item. When you're offering someone a service, you have to consider how much they can afford to pay for it."

Although students are the "consumers" of higher education, it is unfair to ask them to

'Whenever there is a revenue loss, students are being asked to pay the difference by hook or by crook.'

— Sherry Oeser

make up for the cuts, she said. "Whenever there is a revenue loss, students are being asked to pay the difference by hook or by crook," Oeser said. "It's not fair to keep asking students to bear the burden of budget reductions."

The questionnaire contained 16 questions in areas including course offerings, tuition and equipment and facilities. At the

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