

Overrealized incidental fees pay the cost of accessibility project

By Sarah Kitchen
Of the Emerald

Work will begin next week on a wheelchair access ramp at the northeast entrance of the University Main Library.

The ramp is one of two student-funded projects to make the University more accessible to disabled students.

The installation of automatic doors at EMU entrances is the other project. The doors should be installed "probably at the beginning of winter term," said Steve Frichette, ASUO University affairs coordinator, who is working on the accessibility project.

"We have a \$50,000 budget called 'accessibility on campus' that was allocated as one of the last acts of the Pinckney administration with the over-realized incidental fees," Frichette said.

Currently students in wheelchairs must enter the library through the Instructional Media Center.

"The problem arises when the IMC's hours are not the same as the library's (hours) and you have to call up to someone (in the library) from a phone booth downstairs. They then have to come down to make sure there is actually someone there, then go back upstairs to get a key and let the person in," Frichette said.

A new turnstile has been ordered for inside the library, but it will not be completed until about one month after completion of the ramp.

"In the meantime students in wheelchairs will have to go in through the out door of the library security system," Frichette said.

The estimated cost of the work on the library is \$35,000. The EMU doors will cost an additional \$10,000.

"The students shouldn't have to be paying for the ramp, but we have the money and we are willing to do it. Hopefully the Legislature will come through and allocate more funds for disabled funds, which is

number one on the priority list for campus construction," Frichette said. "(Building the ramps and installing the doors) is doing something concrete for the disabled students; the need is really there," he added.

"Campus planning has been excellent in helping us with the red tape," Frichette said. "David Rowe has been our contact at the library, and Garry Fritz at the EMU. I have nothing but praise for those gentlemen," he added. Catherine Marston has also helped to work on the project as a consultant.

Lynn Pinckney, 1985-86 ASUO president, said the idea for an access ramp to the library came up early in her administration.

"Steve Nelson as a student senator did a lot of the initial work, getting ballpark estimates for how much it would cost because we really had no idea of the cost," Pinckney said.

"At the end of the (school) year we were notified that there was an over-realized account that could be used for the library ramp," Pinckney said.

"An over-realized account is excess funds collected in incidental fees that have never been used, and have been building up for a couple of years.

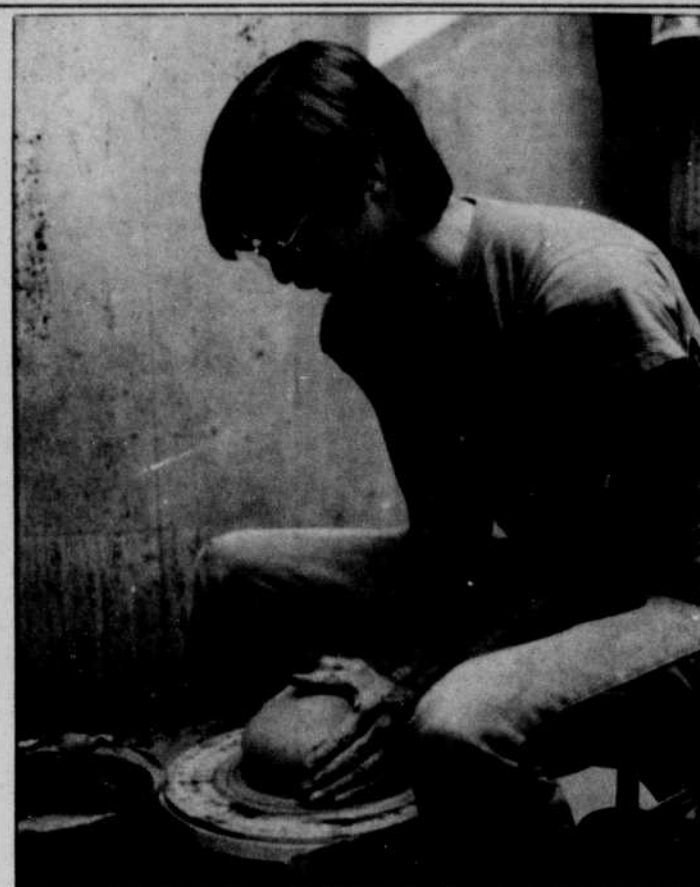
"The IFC allocates the funds and the ASUO president writes to University President Olum to request the release of the funds," Pinckney added.

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education had made many requests to the Legislature for funds to make campus buildings wheelchair accessible, Pinckney said. Last year the legislature allocated \$800,000 to the state for that purpose. Of that amount, the University received \$300,000.

"It is an unusual exception for incidental fees to be used like this," she said.

"I think people are possibly hoping to shame the legislature into making an allocation. The one elevator we got this year (in Allen Hall) is not enough," Pinckney added.

Presently 30 percent of the University's buildings are not accessible by wheelchair, she said.



Playing with mud

An EMU Craft Center employee entertained a crowd of students in the EMU Tuesday with his demonstration of clay pot-making.

Photo by Allan Lazo

Illiteracy campaign reaches area residents

By Jolayne Houtz
Of the Emerald

A national media campaign to inform Americans about illiteracy has resulted in a jump in the number of calls local agencies receive from people needing help with reading or comprehension problems.

ABC and PBS television networks began a campaign this fall to spotlight the epidemic proportions of illiteracy in America. The PLUS campaign (Project Literacy U.S.) was a series of news and informational programs on illiteracy that sparked a nationwide response.

The Eugene Public Library, which is helping to launch a countywide strike at illiteracy, has received at least a dozen calls from people wanting more information on illiteracy programs in Lane County, said Sandy

dy Carrick, assistant head of adult services at the Eugene Public Library.

Others have called local agencies saying they had seen television programs illustrating the problem and wanted to help.

About 30 people have contacted Lane Community College's Adult Basic Education program within the last two weeks offering to tutor those who need help, said Liz Coleman, volunteer tutor specialist for the ABE program. The volunteers will almost double the number of tutors currently working with the program.

The library received another boost from a \$25,000 federal grant that was approved in September, which will be used for publicity to get the word out to the illiterate that help is available.

The grant also will pay for a

part-time coordinator, who will establish a network of agencies and groups involved with helping the illiterate and direct people to the right one, Carrick said. Money also will be allocated to purchase reading material at a first- to third-grade reading level geared for adults.

LCC also has responded to the media campaign by introducing a low-level reading class for people who read at the first- to fourth-grade levels, Coleman said.

Carrick said the media campaign was one of the most effective ways to reach those people needing help. "That's the way we're going to reach them. These people are watching TV," she said. "A print media campaign just wouldn't have the same effect."

Coleman said few people who are illiterate cannot read at all.

In fact, most of them only need help with reading comprehension. One of the students currently in the ABE program is a carpenter who eventually hopes to work for himself and wants to be able to read contracts more effectively.

But one of the most difficult things for a person to do is to admit that he or she cannot read, Coleman said, yet about 44,000 adults in Lane County are classified as "undereducated," according to the Oregon Department of Education, and about 10 percent of Lane County residents over age 25 have less than an eighth-grade education.

People interested in becoming tutors should call the Eugene Public Library at 687-5450.

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