

Olum warns loss of faculty

By Michele Matassa
Of the Emerald

The University is at a crossroads in terms of funding and will lose faculty members and federal grants if the Legislature doesn't approve the governor's higher education budget request, President Paul Olum said Friday.

Olum called a news conference to respond to reports that certain items of Gov. Vic Atiyeh's budget package are in jeopardy.

At risk for the University are faculty salary increases, program improvements and capital construction projects, Olum said.

He said the University needs \$20 million for the salary increases and \$12 million for the improvements to programs — mainly the material, optical, biological and computer sciences.

The capital construction funds would be used in part for the Riverfront Research Park.

"Some of our stars and some of our younger people as well have been sticking with us because they love the institution, because they like their colleagues, their students, the nature of work, the kind of academic enterprise," Olum said.

But if the higher education budget is not approved, these faculty members will give up their wait and will move to jobs that pay as much as twice what the University offers, he said.

"The issue is not one alone of continuing the generation of revenue from the same sources that it's come in the past but one of priorities," Olum said, challenging legislators to place higher education above such programs as property tax relief when dividing up general-fund revenue.

Support for faculty salaries, scientific research and the Riverfront Park will yield jobs and will boost the state's economic development, so it

deserves top priority, Olum said.

If the higher education budget suffers a blow, "that will tell me that the state Legislature for Oregon has decided to climb into bed, pull the covers over their head and say 'We can't do, we can't do it, we can't do it,'" he said.

Lack of support also will jeopardize efforts to recruit business to the state and to attain federal grants for economic development because it will send out a message that "we're not ready to fund economic development," Olum said.

Olum urged people to influence legislators' thinking while the decisions are still being made.

"We're not hearing that any decisions have been made, but we're hearing that decisions are about to be made, and how those decisions are made may be a matter of great risk for what we need so badly."

Coalition urges community to examine research park plans

By Cynthia Whitfield
Of the Emerald

The Coalition for Responsible Economic Development will ask the community to support a more "participatory" process of deciding Riverfront Park policy at a public hearing tonight.

Composed of students and community members, the coalition will sponsor a community forum on the Riverfront Park, at 7:30 p.m. at the Wesley Center, 1236 Kincaid.


Many involved in the coalition "have a feeling that plans for the Riverfront Park have proceeded very rapidly without much community input," says Susan Sowards, ASUO executive coordinator. "We're not taking a definite position against the development, but we want a more participatory process," Sowards added.

The Riverfront Park board of directors is composed of two University members and five community members, including: Dan Williams, University vice president for administration; John Moseley, who succeeds Dick Hersh as vice president for research on July 1; Carolyn Chambers, owner of KEZI television; former Eugene Mayor Gus Keller; Ron Blind of Cooper's and Lybrand accounting firm; and Dan Giustina and Peter Murphy, both of forest products development.


Sowards says she is concerned that the board of directors, who will develop the conditions for the ground lease, is meeting already. The ground lease will set certain restrictions on development, such as the heights and scales of buildings.

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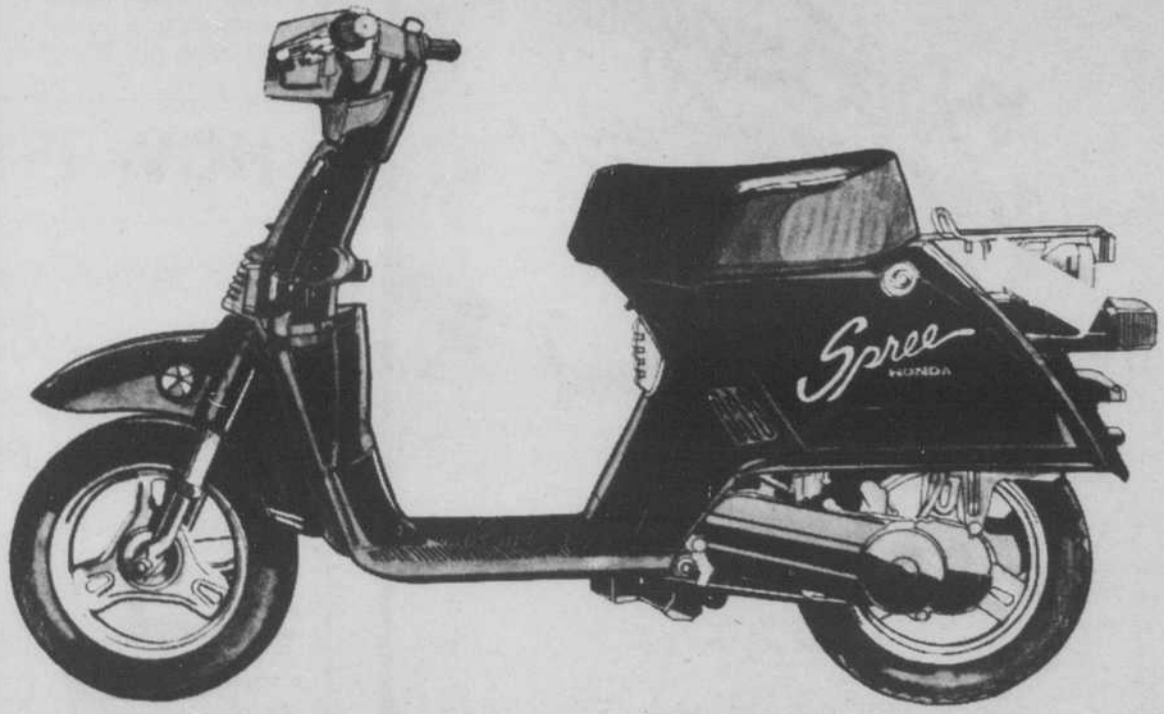
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