

Giving women opportunities

By Michael Hosmar
Of the Emerald

She's 71 years old, and all she wants to do is continue doing what she's done since graduating from college: help other people — especially women.

Since the 1940s, Emily Taylor has aided women in determining their true worth in the job market. She was in Eugene on Friday to speak at a luncheon and to answer questions about the future of higher education in the nation.

Taylor founded the Office of Women in Higher Education in an effort to make available opportunities for women in the work force.

"Right after I graduated from college, I knew I wanted to help women," Taylor says.

Today, more than ever before, women graduating from college are taking advantage of their own potentialities and doing what they really want to do in life, she says. Still, she says, the questions facing college women in the 1940s are still facing women in higher education today. "They ask themselves, 'Can I combine a career and a family?'" she says.

For many years, women have been put down for deciding to quit their jobs to become mothers or homemakers, she says. "I try to tell them (women) that it's perfectly all right to quit the workforce if they first look at all of their options," she says. "The decision is very individual. They've got to decide what's right for them."

To eliminate these sorts of put-downs, she says, women have to take the initiative. "You've got to get people talking about it. You've got to get women talking to both men and women who are public figures in the workforce," she says.

The main objective of the Office of Women in Higher Education, says Taylor, has been to erase the stereotypical differences between the sexes in the nation's job market. More specifically, the office has been trying to find more women who want to be college presidents.

"We've made great progress," Taylor says. In 1975, women made up about 5 percent of the total number of college presidents in the nation. Now 9 percent are women. Most female college presidents are nuns, she says. However, there were 49 laywomen college presidents in 1975, and now there are 163, Taylor says.

"Nobody ever made it on their own," she says. "Somebody is always opening doors for them. Somebody has to take the first step."

She says millions of people recently watched Sally Ride, the first American woman to go into space, open the doors for women who want to be astronauts. And in her campaign for the vice presidency,

"Now, excellence (in education) is being used as an excuse for decreasing accessibility" to a college education, she says. Education officials think that by reducing the number of students attending a particular

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Geraldine Ferraro has opened wide the doors of the political world for women, she adds.

The most pressing question facing both men and women in higher education, Taylor says, is whether or not students have the same access to college educations today as they did in the past. "I think the question really is who gets to go to school," Taylor says.

When Taylor was an undergraduate, only 5 percent of the people her age went to college, she says, adding that college was for the elite. After she graduated, she says there was a national trend toward increasing the accessibility of a college education. Then, about 50 percent of college-age people went to college.

college, the quality of education at that college will improve, she says.

Taylor cites the elimination of scholarship programs and reports of reduced quality in higher education as evidence of this trend.

As the senior associate of the American Council of Education, Taylor says she'll continue to fight for women and students in general. "I've tried to help as much as possible," she says. "If I had it to do all over again, I wouldn't change a thing."

"A woman who graduates from college today has many more doors open to her than she did 10 years ago," Taylor says. "They (women) have been able to profit from the concern of other people."

Solomon Amendment: students are complying

By Michael Hosmar
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A controversial legislative amendment that prompted protests at universities and colleges across the country last year is now working well at the University, says Ed Vignoul, director of the student financial aid office.

Vignoul says most students nationwide are complying with the Solomon Amendment, which requires male students to register for the selective service before they can receive financial aid. "It's no longer an administrative problem," he says.

Almost all of the students that say they are registered are telling the truth, he says. The Department of Education did a study last summer that shows there has been substantial compliance with the registration requirement, Vignoul says.

In a random sample of 1,000 students, 371 were receiving financial aid and therefore had to be registered. The study showed that 98 percent of those students were indeed registered.

In another sample of 1,286 students, all of whom had to be registered, 95 percent had complied with the requirement.

The Department of Education has attributed some of the non-compliance percentage to misspellings, transposition errors or incomplete data, says Vignoul.

The amendment first stipulated that students who wanted financial aid had to sign forms verifying that they were registered with the selective services. In the 1985-86 academic year, a student would also be required to show the letter he received from the selective services certifying his registration, Vignoul says.

However this original design has been modified. Students will not have to show the certification letter from the government in the 1985-86 school year, but they still will have to sign the verification form, says Vignoul.

According to a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, financial-aid officers throughout the nation pressed the Department of Education to drop the certification-letter requirement.

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